



# Gestalt NEWS Foundation

BIANNUAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION NEWSLETTER OF THE GESTALT PSYCHOTHERAPY AND TRAINING CENTER  
SPRING - SUMMER 2017 - ISSUE 25



## Continuing Training Program

# Addictions

page 2

- **Editors note**
- **Press release**
- **Best Sellers IANOS**

pages 3-6

- **Presentations at IANOS**

page 7

- **Free expression**

pages 8-10

- **Continuing Training Program  
"Addictions"**

page 11

- **HAGT: Two days conference**

pages 12-15

- **Gestalt in Organizations**

pages 15-16

- **There is something going on**



With a view to the continues training of Gestalt psychotherapists and mental health consultants this specific program aims to provide a deeper understanding of theory, supervision and the personal development of professionals dealing with a complex, multifaceted and far reaching problem of addiction.

## IANOS ΑΛΥΣΙΔΑ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ

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- IANOS ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ
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**THERE IS SOMETHING  
GOING ON...**

**HAGT: TWO DAYS  
CONFERENCE**

“Man”...

Emotions, pride, satisfaction, completeness, warmth, sharing, horizon, connection, generosity,

contact, dialog, respect, presence, beauty, life, meaning, creativity, “love”...

A heartfelt thanks.

“The Intersubjectivity of Experience in Gestalt Therapy”, the article by Despina Balliou, published in the December 2016 issue of the Epoche scientific journal.

Despina Balliou analyzed the term Intersubjectivity as a corner stone and main principle of the Phenomenology philosophical method, as was first proposed by Edmund Husserl (1931), founder of Phenomenological school of thought that influenced the philosophical approach of a generation of Phenomenologists.

Based on this analysis she explains that the concept of Intersubjectivity can be found at the core of the Gestalt Therapy theory, because Gestalt therapy is a relational and phenomenological approach.

The Phenomenological approach, as the first pillar of Gestalt Therapy, tries to comprehend the human existence and consciousness.

Moving to the second pillar of Gestalt Therapy, The Field Theory (Lewin 1952), we will again find the concept of intersubjective experience. According to the Field theory we are not isolated minds, nor passive recipients of our external world. We are always “from the field” constantly interacting with our environ-



**Katia Hatzilakou**

MSc Social and Clinical Psychology AUT, Gestalt Psychotherapist, Trainer and Supervisor, Member of NOGT, EAGT, ECP Holder, Founding member of Gestalt Foundation

ment, we influence and we are influenced by it.

Finally the third pillar of Gestalt Therapy, the existential dialog, supports the Intersubjectivity of experience. As the article mentions, according to Buber (1970), there is no Self without the Other. There is the “I” of the relational function, the “I-It” and the “I-You” of the same function. The “I” can never exist on its own; people exist in relational dynamics that influence the sense of Self (“I”).

The Epoche’ journal is the product of the collaboration between the Hellenic Society of Dasiensanalysis, the Hellenic Society of Existential Psychology and the Hellenic Focusing Group.



## BEST SELLERS ΕΞΑΜΗΝΟΥ

ΛΟΓΟΤΕΧΝΙΑ



ΙΣΙΔΩΡΟΣ ΖΟΥΡΓΟΣ  
ΛΙΓΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΜΙΑ ΝΥΧΤΕΣ



ΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ ΓΙΑΝΝΕΛΛΗΣ -  
ΘΕΟΔΟΣΙΑΔΗΣ  
ΙΣΜΑΗΛ ΚΑΙ ΡΟΖΑ



JO NESBO  
Η ΔΙΩΣΗ



ΔΗΜΗΤΡΗΣ ΜΠΟΥΡΑΝΤΑΣ  
ΑΝ Μ' ΑΦΗΝΕΣ ΤΗ ΛΕΣΗ  
ΝΑ ΣΟΥ ΜΑΘΩ

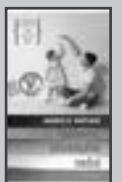
ΜΕΛΕΤΕΣ



ΕΛΕΝΗ ΓΥΚΑΤΖΗ - ΑΡΒΕΛΕΡ  
ΠΟΣΟ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΕΙΝΑΙ  
ΤΟ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΟ;



Γ. Β. ΔΕΡΤΙΑΝΗΣ  
ΕΠΤΑ ΠΟΛΕΜΟΙ,  
ΤΕΣΣΕΡΙΣ ΕΜΦΥΛΙΟΙ,  
ΕΠΤΑ ΠΤΩΧΕΥΣΕΙΣ 1821 - 2016



ΙΑΚΩΒΟΣ Θ. ΜΑΡΤΙΑΝΗΣ  
ΠΛΑΘΟΝΤΑΣ  
ΕΥΤΥΧΙΣΜΕΝΑ ΠΑΙΔΙΑ



GILL EDWARDS  
ΑΛΛΑΞΕ ΤΙΣ ΣΚΕΨΕΙΣ ΣΟΥ,  
ΑΛΛΑΞΕ ΤΗ ΖΩΗ ΣΟΥ



ΒΙΑΧΕΛΜ ΡΑΪΧ  
ΑΚΟΥ, ΑΝΘΡΩΠΑΚΟ!



ΧΡΗΣΤΟΣ ΓΙΑΝΝΑΡΑΣ  
ΝΑ ΕΠΑΝΑΣΤΑΤΗΣΕΙ  
Η ΑΞΙΟΠΡΕΠΕΙΑ



TOLLE ECKHART  
Η ΔΥΝΑΜΗ ΤΟΥ ΤΩΡΑ



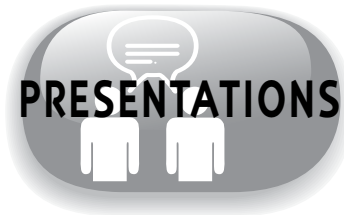
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ΜΙΑΛΑ!... ΓΙΑΤΙ ΔΕΝ ΜΙΑΛΑΣ;

# ΙΑΝΟΣ

ΑΛΥΣΙΔΑ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ

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## «lanos» Cultural Center

### **Notes on Margarita Tarnari's lecture "I meet you-I accept you-I fall in love with you-I commit to you-I relate to you?" (Thessaloniki 21/10/2016)**

Why did I attend this lecture in IANOS? Is it possible that something compelled me to explore something about myself? How can I describe in a small text the elements that are essential to human relationships and especially romantic relationships that occupy our minds so much?

Margarita's lecture proved especially helpful to those in attendance. I focused on the 1+1=3 part, you, me and the relationship. It is crucial to be yourself, not to lose your way and in the meantime, since you both accept each other, to discover a way to coexist in a relationship.

The lecture was based on the Gestalt bibliography and Margarita using examples attempted, in her own way, to explain what is happening.

A number of questions followed and she answered patiently and thoroughly.

As for me, the flow of the lecture kept me alert and focused.

I would like to conclude with Perls' prayer, a fitting Gestalt summation

"I do my thing and you do your thing.

I am not in this world to live up to your expectations,

And you are not in this world to live up to mine.

You are you, and I am I,

and if by chance we find each other, it's beautiful.

If not, it can't be helped."

I would like to thank Margarita for today's experience.

**Kalafati Maria, 2nd year trainee Thessaloniki.**



### **Notes on Antonia Mitsopoulou's lecture "The barrier within", Thessaloniki 11/11/2016**

I was looking forward to this lecture since last year when it was announced but then moved to 2016. So I attended ready to listen and enjoy.

The lecture was based on Spyros Plaskovitis' novel "The Barrier" (To Fragma), (Kerdos, 1960). The title alone eloquently provided all the necessary "instructions" of how to break the barrier inside of us, as it was pointed out by both our moderator Katia Hatzilakou and our narrator Antonis Mavromihalis.

The existential quest is pervasive throughout the novel and the protagonist tries to find who he really is through his process as evident in various parts of the text.



His suggestion in regard to the barrier is to open it up, study it in order to decide whether or not to break it down.

Introspection is a very difficult thing and so is the quest

of a "new beginning" after tearing everything down. Meaning finding out all the things that we want to transcend.

As our lecturer Antonita Mitsopoulou pointed out, it requires breaking down a historical continuum. When we are opening up the barrier stability ceases to exist, life has to start again from zero. This dynamic highlights man as the creator of history rather than a passive spectator.

"Are they in their right mind" is what everyday people wonder, "are they in their right mind to suggest that we break down this barrier on our own, while it stands there where we found it, as it is, at the place where it had always stand, while the engineer doesn't tell as if he discovered a fault or not...The barrier! Isn't it beautiful and nice behind the barrier? Haven't we found our work here, smoothly, in our houses? ...No the engineer must be really crazy to suggest such a thing" (p. 277-278) and they doubt the main characters' suggestion: "Break down this barrier! He pronounced clearly but still in a husky voice. My opinion, my suggestion...I suggest that you should break down this barrier by your own initiative. Break it down he shouted again, because its power cannot be controlled! This is my suggestion...I proceed based on my intuition and science which backs intuition...While there is time, while the initiative is in your hands...(p. 275).

What stays with me from this lecture is the notion of the strength we possess inside of us in order to shatter the barrier. I don't know if the outcome will be good or bad. But definitely it would be something different and of my own choice.

Thank you!

**H. H.**

**Notes on Yianna Yiamarelou's lecture "Support field, a way of navigating a constantly changing world", Athens, 15/12/2016**

When I sat down to write this notes amidst my demanding everyday life I did it as an expression of gratitude towards Yianna Yiamarelou...For everything she taught me, for the things I felt, for everything that I changed in my life, with her help, things that today contribute to me enjoying my life.

On the 15th of December 2016 when the city of Athens was overtaken by protestors I had the opportunity to attend Yian-na's' lecture: "Fields of support in a constantly changing world" which took place on the first floor of the warm and welcoming IANOS cultural center.

I was particularly touched by the part which discussed the trap



that we usually fall into, the trap that confined us in a state of frustration and hardship.

Maybe as a child I wasn't given enough attention and care so now as an adult I can't find the way to take

care of myself and I remain in that vacuum facing a constant hardship.

Let's imagine a situation where a friend calls me up saying she wants to visit and all I have in my house is some pasta and a bottle of wine. If I say "I don't have anything to offer, what am I going to do?" all I would manage is to destroy my evening "burning" a chance to share and interact...But if I stand with the actual situation that I have some pasta and a bottle of wine and a good mood, then I would create the conditions that would allow me to enjoy a lovely evening. So what I did was to find the support field that would help me to feel safety and trust.

So what I need is to be in the Present, because that is where I can act freely. The past is gone and the future is unknown...What does it mean to be in the Present, to stand on my base?

Yianna, I have to say that the image you conveyed of an Odyssey scared by the Siren's voices (=the future) asking his companions to tie him to the mast, helped me realize the necessity of existing in me, in the present, with my abilities finding a way to exploit them to my benefit.

I just conjured an image on my own...two feet trying to stay on earth and a torso moving forward (future=he will say..., I will say...he will not understand) and backwards (past=he had told me...) and forward and backwards again and again with no end, no meaning, no digestion and I already feel out of balance, tired, dizzy...

I need to creatively adjust to the changes I'm faced with, to comprehend who I am and the situation I find myself in; I have to

find a way to cover my need in the given circumstance.

For example when I find myself in a sad situation I need to find also the joy. The way to do that is different for each individual, some will find it in the company of others, someone else in personal involvement, and someone else in volunteering. This in itself gives me a sense of optimism and freedom of choice.

So it is in our own hands to find a way to view CHANGE and DIFFICULTY as a PROBLEM TO SOLVE or a CHALLENGE TO EXPERIENCE. The first approach seems stingy, it provides excuses that the "other" "won't understand", "why discuss the whole thing", it keeps my energy inside and leads to isolation and introversion. It lead to SURVIVAL. The second approach helps me to realize that difficulties force me to become more creative, more inventive and more resourceful. I go out, I meet others, I discuss, I become more confident, self-sufficient and I channel my energy outwards. This approach leads to WELLBEING. And what is the difference between SURVIVAL and WELLBEING? The word survival in Greek includes the word "vios" meaning "lifetime", the period between birth and death. The word wellbeing includes the word "zoi" meaning "life", the way I spend my lifetime.

I was really impressed to find out that the word birthday in Greek "Genethlia" means the birth of exploits. From the moment we are born we are faced with difficulties. Some of which we will overcome, some of which we won't.

There is this sense of continuum...Past brings knowledge, personal experience, other people's experiences, theories. In the present I can absorb and use all these to create something beneficial through communication and relation. I know that the future is coming, as long as I don't feel trapped in it...And this continuum is what makes me looking forward and strong in order to live up to the changes and the difficulties ahead.

Yianna we would like to thank you for this beautiful and meaningful lecture you offered us. Once again I was reminded of our capability and responsibility to ourselves to provide contentment.

**Michalaki Maria**

**Notes on Despina Karpouza's lecture "Raising "good kids"...how this label "good kid" influences the psycho-emotional development of a person from infancy to adulthood", Thessaloniki, 16/12/2016**

Mrs Karpouzas' lecture provided a lot of information especial-



ly informative to people who deal with children and families. It wasn't just a prepared presentation but an accumulation of her experiences working on this subject. Brief and succinct



it didn't prove tiring and allowed for questions in the end. It was a pleasant encounter that provided me with a lot.

**Efthimiadis Yiannis, 2nd year trainee, Thessaloniki**  
**Notes on Despina Balliou's lecture "Balancing between Me, Others, Together..." Athens 19/01/2017**

The welcoming

That evening in my mind I had a vivid depiction of my students' psychic. I was thinking that every child comes to school baring a whole world with him that I know nothing of, in terms of its complexity, quality and dynamic. Each child is confronted with the interaction with a host of different worlds; teachers, school mates. Worlds in themselves realized in certain attitudes and reactions. Therefore each group creates a unique mixture in terms of the complexity of relationships and their outcome. Is this mixture a functional one? Does it facilitate the smoothing out of personal hurdles or does it contribute in their emergence or even worsening the difficulties they face? And where do I stand as a teacher and a human being in relation to the patterns that each child carries from his home?

That was what I was contemplating so when Despina began her lecture on how we move in the world from "Me" to "You" to "Together" I immediately related to her words.

I especially focused on the sentence "if we understand the kind of care that a baby has received from its primary caretaker we will be able to understand and explain the way he consequently relates to others".

It brought to my mind all the alterations of the meaning of "Love". People may love me but smother me, not really see me, may embarrass me, abuse me and still invoke love. They may send mixed messages on my self-sufficiency, so each step I take is laced in quilt or later in life every attempt towards freedom is realized through a fear of commitment.

This kind of misinterpretation leads to an adversarial relationship with our environment where we need to exist and stand out at any given moment.

Despina shed a light on the way and the obstacles facing our connection as a code of a hieroglyphic writing by someone that needs to connect with someone else through his own patterns,



hurdles and needs.

Confluence and egotism was presented with a brilliant visualization. With the audience participation we highlighted our difficulty to stand and see clearly our personal obstacles and the way each of us interprets an image or a concept according to our own experiences and our personal starting point.

I left the lecture keeping alive that sensation and although the risk of differentiation made me nervous I also knew that the "welcoming asymmetry", as Despina beautifully pointed out, is the only way to move towards "Together"

**Mertzani Anna, 1st year Gestalt trainee, M.A in Child Care, Law and Practice, Author, Actress**

**Notes on Marietta Paraschou's lecture "Flirting with the Unknown", Athens 9/02/2017**

"Flirting with the unknown"

A few days ago I had the opportunity to attend a very interesting lecture by a very good colleague. The subject itself, "Flirting with the unknown" was intriguing. I considered it sentimental,



tantalizing something that made me want to explore that "unknown".

The venue helped to create a cozy atmosphere and the audience was eager to listen, learn but also to share their opinions and experiences on the subject.

I enjoyed the opening presentation when the etymology of the word flirting was explained; (Fleurter) which means "to bloom", and the need to flirt was established as a human need regardless age.

As I was observing the audience I realized how that can be so. I felt joy and hopeful, because despite the difficulties each and every one of us face in our everyday life, we still feel the need to connect with something new and sometimes, even unknown.

For some people flirting maybe directed towards a companion or a spouse, for others is an opportunity to meet someone new

to create a new connection or a brief affair, for others it just a way to satisfy their own vanity.

I enjoyed the video that humorously presented the different ways in which different people flirt, as well as the photographic retrospective on how the way we flirt has changed through time and how much the internet has influenced it.

It saddened me to hear that research has shown that in time more and more people resort to manuals, self-help books and “coaches” to learn how to flirt. They also resort to “sexting”, a new way of flirting on the internet, which till recently was foreign to me; people hide behind a PC or a smart phone. As if flirting is something foreign, as if we have lost touch with our own senses. As if it has become easier to expose our bodies rather than go out to the real world and risk exposing ourselves emotionally. A number of the attendees use or have used the internet at some point in their life to make new acquaintances some of which ended up in relationships, friendships and in one case marriage.

Through the conversation that followed I came to realize that the use of the internet may prove beneficial, especially to people who are not so sociable. It may provide an easy and secure way to meet new people and flirt as long as it is used with caution.

The video which presented how our senses function while we flirt combined with the Circle of awareness was really insightful. It brought to mind images of moments when I flirted and I felt what Mrs. Parashou mentioned in her lecture, that “Flirting is the source of life”. So I go on to meet the other with my senses alerted, taking a risk and trusting myself and the prospect of that meeting”

**Tastsoglou Evdokia**

**Notes on Giorgos Diplas’ lecture “The role of Art in the Therapeutic Process”, Athens, 16/03/2017**

ARTIFICIALLY OR NOT...

Giorgos-Art-Therapy-Science...I was certain that somehow all these will connect in the most harmonious way. I felt like that and that was what happened. At least for me because the audience reaction to some of Giorgos’ arguments seemed to differ, in an interesting way. And exactly that which emerged in each one of these cases, to me was art.

Two people may agree by disagreeing and that connection on this commitment- even instantaneously- produces something else, something new, something transformed: a work of art. Not confined in a museum or hidden behind a pompous name. We are all potentially artists in our everyday connection with the “other”, “beyond us”. Not through something tangible but through that meeting of people that creates something new. And I as a

member and companion in this creation, receiving stimuli from objects and subjects not beautiful in themselves but with their beauty emerging through their presence in the connection. And eventually I enjoyed this and I was reminded by lines from an old journal where...

Like colors the shapes...

Change face in the views

I see the same as red, as yellow, as blue,

But it is the most vibrant, the most vivid and the pearllest.

In a background sometimes grandiose, serene, precedent or even...contrived

And I drift unprecedentedly while I observe a child’s drawing that Giorgos has brought with him, a piece of folk art made by disposable materials, the Cycladic statue and the replica of Degas ballerina. They move me, each one in a different way and all of them together; as if Dega had sculpted this as a child, as if he created this piece of folk art as a teenager and as if he traveled the Cyclades and found the inspiration for his ballerina...Like the wandering accordion players who pass outside my window feeling the air with their notes... I don’t know why but the sound of the accordion makes me think of the violin, even though they are not related. And the fat jaunty wanderer with his white as cotton breaded hair makes me think of Vivaldi, even though, again, they are not related. It must be my own mind that wants to clone the sounds throughout the centuries, as if music has lived past lives that vanished.

But what I think is that after all we can experience art in everything we encounter. Let alone in therapy. After all the Asclepion doesn’t stand next to Epidaurus by accident.

**Pantsiopoulou Maria**





## FREE EXPRESSION

"Something like a road map for the workshop "The body in Gestalt Therapy" with Katia as our guide and animator and Elektra as her assistant:

"I look at my drawing framed to

look like me.

A map made of skin with a smudged mind and a soul all over the place.

A drawing so unique and so exceptionally similar to all the others.

Is there the same grass to stand on?

So we could say we played when we were children

Is there the same sky we could look at?

So we could say we lived in the same world

Is there the same emotion to touch?

So we could say we touched each other

Is there the same air we could breathe?

So we could say that, for a moment, we were together

Is there a crossroad we could meet?

Or will we be lost in the happiness of a satisfied ego that there never was anyone like us and the misery of outer loneliness that we never considered anyone worthy to stand next to us even for a moment?"

**Stavrou Konstantina Gestalt psychotherapy trainee.**

### **Maybe a tree lives...somewhere over here...**

(Inspired by the workshop which took place in Stavroupoli, Xanthi in the 2nd annual Gestalt Foundation summer camp, 6-10/7/2017)

Hello mister beaver! Look here two bears. Or is it two race drivers and a Sumo wrestler. Or maybe Cossack dancers or something else.

Through an abstract background we discern and highlight the form.

At the restaurants' porch under a clear sky and an open horizon we set the tables, the paint brushes, the colors and the drawings. Each one chose a drawing. The only guidelines were that each brush had its own style of painting and that we can clean the used brushes with water. And we started to create. All the participants dedicated themselves to their paintings. Some highlighted the form, some described it and some subverted it. They were forms that evoked a double reading. Everyone found its own way to dare to converse with the drawing. The dedication that everyone showed made the limited time seem longer. Aspa monitored the conversation that followed. I was really proud of Aspa! She seemed to be able to moderate with respect and assurance, she listened and she encouraged.

Next day our time in the workshop was even more limited. This surprise lead to a negotiation with Aspa. We were puzzled whether to give more time to drawing or to conversation. We set up the workshop and all scheduling went out the door. By the end of the workshop several participants came in late. The time was running out but no one seemed willing to put down his brush. I felt that the joy of creation swept us away. Somehow creation defeated time. Again Aspa moderated the conversation and within a limited time she gave the ample space for everyone to express themselves.

On my side the fact that drawing found its way in our summer camp was very important. I observed the power of the medium in the visualization of everyone's expression. I was impressed by the clarity in the drawings and the way children expressed themselves, by the boldness of the adults, the consistency in the participants wording and by the joy of creation.

Let's keep the drawings and the cloths to be reminded of the wisdom of this forest...till we discover the wisdom of another forest on the next summer camp.



**Hatsipashali Sophia**

### **Weaving my connection with the world**

(Inspired by the workshop in Elpidohori 7-9/10/2016)

People come and go. They are born, they grow up and they die.

A circle swirling and repeated. But once in a while they stop. They stand, they listen, they understand, they deepen...

We\* in Elpidohori, stood together under the olive trees and the holy oaks. Surrounded by ancient mountains, fertile orchards, rich olive groves and mellow vineyards.

We listened together to the earth beneath and the air around us.

We rolled in the dirt and laid on the rocks, we bathed in the full moon.

We became of each other's presence, we felt ourselves, we tried, and we gave and received truth.

And we grew deeper and wider like the earth that welcomed us. And we grew taller and we grew roots like the trees that trusted us.

People come and go.

They are born, they grow

up and they die. And some time they are reborn! And then the gestation is longer...

\*Despina, Nia, Athena, Claire, Evgeniya, Maria, Alexandra, Helene, Despina, Dora, Lydia, Anthi



**Giannaki Alexandra**



## A workshop with Anastasis Mavromihalis

My presence in this workshop served the purpose of reconnecting with my Gestalt training since in the almost, six months that past since I finished my basic training in GF I hadn't the opportunity to find the time or the way to be active in the schools program.

For almost 10 years now I'm working with addictions and I can say that I'm well trained and informed on the subject. But what I think I was lacking was the view of the Gestalt approach on the subject of addiction.

My personal sense is that psychotherapy doesn't treat addicts as people whose therapy is too difficult to be approached. Therefore I needed to see what the Gestalt view is and how and whether my knowledge of other approaches can meet and connect with its theory.

The seminar was introductory and the main goal was for the participants to meet as a team because we would have to work together not only in theoretically but also experientially. So in we started with a few acquaintance "games", as I would like to call them that helped the team to relax. Is something that I like to do at the start so I can work with the team? We built a warm and relaxed atmosphere with open communication and experimentation with something new since most of the participants hadn't work with addiction therapy. Following we had a theoretical presentation of the course of addiction to substances, of the psychosocial model that analyzes the factor that contribute to the establishment of the addiction and we watched a video which particularly described how a person loses himself



in the substances. I found all these very interesting although for me personally they were familiar.

For the experiential segment we dealt with our own addictions, however each one of us defines and signifies them. We shared

# Addictions



our concerns and parts we feel as addictive that block us and keep us in a repetitive circle of behaviors that lead to nowhere. In small groups we tried to give our own definition of the concept of addiction and through that we found the common issues we face. Finally we observed number of visuals that highlighted aspects of addiction and we discussed them in order to redefine our own addictions. It was a fruitful exchange with honesty, frankness, openness and sharing with all.



# in our Life



Personally I found myself viewing a familiar subject under a new point and wanting to approach it in a way that differs from the one I was trained in my work and I feel that in this first try I succeeded. I felt really content and looking forward to the next workshop.

**Koutsou Maria**

## “Working with Addictive Behaviour in Gestalt Psychotherapy” workshop with Peter Schulthess

I met Peter just before the start of the seminar. What impressed most from his figure was his piercing blue eyes that exude calmness and clarity; Wise eyes, I thought to myself.

As I entered I heard some of my colleagues speaking enthusiastically about the chance they had to work with him again and as I heard them I thought that this person with his experience will be able to offer us a lot. And that was the moment when I heard him say “I don’t have a certain plan let’s see how it will go”

The magic statement! Each time I hear that what follows is



exiting. And it was!

Before I focus on the most important aspect of my experience I would like to give a general assessment for the 3day workshop. As for the theoretical part it was thorough and analytical. We worked a lot on a personal level and his way of working helped me with regard to my own personal open accounts and trauma. Furthermore responded to the expectations I had reading the form that the school sent. The last day so the whole team come closely together and that wasn’t only my opinion but rather the concluding comment of all participants. We wished we had a few more days...

I would like to share a personal incident and I would like to express my gratitude to Peter and the rest of the team.

On the second day of the workshop I was given the news that a person whose presence stigmatized my life had passed away. An open account from my past that defined my choices in terms of “relationships” and because of that fear and suspiciousness always followed me. Nevertheless I had camouflaged this relationship under the guise of friendship. A few days before this person told me that he was battling an advanced stage cancer.

When I came to school that day I was in denial and I shared that with the team. Following Peters encouragement I found myself in the middle of the circle frustrated or rather lost with mixed feelings succeeding one the other. Anger, sadness, bitterness, grief and painful memories. In the meantime I struggled with the fact that I couldn't be there for his funeral to say goodbye because I was in Athens and even if I was back in Cyprus I wouldn't be ready to say Goodbye.

The personal work I did in the circle helped me to regain my composure. Peters' words was balsam for my wound and the way he handled it comforted me and gave me strength and hope. A week after the workshop I was able to visit his grave and close that chapter forever.

I would like to thank Peter and the team for their understanding, support and care they provided. It was a difficult moment and I couldn't handle it on my own. I feel lucky I was with them.

**Kiriakidi Stavri**

### **“The intersection of addiction, trauma and shame”**

I feel immensely grateful having the opportunity to attend this seminar and meet in person Armin Baier, one of the sweetest and open people I have ever met, a supervisor and Gestalt therapist currently director of the Gestalt Therapy Institute in Los Angeles.



Besides him sharing his valuable experience on his work with addictions, Armin helped me to gain a better understanding on the feelings of guilt and shame.

I figured the connection inside me using the inferences as a guide to my progress in both a personal and professional level. My shame take a lot of forms. Many times it hides behind my wish to hide, to stay silent and stand motionless. I want to stand alone in a corner and avoid being seen. Sometimes I blush

and I start speaking incessantly. Sometimes I don't allow any expression to my face in order to not let others “see” me. I fell transparent and I'm afraid that if they decode me I would expose secret parts within me that I don't want anyone to know. My shame has a voice. Always strict, it speaks to me to remind me of my mistakes and label me with unkind adjectives.

Shame is not something simple. Its toxic and it organically distracts us. Anyone who experiences it feels like he is not worthy to belong to humankind. He feels rejected by those around him and by himself and of course unworthy of respect. As if something very deep inside of him, the very core that allows him his human essence, is brutally torn in such an extent that he is left hanging in a deep existential loneliness, adrift, miles away from everyone else.

He is governed by a deep conviction that something is wrong, something is wrong inside of him, he feels that he is wrong and he can't understand how this has begun and where it leads him, rendering him incapable of finding the form. Because there is no story that can be told, even to ourselves, in order to explain that king of shame. And the fear of others seeing that “defect” and judge us becomes even greater. Sometimes is this shame that leads us to substance abuse and any kind of addictive behavior. It same that comes from experiencing a childhood trauma, a difficult memory or it can even come from the experience of the substance abuse in itself. The purpose always remains the wish to mitigate the pain, in order to eventually bring the coveted release and carelessness.

And that is where Gestalt therapy comes in to illuminate awareness and through the process of relation to provide the necessary support, to bring shame to light and to brake its mystical curse and give space for breathing. In the openness. In the change. In the experience of the self in the “here and now”, in his entirety, incorporating those pieces that were left stranded in the cold, timeless darkness.

Because when fear, whose aim is to motivate, gets mixed up with deep shame then it leads to anger. The sorrow embedded in shame becomes depression. And as this shame was initially created with a relationship the same way but this time with a therapeutic relationship, it can be healed.

**Liakaki Harietta, psychologist, psychotherapist, MSc in Counselling Psychology, Gestalt Foundation senior, EMDR.**



## HAGT TWO DAY CONFERENCE

The HAGT two day conference on the subject "Myth or Safety; the uncertainty and vulnerability in the therapeutic process" concluded on Sunday 27/11/2016 at 18:00.

The two day conference was hosted in the Lecture Hall of the Old Building of the Philosophy Department at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, on November Saturday 26 & Sunday 27 2016 between 10:00-18:00. The program included lectures, presentations and roundtables given by Gestalt Psychotherapists as well as Therapists and Trainers representing different approaches.

The Gestalt Foundation founding members actively participated in this event with Katia Hatzilakou as moderator for the roundtable discussion on the subject "When our sense of Safety is crumbling..." and speakers Victoria Askaridou, psychologist (Traumatheapy, CRM), Lia Zografou (Drama therapy), Sonia Lazaridi (Psychoanalysis), Antonia Konstantinidou (Gestalt Therapy), Vicky Seligouna (Person Centered approach); Yiana Yiamarellou as moderator for the roundtable "Educating in Vulnerability" and speakers Despina Balliou (Gestalt approach), and psychologists Tania Anagnostopoulou (Psychodynamic Approach), Virginia Ioannidou (Systemic Approach), Katerina Miravali (Cognitive-Behavioral Approach).

There two day conference was met with wide participation and interest by psychology students and students of other humanities departments as well as by Gestalt Psychotherapists and Therapists and Trainers of other approaches. Notable presentations come on the subjects of "The vulnerability of the therapist facing his loneliness", "Vulnerability as a common ground for patient and therapist", "When vulnerability meets addiction in the therapeutic process". "Educating in Vulnerability" etc.

### HAGT November 26-27 2016

For the second year the HAGT two day conference took place in Thessaloniki. Above all it provided people from the Gestalt community an outlet to meet and share their experiences, their thoughts and knowledge on Gestalt psychotherapy with other notable approaches. Within the HAGT framework the Gestalt Foundation Alzheimer Supervision, moderated by Katerina Simpani and Melina Makridou and observers Maria Giannopoulou, Naoum Liota, Aspasia Zigaki, Afroditi Tzika and Evagelia Havaki co-created images of experience through their personal point of view that they shared.

We would like to extend our thanks to the members of the supervision for this encounter as well to the Gestalt Foundation for supporting and trusting in the whole process. And another great thank you to each and every one of you, first and foremost for your presence and warm feedback for our effort.

Below you will find listed a part of the presentation through my viewpoint in order to further share it with those who hadn't had the opportunity to be with us.

Thank you very much!

**Goutzioti Ioanna**

## 2nd Two day Conference, November 26-27 Thessaloniki

Safety, relation and relating...

"Dementia is when at the end of your life, you relate to your past.

To fight now for what you hadn't fought then.

To shout now for what you hadn't shout then.

To express yourself freely now for what you hadn't expressed then.

A big Psychodrama with you in the leading role"

By Frans Meulmeester

(Francesetti, Gecele & Roubal, 2013, p.341)

And the relationship?

Relationship is something complete, finished, closed ... a relationship provides certainty, safety. But when I relate with the other it involves meeting between the two of us, as strangers, a simple overnight connection were the next morning we say our goodbyes. Who knows what tomorrow may bring? And I'm scared and maybe you are also scared, so much that we want to make sure we do. There is insecurity in relating... (Osho, 2000). Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951) mention that what we usually refer to as "safety" is the non-sensual part, that diminishes the danger of the unknown involved in any exiting satisfaction. Felling secure in any situation makes me lose interest, it lets it become unnoticeable. Often times as a secure person I don't realize that (Perls, Hefferline and Goodman 1951). And behind that security I place myself in a state of immovability, which is nothing more than my experienced view, as I refute my own life and I hide it (Baselar, 2007). But even in this immovable safe and familiar stand I'm confronted with the dilemma to either face my unfinished business or to trust in the self-regulation and get involved in a continuous sense of danger of a painful failure. (Dietrich, 2013).

In 2016 I started to observe a group of dementia patients where I was impressed by Mrs. Eleftheria. One day, through the fairytale "The tree that gives" she shared with the group and said: "I am a dark case, I don't have a beginning or an end, my mother left me..." she didn't say anything else and remained silent. And in our next group meetings she remained silent... maybe it was just that moment, that moment of Now that as Perls mentions, someone might feel secure (Perls, 1969). And she didn't need a lot of words to share the depth of her truth... only a few words were enough for her to express publicly her private stuns, to communicate with others but also with herself, offering herself a sense of stability (Merlo-Ponty, 2009). And I'm wondering why did I chose Mrs. Eleftheria for this presentation, maybe because I managed only a few times to forgo my security and share my personal truth. But maybe mainly because through Mrs. Eleftheria I remembered how I felt when my parents were leaving me when I was a child...

Why?

"The soul selects her own society

Then shuts the door

To her Devine majority

Present no more (1862)" (Dickinson, 2004, p. 17)



## GESTALT IN ORGANIZATIONS

### Leadership as a process

Approaching leadership under the spectrum of Gestalt and business psychology.

What does leadership mean to me? What does I mean for

someone else?

What are the attributes of a good leader? What are my characteristics as a leader?

When do I decide to lead? What makes me want to follow someone else?

These and a lot of other were the questions we were called upon to discuss and manage in regard to the concept of leadership in the first meeting of the Gestalt in Organizations workshop, moderated by Giorgos Stamatis.

He started the workshop with a "circular" first meeting, game-exercise, which helped to reduce the initial awkwardness and lead us to introduce ourselves and declare some of our attributes to all. It was followed by a conversation on what our expectations and motivation were as a group and then we previewed an extract from a film which featured a powerful leading figure. The first day ended with a discussion on the types of leaders and the Gestalt approach which views leadership as an ongoing process based on interacting and affected elements. It is a different approach to the old one which viewed leadership as an entity bearing specific characteristics.

The following days we had the opportunity to go back and take note of the definition of leadership and discuss the reasons why we follow a group. Through a combination of exercises and discussions we reached the crucial part of recognizing the decision making process in each one of us. We contemplated, each on his own, how we make these decisions and how Gestalt helps as to learn how to make decisions according to the situation we are facing without following preexisting models in order to have the opportunity to decide what is best for the moment we are experiencing.

We discussed the importance of a leader being able to influence and make decision. We talked about how vision is defined, the principles and goals of an organization and how is that influenced



by the principles and personal relationships of the people who make up that organization.

We learned about the "Psyche of Leadership", the passive and active resistance and we "played" with the city of axes. Finally we referenced cases from our own professional lives and how Gestalt can influence our working environment and the Ten Words of a Gestalt counselor.

I left the 3day workshop keeping in mind everything we discussed, feeling glad that I met people of different ages and experiences that I was able to share thoughts and experiences with. The advice that I will mostly keep in mind is face the situations I come across as they are and not as I wish they are or as I believe they ought to be. This power to face reality encourages me for the things to come.

*Varvarigou Nikol*

### GESTALT IN ORGANIZATIONS – Athens January 20, 2017

It is the second year for the "Gestalt in Organizations" workshop and I make the trip from Thessaloniki to Athens to attend with an even greater enthusiasm. It is the second year and a group half made up of familiar faces and half from new bringing a new



dynamic and "personality". It is the second meeting on the subject "Group dynamics and Gestalt in Organizations", with Demi Moraitou as speaker.

Writing about this meeting I find myself, once again, contemplating that I attended an absolutely experiential seminar that helped me to realize in the most direct way the concept of "Group Dynamics". I absorbed the theory which acquired substance in all the everyday conditions of a group. Joy, laughter, game, coexistence, argument, difficult interaction, unmitigated declarations, situations where one speaks and the others don't "listen".

And I will explain myself...

We have discussed the stages of the life of a group, about the issues I control when I join a group as a Gestalt consultant, about

each member assuming responsibility, about the patterns that emerge and demand our attention both as members of the group and as consultants and about a lot of other theoretical aspects. And then it came.

THE SUBVERSION!!!!

“Split into two teams and within an hour spending a specific amount of time you have to prepare a salad and a fruit salad for our lunch and coffee break. Your time starts now and these are the teams...”

Immediately my group comes together and we go to the next room to converse. We all speak simultaneously and we look at each other but we don't waste a word, an idea, a look. We are determined to make it on time and produce the perfect salads and within all this brainstorming I observe that no one is interested to assume the role or bestow the role of “the leader” to anyone. We continue to speak and we very quickly decide on our part but when it comes to the crucial decision on what ingredients to use we (finally!!!) start to argue. Everyone begins to focus on “his own recipe” and “his own opinion” and “his own choice”, totally realistic and usual for as all. And as we spontaneously focus on “our own”, equally spontaneously we begin to resort on “what is your proposal?” and to “this is also a good idea. Do you think we could change the recipe that Evgenia proposed and make it with these ingredients?” and also “time is running out, those supposed to go

attention we I speak, how do I communicate with the members of the group, am I open to listen and coordinate, do I have the patience and persistence to listen and coexist, do I assume the responsibility as a member of the group or as a consultant, do I stand in the HERE and NOW of the both the group and my own or do I remain on “my own”.

Ultimately these salads filled me with thoughts, realization, and knowledge and provided a special experience-workshop. It is really a pity that I can't put to paper what our salads really tasted, but I urge anyone who is reading this to try the experience. You cannot imagine the “ingredients” you'll find within yourself and the cascade of emotions and feelings you will experience. Demi and the groups, thank you very much for the great salads!!!

P.S. Demi gave me a phrase as a present and I want to share it with you

“Nothing is implied, Evgenia. We make everything into words”

**Makridou Evgenia, Agriculturist**

### **Business Diagnostics (or else an ode to subjectivity)**

As Gestalt consultants, how do we approach an organization? How do we recognize what is required for the organization or the



to the grocer should leave now”.

And in this created chaos, which of course has its rules and its information, each member of our team begins to deal with its own part and we also begin to discuss with each other. And of course steadily one person repeats the phrase “maybe the olive oil is not good?” Twenty minutes later and still in a chaotic situation trying to work together to finish the task we realize that the olive oil is indeed not good!!! Panic ensues but we find a solution and although we lost a lot of time we came up with a great salad...

And now is a good time to think about, connecting to the theory and also myself as a member of a team, how does it feel to speak and the people around you don't pay attention; how does it feel, as a consultant, to work with a group that doesn't pay

group? What are the directions and guidelines that the Gestalt approach provides us with? How do we work with representation to give meaning to the dynamics of a group?

In this 3rd meeting of the series of Gestalt in Organization workshops that took place on February 12-12, 2017 we trained, discussed and contemplated on the subject of diagnosing groups/organizations. Frans Meulmeester was our guide.

Mind-Body-Senses-Emotions. Four unique tools each with its own power and impact. Which do I invoke the most, which do I use the most and which do I leave dormant? Our first experiential exercise asked us to contemplate on which prevails over the other.

As a result we came an extensive discussion on one of the basic Gestalt principles, that o awareness. How in order to expand our

awareness, we embrace our curiosity and we try to examine what is happening to us without criticism? Keeping in mind that what is happening to us is related to the Field and is the result of the



interaction with it.

Talking about awareness we focused on the importance of observing what is happening, recording, hypothesizing, checking our hypothesis and confirm them or reject them moving to another. On how important it is to accept our subjectivity, assuming the responsibility of our hypothesis and checking our conclusions.

In the following days we referred analytically to the theory of the Gestalt method and specifically on the part of connection and the obstacles that might hinder it such as confluence and projection. I vividly remember the discussion on the diagnosis of how an organization connects and how interesting it was to examine how that might work and also how this can be hindered. It was very helpful trying to find why these obstacles were created, maybe searching for an unexpressed need that needs an outlet.

On the last day by bringing cases from our own work we continued our search for awareness experimenting with the method of representation (constellations). Through this exercise we flirted and contemplated on reality and the concept of reality through the prism of Gestalt. Once again the exoneration of subjectivity functioned in a beautiful cathartic way.

The conclusion of the 3day workshop left me calm and at the same time troubled. Troubled as to the process and the approach of diagnosis and calm by the awareness and acceptance of my own subjectivity.

*Varvarigou Nikol*

### **GESTALT IN ORGANIZATIONS “The Art of Change”, Athens March 17, 2017**

The GIO program for the 3day workshop reads: «The Art of Change through the Gestalt viewpoint», lecturer Ioanna Rizou and as I read it I think about the use of the word “ART” in connection with change. I’ve never thought about it that way.

I arrive late on a Friday evening to find the group taking a break. I arrive troubled because I consider change to be a deep personal issue for me and I think that I might be spared for the Friday ac-

tivities since it is late and we will leave art for Saturday.

But my expectations are not met since in the last 30 minutes Ioanna utters the perfect sentence: “CHANGE IS NOT MANAGABLE. MY ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHANGE IS MANAGABLE”, and in plain words “This is something that happens. So who am I going to be and how in what is happening and what can do in this situation?” Two sentences that stress me and upset since they highlight my personal responsibility before change. And the realization becomes even harder when this is an issue I have to deal for myself in order to be able to discuss it-recognize it –name it in a group environment in my work as a consultant.

In the next two days with the help of Ioanna and the rest of the group I begin to approach the art of change. And in the same time, obligingly, I come face to face with Evgenia and the work group and I follow their steps in order to approach their issues. Because eventually Evgenia with herself is a group, with her resistance, her dysfunction when things don’t go her way, her established attitudes that make for a difficult art to break them in order to give space and light to a creative adjustment that would bring satisfaction.

The group need in every HERE and NOW to check if it maintains connection with its goal and process, if it cover its needs, if any member carries with him unfinished business, if the energy of the group flows, becomes action or if it stumbles and is fully blocked. In every HERE and NOW I always keep in mind that I view the condition of a group from the start, looking on anything as something new and not taking the circumstances and conclusions as a self-evident and the same in all “similar” processes. And it is the same that I need to do in the HERE and NOW for myself.

What goes through my mind is the thought on many experiences I had with groups that either I’m a member or I’m moderating and I realize that when I find myself stressed I consider the condition as “them” and “me” regardless of the position I’m in. But at the same time me as Evgenia is very possible to stress somebody else or the whole group who things accordingly in terms of “she” and “us”. And this is also a wager, wither we can allow all the different personalities of the group to exist and express themselves; to use each part-member of the group with its own capabilities and work to complete the goal of the group; and also keep in mind that I can be difficult and frustrating for others and of course they will get angry at me exactly as I do with them. That I difficult for Evgenia and for any group!

Something that was said during this 3day workshop brings me closer to my real responsibility opposite myself and my work as a member or a moderator of a group. Every single thing is so informative and at the same time experiential that fills me with a sense of satisfaction and awareness.

I would like to thank Ioanna for the crash course on the art of change and the rainbow at the end!! I would like to thank her for the trust, understanding and respect she showed to those difficult “pieces” of team “Evgenia” that I dared to expose. I would like to thank each and every one from the group for helping me



start my education on the art of change in such a supporting environment.

**Makridou Evgenia, Agriculturist**

## Conflicts

Since early on I was trained in Gestalt psychotherapy and it has become for me more than a favorite work but also way of life. The connection, the boundary, dialogue, the other, the conflicts. But also the respect, parity and ethic.

This year I attended the seminar on the Gestalt approach in Organizations and Businesses which concluded with a 3day workshop in the beginning of May.

I attended that seminar trying to resolve an inner conflict. What does Gestalt, an anthropocentric approach; have to do with business? And at the same time: How can something that provides humanitarian work can be "businesslike"? Prejudice and deeply rooted beliefs that are often confirmed by what I listen and see about "the cruel world of business" and its dedication to profit that can flatten human beings and their values.

At the same time in my work, that has to do with humanitarian aid, I come across cruel attitudes and a solidarity that is limited only towards the weak but not towards the different, the other.

Two extremes. Humanism, sacrifice and contribution opposite hierarchy, competition and profit. And all these in a time of crises that has led to extreme positions, attitudes and actions, to polarization and conflict focused on profiteering against others or to the annihilation of both...

I couldn't resolve this internal conflict that both in my work and life (and even in the here and now of the workshop) becomes interpersonal (something that I already suspected). And it also became clear through theory, exercise and the cases we presented from our own various working environments, that the unspoken and hidden conflicts, deflation, rushed solutions and compromise can contributed to a blocked energy in both the work place and the interpersonal relationships. As a result efficiency falls regardless of the area, services, humanitarian aid or sales.

And I believe that this will be evident to all of us and our society if we just observe it. Unspoken, covered conflicts that remain unresolved for years ware down the dynamics of our society and its evolution.

I couldn't resolve this conflict. But I show an opening. Gestalt paves a way. A way where these two collide according to Gestalt that supports and proves how we can avoid to escalate a conflict into a clash but instead create a space for a strong connection. A space of evolution and growth.

So Gestalt focused on the process and the relation paves a road that I traveled for a while and I allowed my conflicts, internal and interpersonal, to help me evolve. A road where parity can lead to profit. A road where growth requires trust and respect. A road where I show that hope in organizations and entrepreneurship can be viewed as part of humanitarian work.

I would like to thank Giorgos, Demi, Ioanna, Frans and the group for this valuable experience.

**Alexia Ioanna**

## THERE IS SOMETHING GOING ON

### Colorful Xanthi hosts and embraces Gestalt

It is so beautiful to live in a small quiet, colorful town! It is so beautiful to share and promote the Gestalt psychotherapy

approach with my friend and colleague Stavroula Sehlidou in our town.

I'm going to talk to you about the Folk and History Museum of Xanthi that plays host to my self-awareness groups, seminars and lectures. It is the 6th consecutive year that the Folk Museum, "The Gem" of our town, the building that adorns the old town keeping alive the town's history with its memories reflected on its walls, has played host to our self-awareness groups.

The Museum was founded in 1975. The building an exhibition itself is a historical evidence of the social and economic life of a city that flourished in the early 20th century. The Folk

and History Museum of Xanthi is the institution which acquired, preserved and explored the elements of the city's modern history. It communicates exposing the material evidence of people and their environment, which contributed to the formation of the local character and aims at continuing the study of these, the education and the entertainment of visitors.

And somehow like that under the framework of activities and workshops that the Museum offers to the people of Xanthi, the self-awareness groups were incorporated. The museum's history becomes itself a field that allows participants to focus on a different level on their needs. The nobility and respect that reside

in the mansion inspires and reminds that what stand in time with quality needs care. The layout of the Museum affects the memory and awakens memories of another period and resonates with the nostalgia for a time of warmth, sweet smells of coffee brewing, children's feet running up the wooden stairs and it seems like our soul sooths listening to the soft piano



playing at the back.

Many times I felt its structure supporting me in the process of the group, I felt it motivating and aligning with me in our effort to contribute effectively to the demands of the group to change and find a new Self.

I feel happy and honored by this wonderful collaboration and I would like to thank the curators for embracing and hosting our self-awareness workshops. It feels like the "Then and There" of history is incorporated to the "Here and Now" of reality. Like the Past meets the Present anticipating a better Future...

**Katsikidou Marina, Psychologist, Gestalt Psychotherapy graduate**

### **Collaboration with the Foundation of Thracian Art and Tradition in Xanthi**

The Foundation of Thracian Art and Tradition is a non-governmental, non-profit body active in the field of education and culture. It was founded in 1998 aiming at the wider promotion of the cultural capital of the region while developing infrastructure and human resources. In the course of its operation, it has become a model of a cultural entity by exploiting, exemplary restoration and management of preserved monuments of historical and aesthetic interest of the industrial heritage. The exhibitions of distinguished artists, the lectures of distinguished speakers, the concerts, the multidisciplinary seminars, and the opportunities for promoting Thracian artists, the organized interven-



tions for disadvantage groups, educational activities, the enriched learning environment and the parallel activities in training workshop define the identifying elements of the organization.

The Foundation organizes workshops for children and adult, such as painting workshops, photography, creative employment workshop, capoeira, Pilates, dance classes, ancient Greek, hagiography, wood carving, art history and many others, enriching their overall activities always in touch to the current needs of the local community.

Within the framework of our cooperation since 2009 I'm honored and privileged to consistently moderate personal development groups as well as self-awareness groups. We organize seminars and lectures on psychosocial and psychotherapeutic issues. We enjoy a wonderful cooperation and a space always open to new ideas.

The Foundation of Thracian Art and Tradition venue occupies the expertly renovated building that was used as a Tabaco Warehouse in during the previous century. The warm connection of the people who joyfully and creatively work to achieve such positive results complement the aesthetic beauty of the place.

**Sehlidou Stavroula**



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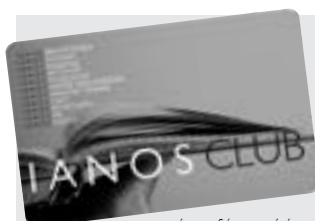
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