

SOUTH AFRICAN SANDPLAY THERAPY SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2024

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

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Colleagues and Friends in Jungian Sandplay Therapy

As President of SASTS, I warmly welcome you to the 5th edition of our Newsletter.

The year 2023 brought many challenges, growth and transformation to our Society and to each one of us. May this new year bring you joy and happiness.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of you who contributes to our Society and allow the Executive Committee, through our seminars, to help you reflect intensively on the various aspects related to Jungian Sandplay Therapy. This year we invited international ISST Teachers to continue this process of learning again.

Retha Roux, our Vice President, and myself are part of the ISST Congress Committee for next year. Our ISST Congress will be held in the Netherlands in August 2025. We hope to see many of you there as it is a time to learn more, to make new international friends and to be in a space to celebrate this wonderful Therapy.

In this newsletter you will also find the information of our Intensive Teaching Week for 2024 that will be held in Portugal. This is a international training and for many new in ISST a opportunity to immerse yourself in the teaching of a few selected ISST Teachers.

Our 5th Newsletter also tells the story of how one of our Founding Member's and a dear friend, Gwenda Euvrard, started her Sandplay journey.

I wish you all a rich and stimulating year in Jungian Sandplay Therapy.

Greetings

Braam



Without this playing with fantasy, no creative work has ever come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of the imagination is incalculable.

C.G. Jung

Looking back I realise that, like all our psychodynamic processes, the roots of my sandplay journey go back to my early childhood years. I was an imaginal child, spending many hours immersed in the rich and diverse worlds that emerged as I played in the sand alongside a river or on the beach, in the veld where we ran freely, in the gravel in our driveway, in art and in books. Found objects like leaves and flower petals or a toktokkie beetle, which found a temporary home in a matchbox, populated and fleshed out the stories in these emerging imaginal worlds in the sand, gravel and earth.

When I was three years old my family suffered a devastating loss when a fire broke out one night and engulfed and burnt to the ground my father's business and the flat above where we lived. We all survived, but we lost everything. For the next year we lived in an old house belonging to elderly relatives: while nightmares interrupted my sleep, I can recall with all my senses this soulful house and especially the very large garden which invited exploration. At the bottom of the garden was an enormous old English oak tree, and I now realise that this generous tree enfolded me in a healing space, providing the rhythm of the seasons, filtered light, a place to climb and to find secret spaces, and in the shade below where I spent many hours collecting the abundance of acorns that fell. These acorns became the miniatures which enacted the imaginal worlds that I created in the ground under the containing branches each day. And the next day they were waiting there again, and I lived yet more imaginal worlds. I did not realise at the time that I was experiencing the process which is so important in sandplay.



Childhood Imaginal worlds.

IN THE BEGINNING



Gwenda remembers...

My studies and clinical psychology training were steeped in psychodynamic, phenomenological, and Jungian psychology. I'd always experienced a rich dream life, and my own, long-term Jungian analysis awakened me to the transformative place of dreams and their symbolic language. In Jung I found a resonance with my belief in a symbolic attitude to the imaginal as a place where we can encounter and integrate traumas, opening the way to expanded and deepened living. Throughout my studies I continued to steep myself in understanding how opening ourselves to our encounters in the imaginal can activate the healing process, and in my Clinical Psychology Masters thesis I explored Jungian dreamwork incorporating artwork. One day, early in my studies, I stumbled across the Dora Kalff film in the Rhodes University library. I began collecting miniatures and, along with practising long-term Jungian psychotherapy in which I incorporate dreamwork, active imagination, and art, sandplay became part of my work.

It was many years later, when I attended the BISS (British and Irish Sandplay Society) conference in Ireland in 2010 that I discovered that I could do the ISST sandplay training via the independent route. I had for a long time been attending and gaining much from the very rich offerings at SAAJA (SA Association of Jungian Analysts) in Cape Town, and got to know several of the analysts, many of whom included Jungian sandplay in their work. But it was in Ireland that I realised that my calling was towards ISST certification, thinking that it might take me 20 years! Although it did not take nearly as long, I really do feel that we need to respect our journey towards certification as sandplay therapists as a deep process which should never be rushed.



Participating in a panel at the BISS Conference in Scotland 2019, mentors Diana Jansen (extreme L), Maggie Baron (extreme R)

At that same BISS conference in Ireland I met several people who became part of my emerging international sandplay world and training. I feel a huge depth of gratitude to 1) Alex Esterhuizen, who was then chair of ISST, living between the UK and Hong Kong, who provided me with wonderful supervision in which my work grew, and who became my ISST advisor, guiding the process as I worked towards certification, and 2) Maggie Baron in London with whom I did my personal sandplay process in London. On my annual visits to my daughter who lived in London for eleven years, I enjoyed deepening relationships in sandplay with them and others, including Hannah-Valeria Grishko, now living and working in Israel, who became a supportive and encouraging sandplay friend. Sandplay was calling me to journeying to new places, both personal and collective, and to an openness to ever-widening and ever-deepening processes, as I responded to what was emerging.

However, looking back, these were not my first encounters with ISST. Two things happened one memorable evening in 2007 at the IAAP (International Association of Jungian Analysts) Conference in Cape Town. A 70 year old woman sat next to me on a bus which was to take us to an evening function and an instant and deep connection was struck between us. She was Diana Jansen, a doyen of BISS, and I would like to pay tribute to her for her vibrant presence through my sandplay journey. When a colleague-friend met Diana with me soon after our first encounter, she laughingly said: "But Diana is an older version of you!" Was my colleague-friend seeing something emergent in me that I did not yet know? Was this a foresight that I too would one day become an ISST teaching member? And that same evening in Cape Town in 2007, a woman I had briefly met at an earlier lecture

came up to me and said: "I've been looking for you, I wanted to give you this" and thrust a sandplay journal into my hands. SachikoTaki Reece, a member of STA (Sandplay Therapists of America) had an article published in the journal she gave me. Was this a foresight of the writing which later became part of my professional expression? As all these connections were gathering synchronically, something bigger than me was calling me into sandplay and guiding my journey. As Jungian sandplay therapists we implicitly trust the wisdom of the psyche as self-regulating and teleological, calling into being those aspects which are not yet known, a never-ending opening up to the emerging possibilities of our unique purpose.

Unknown to me as I engaged in my sandplay journey, another synchronistic unfolding was happening. It was inevitable that I connected with Braam, who had a particular calling to bring sandplay to South Africa, and so I became enfolded in this aspect of ever-widening circles with the sandplay world: Braam, international colleagues including Ruth Ammann, Judy Zappacosta, Martin Kalff, Debbie Bedford Strom, and with you, my local colleagues and fellow members of SASTS. Huge respect to the South African committee and all those who have been called to work on the unfolding of this amazing dream! But we soon realised that Braam and I share another deep and soulful connection: African elephants.



Elephant Watercolour Painting

I have been encountering African elephants my whole life and cannot remember a time when I was unaware of their presence. Shortly after I realised that the international ISST training route was open to me, I was driving past the many game reserves which surround my home in the Eastern Cape, singing:

Igqirha lendlela nguqongqothwane
Igqirha lendlela nguqongqothwane
Ebeqabel' egqith' apha uqongqothwane
Ebeqabel' egqith' apha uqongqothwane

(isiXhosa: The healer / diviner of the road is the toktokkie; he was just passing by here)

The healer in the song is the toktokkie, the beetle which had accompanied me in my childhood imaginal worlds. But, as is so often the case with a diviner or healer, this gqirha was the herald. The toktokkie and the African elephant share a unique relationship in the Eastern Cape Addo wilderness, and I soon knew that it was the African elephant that was rumbling, resonating its presence. For the next 22 months (synchronistically the length of an African elephant's pregnancy), I steeped myself in the multitude of depths that the African elephant brings to our encounters, as I wrote my first ISST symbol paper. And this journey has continued, taking me into deeper and broader

encounters in my writing. Most recently, following a presentation at the IAJS (International Association of Jungian Studies) conference, I have been deeply honoured to be asked to contribute a chapter to a book to be published by Routledge this year, Jungian Psychology and the Human Sciences. I could never have foreseen back in 2007 that those synchronistic meetings were heralding the unfolding of my expressing myself as an ISST teaching member and published author. A symbolic attitude asks that we are open to what might surprise us, never knowing what that might be!

I am grateful to the many people I've encountered and continue to encounter along the sandplay way, including my patients, sandplay therapists and supervisees who have honoured me by inviting me to share their personal processes and those of their patients. For all of us who answer the calling, sandplay training and practice is both a very deep personal journey and an intimately connecting and expanding one. It is with respect and excitement that I wish each of you well on your own particular journey, and SASTS on its voyage.

January 2024

Makhanda, Eastern Cape, South Africa

All picture supplied by Gwenda



With Martin Kalff.



Teaching in Paarl with Braam.



In 2011 Ruth Ammann met us on South African soil for a week as part of our two year intensive training. She brought within her Swiss German precision, a richness of knowledge and experience to the barren soil of the inexperienced and very young South African Sandplay community.

RAINBOW

In a novel: “All my mothers”, that I had recently read, a teacher read a fictional book: ‘The rainbow rained Us’ where the rainbow broke apart into hundreds of multicoloured mothers spreading children all over the world. In the book mothers were experienced as “slightly textured splashes of gorgeous reds and blues and golds and greens that formed into mother shapes”. Blue mother is free and open and speaks from the heart. Green Mother was serene beside a mossy green waterfall, full of hope and healing. Gold mother seemed to be welcoming her children into her perfect golden garden for a treasure hunt. Purple mother was dutiful and proper and tidy and Red mother held a flaming torch against the night's sky, sometimes frightening. Yellow mother was busy and hard working. And a bit tense.

RED

Ruth loved the colour red. As an architect, she loved colours and shapes and spoke about how the nuances of colour envelopes in us a subtle cloud of feelings, sensations memories and reflections.

HONOURING AN ELDER

She often wore red.
We waited in anticipation...
Then she spoke.
We listened.

She used terms like “circumambulation” and “resonance” and “constellation” and “transcendent function”.

Then we froze.
She turned into Red Mother.

“My God people, you know this!”, she shouted.
We turned into grey children.
Disso ciation.

And then she turned into Gold mother, leading us into the land of treasures of the Jungian Theory and into the depths of the unconscious.

The more it resonated with us, the more the colour returned. We started glowing. And then she was our Green mother bringing hope and healing. And growth. And then connection and integration happened.

She rid Sandplay of sentimentality.

ROOTS

Ruth “rooted” the South African Sandplay group firmly in Jungian Theory, one of the three roots of Sandplay.

Ruth will always be all “our mothers” integrating all the colours into one rainbow. Bringing structure, hope and healing. Her biggest gift and legacy she left to us; is the Gold of finding and listening to the voice of the Self.

The energy in the universe is not held in each particle alone, as scientists originally supposed, but in the space between the particles, that is, the energy in everything is in its relationship to everything else.

Alchemy. May this energy that was created between South Africa and Ruth expand beyond measure. You will be deeply missed.

Article by Elana Burger

Ruth was the ISST Development Group Liaison for South Africa during her presidency. It was Ruth who steered the existing development group's journey towards becoming a society, when she approached me in 2009 to become the ISST local liaison. Over the years, we developed a meaningful friendship, and she guided me in many aspects – personally and professionally – in Sandplay Therapy. We say goodbye to a dear friend and confidante, a special soul who did so much for us in South Africa.

Braam Beetge

I remember Ruth once sharing with us that Mountain People (from the mountainous countries of Europe) with whom she associated, seem to be aloof and cold. The memory of her stern look still scares me. However, the fondest and most imprinted memory I have of her was when she asked us to pull our chairs up and gather around her to discuss and share on what she was teaching. A beautiful tree has fallen. May she blossom in the enchanted garden of her dreams.

Anjenita Hugo



Ruth with Braam Beetge and Elana Burger.

Picture: Nikki Themistocleus

I too remember the cold mountain side of Ruth. But I got to experience a softer, nurturing side too. I was pregnant with my son in our training with her. Ruth reached out to me via e-mail to track his progress, birth and a while after. She even sent a gift to him!

Tania Grobler

Hamba Kahle Umama Ruth

(Go well Mother Ruth)

Gathering around Ruth. Picture: Judith Bredekamp



INDABA

2024 WEBINAR PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 10 April

*Sandplay Journey to Wholeness
through the Alchemical Colours
Black, White and Red*

Presenter: Dr Lynne Ehlers
Clinical Psychologist, STA &
ISST Teaching Member

Thursday, 30 May

*The Observing Ego: A Camera
into the Soul*

Presenter: Carina Conradie
Clinical Psychologist, STANZA &
ISST Teaching Member



SYMBOL SHOWER 16 MARCH 2024

Join us for an online community event
to explore symbols

FREE OF CHARGE
for registered SASTS members



TWO YEAR INTENSIVE TRAINING

JULY 2024 - JULY 2026



Module 1

26-28 July 2024

- Introduction & Fundamentals of Jungian Sandplay Therapy
- Therapist as Instrument

24 CPD points & ISST credits

Module 2

11-14 October 2024

- Jungian/Analytical Psychology
- Therapist and process

32 CPD points & ISST credits

Application via website

ISST announces two Intensive Training Weeks in Portugal

Sandplay training - Group Supervision - Excursions to Pena Palace & the Initiation Well

Experience the richness of an
international learning community

Save the dates !!!

Week 1: November 4-10, 2024

Week 2: November 18-24, 2024

PS
Our own Braam
will be teaching
during the first
week!



ISST
sandplay

International Society for Sandplay Therapy
Associazione Internazionale della Sandplay Therapy
Internationale Gesellschaft für Sandspiel Therapie
國際箱庭療法学会

For more information contact:

ITW2024.ISST@gmail.com

The Symbol Shack

Pagoda

The upwards spiralling pagoda is a quintessential feature of the Southeast Asian horizon.

The structure derives from the ancient Indian stupa that symbolized sacred mountains and was used to enshrine relics or deceased dignitaries. The spread of Hinduism and Buddhism to other parts of Asia saw the structure taking on the characteristics of the local culture's architectural traditions. In Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos, pagodas typically took on a pyramidal or conical shape. In China, Korea, and Japan it evolved into the towering construction most people are familiar with.

A typical Chinese pagoda has a small underground enclosure. Lined with brick or stone, the concealed space below ground may be decorated with murals. Known as the dragon palace of dragon cave, it holds sacred artefacts and funerary objects within one or nesting containers.

The outermost container is covered by the base of the visible upper structure – a solid or hollow turret with multiple tiers in diminishing proportions. Bases were initially simple and often had a rounded shape. Over time, the outer structures evolved into pedestals and elaborate designs that dominated the cavern underneath.

The pagoda incorporates unique design elements such as friction damping and a complex sliding system of interlocking wooden joints, the structural isolation of floors, the balancing of wide eaves and a centred column that is bolted to the rest of the framework. These traits are considered to fortify pagodas against earthquake damage.



Crassula pyramidalis, a succulent better known as Buddha's temple. Picture: Johan Roux

Soaring above the landscape, taller pagodas often attract lightning strikes, which perhaps inspired the belief that the ornamental decoration of the top of the structure can seize demons. Today, the crowning ornamentation is often fitted with lightning conductors.

Some pagodas retained their original spiritual purpose in modern times, while others are now simply admired for their ingenious application of physical laws and their architectural elegance.

According to Buddhist scriptures, the Sanskrit word for a pagoda means tomb. An ancient Buddhist text recounting the last days of Gautama Buddha's life describes how he placed a bowl upside down on another bowl to indicate the way he should be buried. The earliest pagodas served a religious function and acted as vaults for the Sarira – the most holy of Buddhist relics which are crystal beads believed to have formed from the bones of Buddha or the remains of eminent monks after cremation.

In classical Chinese myths, the pagoda figures as both a prison for evil forces, and a weapon against evil. In its positive aspects, pagodas suggest spiritual protection and sacred roots, as well as guidance and progression. The pagoda's elevation offers spectacular views, alluding to a broader perspective and a higher purpose. It may symbolise the transcendent function of the psyche.

The invisible underground cavern has associations to the feminine in its creative and destructive attributes. It symbolically suggests hidden potential and original creation, as well as ensnarement and death. The original rounded upper structures seemed to display dual symbolism related to either the uterus or the sun. Over time, perhaps in conjunction with the rise of cultural patriarchy, the upper structures acquired a more distinct phallic appearance expressing the masculine principle. In its negative aspects, the pagoda may portray suppression of instinct, embodiment and the shadow in favour of the intellectual, spiritual and persona elements of the human experience.

To protect the inner vault and support the weight of several stories, the pagoda's superstructure must be solid. It implies the symbolic constellation of the stable yet dynamic interdependent relationship between ego and Self. Most pagodas have an odd number of floors, while the shape of the floors depict even numbers (quadrangular, hexagonal, octagonal, or round). In the I Ching, odd numbers reflect Yang and even numbers Yin, which manifest in perfect balance in the pagoda. The pagoda superbly expresses the concept of the totality achieved through the balancing of and union of diverging psychic qualities through the continuous process of individuation.

Qinying Shi (Helenda)

Helenda was a student of Imme Thom in China. This article is based on the research for her symbol paper. She graciously gave permission for publication.



Picture: Braam Beetge