

# Art of myself

Creating deeper engagement with the self through art



A Final Project Contextual Essay  
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of the Requirements  
for the Diploma in Process Work

by  
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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	5
Abstract	7
Following my process	9
The Creation of my exercises	13
Process Work terminology	14
My Personal Experience of Using my Exercises	
Let's work my 'sweet' critic (Amy's exercise)	18
Exercise number 1 painting-body symptoms	20
Exercise number 2 poem-dream	22
Exercise number 3 sculpture-empty mind	23
Exercise number 4 cards-problem in CR	25
Exercise number 5 collage-1st memory	27
Art inner work retreat	29
Workshop participants' artwork, experience, and process	
White	30
Green	33
Blue	36
Red	39
Yellow	42
Black	46

Findings, thoughts, limitations, and conclusion	49
Contribution to the field	51
References	52
Appendix	
Exercise 1	53
Exercise 2	55
Exercise 3	56
Exercise 4	57
Exercise 5	58
Consent form	59

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I'm here because, nearly fifty years ago, a man called Arnold Mindell, worked hard with himself and psychology theories to create a methodology/philosophy that was meant to make my soul feel in the right place, years later. I thank him, and his wonderful partner in life and Process Work, Amy Mindell, who took all that knowledge and worked on dimensions that I so much needed, creating amazing books to teach me through them, and help me expand my soul as a person, and a therapist such as, "The dreaming source of creativity," "Metaskills" and "Alternative to therapy".

In 2016, their incredible students/my beloved teachers, who I can't thank enough, started with a huge amount of effort the training program for the diploma in Process Work at the Process Work Hub in Greece, in a safe, cozy environment full of acceptance, love and support. They became what I was always searching for - human models in life. I feel the need to share their names: Lily Vassiliou, Lena Aslanidou and Alexandra Vassiliou. These 3 women made psychology feel like home and let me evolve to the woman and therapist I was meant to be, in such an enjoyable way. They, with their power, brought together so many amazing personalities to teach us, and guide us through these last six years, in person, or through zoom. Thank you, thank you, thank you. You made that happen!

I must thank again Lily separately because, as my live supervisor and final project advisor, she taught me more than Process Work, as a theory, could have ever taught me. I learned through her example to be who I am with no fear, admit my growing points and grow through them, trusting this is my path and dealing with all my strict critics who demanded from me to be unrealistically perfect. She was also there as my study committee member, along with Gill Emslie, to guide me and support my study journey helping me reach the end of this process. I can't thank you enough.

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I keep Rhea Shapiro for the end. Rhea, you hold a special place in my heart. You were a therapist and so much more for me. I have no words to describe how safe to grow I felt in your “arms”. Your acceptance, trust and support will never be forgotten. I feel so lucky to have you on my path, celebrating life together.

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## Abstract

This is an educational project with the content being creative practice.

The purpose of this project, initially, was to create five inner work exercises based on art, which would be used to do a two-day art inner work workshop for six individuals to participate in, and have the opportunity to use art, have fun, and explore their inner worlds.

In the process, I also used these exercises with myself, in order to deal with the voice of my inner critic who judged my way of doing a final project and blocked me every time I tried to express my thinking process.

Using the five exercises with my own inner experience, I got the help that I needed, deepening my experience of dealing with my inner critic, finding ways, energies, and voices to support me in this journey.

My exploration using these exercises became a big part of this project and has been included.

After creating the exercises, I reached out through the phone to six individuals from my wider circle of friends and acquaintances, informing them about the two-day art inner work workshop, letting them know in a few words, to what they would be committing, and inviting them to participate.

I did the workshop at my home-office space. When the people came to my place, I started the process with a consent form, which they all read and signed. Next, I split them into dyads through a game, so they would find and have their partner, with whom to share and get support, if they needed, throughout the whole process. In the beginning, we used some visualizations, through which I guided them, in order to meet their inner critics who might arise, as well as a new part of themselves that could support them, if the critic started to speak to them, and help them stay more connected to joy and their spontaneity.

We used a lot of art materials for the exercises, which I had provided. I guided them through the whole process of the exercises, and after each one, they took some time to think, write down, if they needed, and share with one another their findings and feelings with their partners.

At the end of each day, we sat all together as a group for sharing time. They each showed their creations and talked about their processes or difficulties, getting some feedback. The sharing was always only about things they felt safe and wanted to share.

When the two-day workshop ended, they took some time with themselves and afterward emailed me how this experience was for them.

Through this process I was happy to find out that people, without necessarily having any therapy experience, could, through art and simple inner work steps, gain access to hidden, until then, parts/voices/energies. Not only could they meet these parts, but also had the chance to experiment with them, play them out, embody them, interact with them, fight or enjoy them, and discover their perspective.

This project offers the reader five inner work exercises using art, which they can use to explore and discover experiences, which are further from their awareness, and needed aspects of their wholeness.

The detailed description of the use of these art inner work exercises with my own inner experiences, offers the reader a deeper understanding of the exercises, as well as aspects of the theory of the Process Work paradigm. The reader can also see in the description how Process Work tools, and knowledge that I gained through using these exercises, supported me in this journey, and played a crucial part in forming and performing them.

This project also offers an inside look into how people from varying backgrounds, and of different ages, used them, enjoyed them, and gained access to their self-teaching through this simple and fun procedure.

## Following my process

### How everything started:

I'm sitting in the middle of my room feeling desperate. Months have passed and I still feel unable to start my final project. I feel scared of a possible failure. I fear my writing won't be interesting, it won't be enough, or at least fun to read. My whole life I remember myself feeling desperate over blank pages. I felt I wasn't talented enough to write anything, even to fill in an application form for something. I was scared that when that paper ended in someone's hands, I would be completely humiliated. I have believed so deeply that writing is a skill that I don't have, that even after so many years, the white page makes me freeze with fear.

To fully understand my fear, I travelled back to my school years when I first heard teachers screaming over my essays, telling me that they were a disappointment; that my letters were malformed or I misspelled too much, and that the way I expressed my beliefs was wrong.

That same freeze, I feel, when I am about to sing or dance in front of people. A huge critic arises and screams at me "Stooooop, you are not talented enough, and humiliation is around the corner." Again, if I go back to my childhood, I can recall millions of moments when people I trusted, loved, or admired told me that I moved in a funny or clumsy way, or that my voice was so out of tune that it would break the window and that I should pretend to be singing without making a sound.

That is exactly the root that motivated me for my final project. I wanted this to be a huge invitation to everyone who might have heard similar things and believed that they are not good enough to use any form of art to rethink it, right now!

Art, in my experience, is the most fun, creative way to explore myself in a deep spiritual way. I was very lucky that no one told me to stop drawing or judged my creations badly. I wasn't especially talented either. A perfect combination for me to start using art in my life with no fear that someone will notice. I felt safe that I wouldn't be humiliated if someone saw my work, and at the same time, no one would be amazed enough that I would have to prove myself afterwards.

That's how I ended up using art as my way of journaling. I put there all my secret emotions, and no one was able to understand what was happening inside me. See? Completely safe.

A lot of years passed before I realized that I could do more with my drawings. I could look at them again and find important things about myself. That happened the first moment I had the chance to participate in an art therapy class, at the center where I started my studies as a therapist (the Athens Synthesis Center). That special day I felt I was a member of a unique kind of tribe, and I fell in love with this amazing community.

There were many reasons why that class had such a big impact on me. First it was the soft, full of acceptance voice, and attitude of our teacher that created a safe space out of nothing. Then, it was the access to all the materials and colors that awoke my inner child and curiosity. Of course, really helpful, was also the chill music that the teacher chose to accompany our creative process, which took the thinking out of the process. Last, it was this most important part, the feeling that our artwork matters and has many essential things to narrate about us - our stories and our hidden parts. We now had the space and the support to trust the process, follow our bodies and our tendencies, leaving our mind processes behind, and explore whatever would arise.

These were moments of great importance for me as a therapist, but especially as Dafni. Now, I trusted more the artwork I did in my daily life, seeking afterwards all the hidden elements in my creations. But something crucial was missing. It was like I now had all that new information that was arising but without the tools to do something with it; to use it in order to bring a new way of balance inside me.

One day, a few years later, life brought me to the Process Work path, where I found all those missing parts. Process Work is actually the reason I can now talk in this way about my previous experiences. It was the place where I really found the terminology, the methods, and most importantly, the philosophy that glued everything together, for me, in the best way.

There I realized why those hidden parts were so important for me, and how I could use them to bring a new kind of balance in my identity (my everyday self

as I was experiencing it until then). As I learned through my studies, those parts were parts of myself, let's say energies, that my everyday self didn't appreciate enough, or was afraid of, or even strongly judged, for a ton of reasons, and the barrier that I had of allowing them into my life (my "edge") held me from experiencing my "whole" self; a sense of self from which I could flow with these energies, attitudes, feelings in a new way that broadened my identity, and led to an unprecedented sense of fullness, strength and balance (what in Process Work we call an "essence" level experience of self).

Process Work gave me all this knowledge, tools and attitude that helped me use my work, no longer with the goal of hiding myself in my artwork but of seeing the parts of myself that I wasn't aware of yet, and doing something with them, trusting that there are no "wrong" feelings and energies inside us, but only misused and unappreciated ones.

The idea of art changed for me to an opportunity for inner work in a fun, creative way. I could use it alone, and with my therapist's guidance too. Afterwards, I could also hang my piece of art somewhere in my room to help me remember the sense of my discovery.

This shift made me so happy, full, and motivated that when they told us to do a final project, I couldn't resist sharing it with you!

I'm not sure why exactly we feel frightened to use art. Maybe because of bad experiences, huge critics inside of us, or general beliefs that art is only for the artists (the talented ones who can create "beauty.") Maybe also because nowadays art has transformed into a product that must be perfect in order to be worth buying. I can't say exactly what the root of the problem is, but I know that many of us could make great use of art as a joyful way to explore, unload or just enjoy ourselves.

Psychology can be seen as something heavy and difficult to engage with, as I learned in the University while studying Anthropology, but it can also be something that Arny and Amy showed me through their books. It can be "all kinds of things we had never learned in school, like fun, art, and creativity" (*Riding the horse backwards*, 2021, p. xi-xii). *Riding the horse backwards* is a book that inspired me to trust any way that feels like it's working, even if it's an enjoyable one. As Arny said in one of his classes, "if it works, it's Process Work," which in my understanding means that following our process can be done in so

many amazing ways, and I don't need to hold on to just the linear way that my western studies had once taught me.

## The Creation of my exercises

When our teachers introduced us to the final project as a requirement of the Process Work training program, I immediately felt the need to talk about art tools combined with Process Work methods and philosophy. It was not something that I planned. It was more something like a need. Before my training in this area, I was working with individuals as a psychotherapist using the methods and philosophy of the paradigm I had studied and been trained in (Synthetic Psychotherapy). Getting immersed in the Process Work paradigm's philosophy, ideas, methods, and tools, in which our teachers were introducing us, I noticed that I was already changing as a therapist. My belief system was shifting. I was starting to see myself, and the people with whom I was working, through a different lens; the idea of bad and good behavior or thinking, was changing into acknowledging all our parts, validating and using them to our benefit (the lens of the principle of "Deep Democracy").

With this mindset, and through my love of all art ways, I started, without really thinking about it, to combine my new Process Work tools with art "games" in my practice. I was using poems, paintings, cards, stickers and plasticine playing with my clients and their new discoveries of themselves, figures, energies and ideas.

It was when my supervisor noticed and validated one of the exercises I had created, which I happened to use with the client in the supervision that I began to think of them as potentially useful for others! Until that moment, I never thought that these exercises I was using may be interesting for someone else. My supervisor, through her positive way, encouraged me, without knowing, to appreciate them more and form them in a clearer way.

When I decided to use them for my final project, a few of them were already formed in my mind. I started writing them down with the idea of combining five areas that attract me (body symptoms, dreams, empty mind, problems in everyday life and the first memory) with five art ways I was already using in my private practice and was familiar with (paint, poem, sculpture, cards and collage).

In this way, just like that, these exercises came into being and were ready for my two-day workshop! Creating the exercises was the easiest part of this project; they already existed in a way. There was no real effort. The steps and the whole idea were just there, ready to be written down on the paper!

# Process Work terminology<sup>1</sup>

It's important before I go into describing how I used the exercises to work with my inner experiences to put here my understanding of some of the basic concepts of the theory of Process Work, which was developed by Arnold Mindell.

**Levels of awareness** are the dimensions of our experience. Mindell postulated three levels of awareness:

- **Consensus reality (CR)** is defined as the everyday, impersonal experience we share with others and the culture at large. It is the world around us that can generally be named and objectively agreed upon. Consensus reality includes collectively defined aspects of experience related to time, space, and matter.
- **Dreamland** includes realities that depend on individual, subjective experiences for their definition and characterization, and do not require agreement from others. Like nighttime dreams, the subjective experience of body symptoms, relationship conflicts and other personal experiences.
- **Essence** level is the dimension of totality, the soulful area from which everything emerged, the experience at the root of experiences, the one that cannot be named and from which all the experience unfolds.
- **Flirt** is the sensory experience that emerges spontaneously into momentary experiences and attract our attention for a few seconds and usually afterwards we ignore.

“Flirts are the first way in which the essence world arises in our awareness, the first way that we experience the movement of the Intentional Field. Flirts are quick, evanescent, nonverbal sensations, visual flickers, moods, and hunches that suddenly catch our attention...The moment we notice a Flirt that has captured our attention, we have caught the tail of a creative process in the midst of unfolding.” (Amy Mindell, *The Dreaming Source of Creativity*, 2005, pp. 23-24)

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<sup>1</sup> Information from books that are cited and from theory handouts of modules in the Diploma training program, written by Lena Aslanidou, Alexandra Vassiliou and Lily Vassiliou.

**The Dreaming Process** is a central idea in Process Work. It supports the idea that we do not only dream at night but we are dreaming all the time, throughout the day as well. The source of these experiences is what we call the dreaming process. Spontaneous movements and gestures, body symptoms, and flickering experiences are some of the ways in which the dreaming process manifests in everyday life. If we trust, follow, and unfold these occurrences, we find that they mirror our nighttime dreams and they illuminate parts of ourselves of which we are not yet aware. The dreaming process is posited to have a meaningful, purposeful direction of change, reflecting the influence of Taoism and Jungian psychology.

“The dreambody begins with a subtle feeling or sentient experience, which manifests in the body in terms of symptoms and uncontrolled movements, in dreams, in synchronicities . . . it is your personal, individual experience of The Tao That Cannot be Said in consensual terms.” (Arnold Mindel, Quantum Mind, 2000, P.509 )

- **Signals** are units of information. Some of our communication signals are intended, while others are unintended.
- **Channels** are the multiple ways in which we perceive ourselves and the world around us. They are carriers of information, means of representation of signals. In other words, they are the means of expression of information in the form of communication signals. The channels are the visual, the auditory, the kinesthetic (movement), the proprioceptive, the relationship and the world channel.
- **Process** is “the flow of experience” (Amy Mindell, Alternative to Therapy, p.50), “the variation of signals experienced by an observer” (Arnold Mindell, River’s Way, p11). It is the flow of information through the various channels.

## **Process Structure**

In the Process Work paradigm processes are differentiated into primary and secondary processes.

- **Primary process** includes the experience with which one identifies, or intends, or is the agent of, or desires, and of which we usually have more awareness.

- **Secondary process** includes all the processes and experiences with which one does not identify, does not intend, is not the agent of (happens to them) or does not desire. We usually perceive our secondary process as an annoyance. It is often the more mysterious one, of which we have less awareness.
- **Edge** is the boundary between our primary and secondary process. When we reach an edge we reach the boundary of our known world. It is the limit of what we are allowed to do or express. Getting over an edge is always a powerful experience. At that point you feel your identity changing, and you may find yourself feeling confused or lost.

“When we come to the edge, we may feel lost, or our minds may begin to drift off and become unfocused, or a critical voice may interrupt what we are doing.” (The Dreaming Source of Creativity, Amy Mindell, 2005, pp.226 )

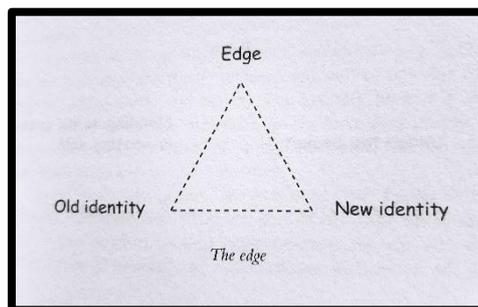


Diagram from "Riding the Horse Backwards" Arnold Mindel (1992)

**Deep democracy** is an attitude that focuses on the awareness of voices that are both central and marginal, and it involves exploring “those parts that have been silenced or seen as disturbing” (Julie Diamond and Lee Jones, A Path Made By Walking, 2004, p. 11). It involves not only openness to other individuals, groups, and diverse views but an openness to our own experience, which includes feelings, dreams, body symptoms, altered states of consciousness, synchronicities, and an awareness of signals, roles, and the structural dynamics of the interactions between the parties involved. Deep democracy is a radical and counterintuitive belief.

“Following the unwanted, unintended message goes against collective belief, which says that if you follow the unknown, it will lead you off the edge of the world. We all think that when we get to the edge of the known world, we will surely fall off. But Processwork shows the roundness of our universe. It shows that if we have the courage to follow unintentional signals to their edges, we do not fall off, but discover new worlds.” (Arnold Mindell and Amy Mindell, *Riding the Horse Backwards*, 1992, page 11)

“... deep democracy, that special feeling of belief in the inherent importance of all parts of ourselves and all viewpoints in the world around us... deep democracy is a timeless feeling... It is our sense of responsibility to follow the flow of nature, respect fate, energy... and of our role in co-creating history. Deep democracy is our sense that the world is here to help us become our entire selves, and that we are here to help the world become whole.” (Arnold Mindell, *The Leader as a Martial Artist*, 2014, page 13)

## **Unfolding of process**

In Process Work we track process, meaning we observe the flow of experience (signals/information) as it moves through various channels. We notice the patterns that emerge and make a hypothesis about the process structure. We unfold secondary processes, beginning by amplifying the signals the channels in which they occur, using channel appropriate methods, and then by either tracking their organic unfolding through the various channels (organic channel switches) or by adding channels, in order to globalize the experience, until the meaning of the experience for the person emerges.

We stay “on track” by **following closely the person’s feedback** to our interventions.

**Feedback** is differentiated into positive, negative and edge feedback, and can be both verbal and non-verbal.

## My Personal Experience of Using my Exercises

### Let's work with my 'sweet' critic.

So, as I am over my blank pages feeling terrified, a spontaneous thought comes, "That's what I need in order to start my project, to use art and work with my own critics!" I grab Amy's book "The dreaming source of creativity." I remember that somewhere in her book she worked with her critics too. I always felt this woman as an old soul who could guide me. And here it is, page 203, the chapter is called "It's all a bunch of junk!" I already hear my critic's voice saying these exact words about my project. So, I start with her creative exercise to deal with my inner voices.

A first doodle of my inner critic is ready:



*He is a disgusting and very old creature<sup>2</sup>. His ability to think too much is incredible. His focus is on my legs. He comes closer in a super slow pace, making no sound, reaching me from behind. With a sudden, instant move he attaches a heavy chain with a metal ball to my ankle.*

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<sup>2</sup> Secondary figure

*He succeeds and glows with pride. I can't move now. He thinks with certainty I should be grateful for something I don't quite get.*

Now it's time to step into his shoes:

*I start to move like him,<sup>3</sup> unfolding his micromovements, trusting his energy.*

*I feel extra clever. I know what is right and what is not.*

*I'm moving so slow that I have all the time to focus on my goal, and "AHAAA" a sound with a quick grabbing movement comes<sup>4</sup>. I feel strong and powerful to get and hold what I want.*

*I trust this 'Ahaa" movement. I do it more<sup>5</sup>. I do it slower, and then an image from my childhood pops up<sup>6</sup>. I'm in the sea and I'm focused on grabbing little fish from the surface of the water. I make no sound. I'm moving in such a slow and focused way that they don't even notice me, and "ahaaa" I grab 3 of them. I'm proud of my skill. My mind is clear enjoying the moment. Then I let them free.*

*Something here in letting them free makes me want to cry.*

*I stay more in the movement channel, focused-grabbing-letting go, focused-grabbing-letting go, focused-grabbing-letting go. Slow, fast, relief<sup>7</sup>.*

*Yes, I feel it. I know what it is<sup>8</sup>. I need this state of mind. It holds the freedom I need.*

*Note for the self:* *Focused with clear mind. Grab a thought and move on. No need to impress anyone here. Just enjoying myself, my thoughts, trusting it is how it was supposed to be.*

Now, with this kind of focus I need so much, I'm holding the exercises I created in the beginning of this journey. I'm wondering why I haven't tried them yet for myself! It's the perfect timing. I need them more than ever to find out the answer to my question "What holds me back from completing my project?"<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Using movement channel to unfold the experience

<sup>4</sup> Organic channel switch from the simple channel of movement, into the coupled channel of movement and auditory.

<sup>5</sup> Amplification

<sup>6</sup> Organic channel switch into the visual channel

<sup>7</sup> Reaching the essence level

<sup>8</sup> The meaning of the experience arises

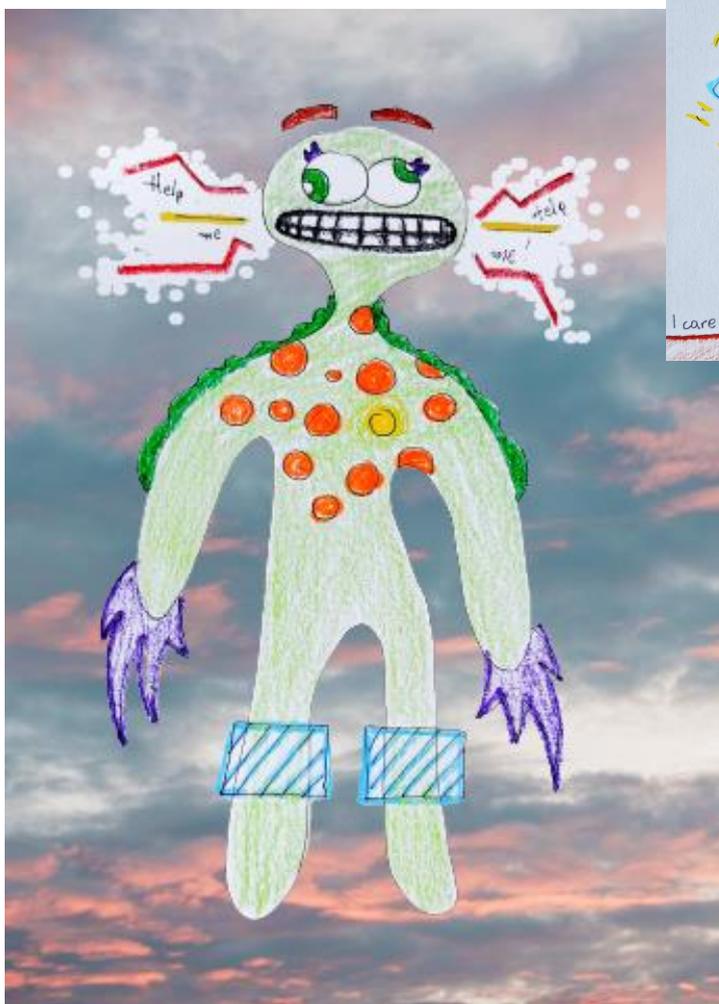
<sup>9</sup> The insight that came up in the Essence level brings a new perspective to the problem I was facing in Consensus Reality

## Exercise 1 painting-body symptoms

- Close your eyes and take a few moments with yourself. After a few deep breaths scan your body from the toes down at your feet, till up the top of your head. Give your body parts voice and let them inform you how they feel in the present time. Are they sore? Are they relaxed? Do they feel a pain? A pulling? A pinch? A warmth or a coolness? Let them inform you and give them the attention they need. When you reach the top of your head, thank them all for their ability to know what they're experiencing and informing you about, so you can have a better sense of the self. (Now you can have a moment to write down any insights you may have had.)
- Leave all the thoughts that you have had already, and with an "empty" mind, take a big piece of paper and draw with a pencil the outline of your form. Stick the paper on the wall, at the height that's needed so that you are facing the face of your body. Take whatever form of paint you feel attracted to and trust your hands to guide you and fill with color the body on the paper, enjoying the moment, and your body movements while creating. Your hands are following your body's need to express the self.
- When you feel you have completed your work, take two steps back and look at your drawing from a distance. Let your eyes be attracted by something unknown in your artwork.
- Look at it and let this part of your work transform in front of your eyes into a figure, with its own energy, and see it step out of the painting. Notice the colors of this figure, its vibes, the way it moves. Notice if it's outward oriented toward the world or inward oriented toward its internal life. Become this figure. Walk around as this figure, and notice your experience, your sense of yourself as this figure.
- Now take a small piece of paper and draw this figure.
- Holding this paper let it interact with the big artwork. How does this figure feel next to the "big" self? What does it want to say to it?
- Now become the "big" self and notice, how do you respond? Trust and follow any insight you may have until the "big" self and the figure complete their interaction.
- On the big drawing of the self, write anywhere that feels right to you, any words that have stayed with you from the relationship interaction that

just happened, or any other insight you had that you may want to keep for yourself.

- Share your experience (only the things you feel safe to share)



*I'm here drawing a figure, full of my body symptoms and experiences, noticing that this procedure makes me uncomfortable<sup>10</sup>. As I put all these on the paper, I intensify each sense<sup>11</sup>.*

*So now, I'm taking two steps back, and I notice something unknown in this figure. It's this yellow spot<sup>12</sup>. I really have no clue why I chose the yellow color there on my chest.*

*So, I let my eyes rest there and observe this spot<sup>13</sup> while it is transforming into a tunnel through which, a small little cute creature comes out happy and light.*

*It stands in front of me looking with its big loving eyes. I make a quick sketch of this yellow cuteness<sup>14</sup>.*

*Then I let my hands guide me<sup>15</sup> to make this creature interact with my everyday self in the big drawing. I start enjoying its*

*unique movement around the self. It's flying, jumping around "me" with an amazing lightness. The everyday self is screaming for help, while clenching its teeth<sup>16</sup>, and the little creature whispers to it that it cares<sup>17</sup>.*

*Note to the self: I keep the whole existence of this creature. Lightness, clarity, pays attention with acceptance and with a deep feeling of care. That's the help I need right now from myself.*

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<sup>10</sup> Primary process

<sup>11</sup> Amplification

<sup>12</sup> Secondary figure

<sup>13</sup> Using the visual channel to unfold the experience

<sup>14</sup> Amplification of the signal in the visual channel

<sup>15</sup> Switching to the movement channel

<sup>16</sup> Primary process

<sup>17</sup> Secondary process

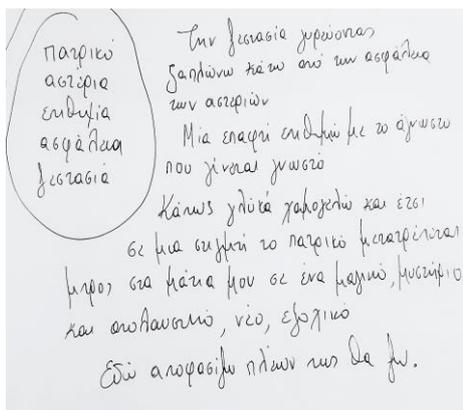
## Exercise 2 poem-dream

- Think of a recent dream that has stayed in your mind.
- Share it with your group partner.
- Your group partner is going to write down 5 words that you used in your description of the dream.
- Take these 5 words and let them guide you into creating a poem out of them. In the process try to keep an empty mind with no particular goals.
- Now read your poem, like the author left it in front of you, knowing there is something hidden inside that you need to hear.
- Reflect on the gift. What new does this poem offer to who you are today? What question is it answering that you haven't asked yet? Where do you need it in your life?
- Share your experience (only the things you feel safe to share).

*Dream: I am at my ancestral home<sup>18</sup>. I'm lying on a soft big sofa in the garden. I'm watching the stars. There is a warm feeling. I desire someone to hold me tight<sup>19</sup>. I ask it from my partner<sup>20</sup>. He is coming towards me and I'm thinking that people from the other houses<sup>21</sup> might see us and judge<sup>22</sup>. But it's night and I feel safe in the darkness. I forget them and I enjoy the hug with the view of the stars<sup>23</sup>.*

*Words: ancestral home, stars, desire, safety, warmth*

### My poem:



*In search of warmth, I lie under the safety of the stars.*

*A contact I desire with the unknown that becomes known.*

*Somewhat sweetly I smile and so in an instant moment the ancestral home is transformed before my eyes in a magical, mysterious, and enjoyable new cottage home.*

*Here, I decide, that I will live from now on.*

*Note for the self: Holding the power of the knowledge of the past in a new free and safe way. Accepting there, myself as a*

*whole, with my own way, my thoughts and my desire for contact with the world<sup>24</sup>.*

<sup>18</sup> Identity

<sup>19</sup> Primary process (wanting to be held)

<sup>20</sup> Secondary figure

<sup>21</sup> Edge figure

<sup>22</sup> Edge

<sup>23</sup> Secondary process

<sup>24</sup> Insight brought from the unfolding of the secondary process shedding light on Consensus Reality from a different

### Exercise 3 sculpture-empty mind

- Pick the first color of clay that flirts with you in the moment and take it in your hands.
- Let the music take away all the thoughts that come to visit you. Try to keep your mind empty.
- Enjoy the pleasure of your sensation of touch. Put your attention on the energy that comes out of your fingers.
- Trust this energy and let it free to guide your fingers and give shape to your formless clay.
- When you feel that your movement has completed, take distance from your creation, and admire it
- Notice the spikes and the curves, the symmetries, and the asymmetries.
- Add any other color to your art if you feel it's needed.
- Now give this creature soul and voice; let it free to speak to you.
- Ask it the question that arises from within, and let it answer you, in any way and temper it wants.
- Thank it for being itself and write down its words.
- Share your experience (only the things you feel safe to share)

*I am transforming into this wise little snail<sup>25</sup> I just created with clay from a state of empty mind, beginning to move like it<sup>26</sup>. I'm slow and I'm holding the power to move my whole heavy self with*



*no real effort. I have a rhythm in the way that I move. I'm a creature which lives in total harmony with its abilities, not trying to be something which is not.*

*A question arises from the known self "Am I going well?"<sup>27</sup>*

---

perspective

<sup>25</sup> Secondary figure

<sup>26</sup> Using the movement channel to unfold the secondary figure of snail

<sup>27</sup> Primary process

*My answer as snail surprises me "You are going"<sup>28</sup>*

*This poetic answer hides so much in it. It has no validation about good or bad. You are just going. You are just moving forward. Without the hidden meaning that you should keep moving forward or do something. Just as a clear observation<sup>29</sup>. "You are moving".*

*These words shifted my mind completely.*

*I used to live a life in which I needed to prove myself, my speed, my worth, my ability to be good, right, and interesting<sup>30</sup>.*

*Accept who I am at the moment with no extra goals? This is a completely new way of being for me. I feel excited.*

*Note to the self: Just be. The way I am. Nothing more than that.*

---

<sup>28</sup> Secondary process

<sup>29</sup> Secondary process

<sup>30</sup> Primary process

#### Exercise number 4 cards-problem in Consensus Reality (everyday life)

- Take some time and think about your life these days.
- Is there anything that pops up, small or big, that occupies your mind? Give it time and acceptance.
- Close your eyes and trust your hands to choose the right card that describes the issue that has already risen.
- Give attention to every clue that you perceive on the card. How does this drawing describe your feelings? Do the figures on this card remind you of any parts of yourself, and how?
- Now take a better look at this card and put your attention on that one thing that you didn't notice before. What new does this energy bring?
- When you are ready choose a new card. This one is going to bring something needed in the situation you are working on! Check this new energy that this card brings to you, and that is missing in the field. This new energy is going to support you.
- Close your eyes and let this new energy move your body (or a part of it) filling it with its vibe. Let go into the movement and let it develop into a dance. Stay deeply in that dance and let insights visit you!
- Share your experience (only the things you feel safe to share)

*While I'm moving forward with these exercises I already know that I'm doing my project. My fear arises: Is it in the right form for it to be approved? Is it solid, interesting, innovating and enough? Or am I doing this only for myself?*



*I close my eyes and I choose the first card. It's this underwater dancing woman. I know how she feels. Not solid enough to keep the fish inside her. Like she had to be in another form to be useful<sup>31</sup>.*

*But now I put my attention on her look<sup>32</sup>.*

*She gazes at the sky. Her interest is not in her dress because she doesn't feel she has to change something in her existence. No, I was wrong. She is*

---

<sup>31</sup> Primary process

<sup>32</sup> [Following what flirted with me \(what caught my attention\)](#) to unfold the experience

*happy, complete, and wonderful. She knows she is how she was supposed to be<sup>33</sup>.*

*Now it's time for my second card.*

*These people standing on this pedestal showing proudly their award to calm the angry sea.*



*I'm not very satisfied with this card. I thought this would make me feel better and now I feel stressed instead<sup>34</sup>. But I trust the process and I start moving my body with their energy<sup>35</sup>. The awards in my hands are now transformed into a white breeze energy that comes from within, and letting it free up to the sky is just so liberating. I'm happy, light, and free from any form of obligation. Just me being myself. Giving the world what I am is more than enough<sup>36</sup>.*

*Note to the self: I don't need to try hard and be something I'm not in order to be enough. Expressing my whole potential is not vain. It serves my purpose in life. So, just enjoy the process of letting my way, my knowledge spread out into the world.*

---

<sup>33</sup> [Secondary process](#)

<sup>34</sup> Edge

<sup>35</sup> Using the movement channel to unfold the experience

<sup>36</sup> [Secondary process](#)

## Exercise number 5 Collage-1st memory

- Connect with your first memory (or the one that comes first in your mind now when you hear me say “first memory”)
- Now let the music take away all the thoughts that came to visit you. Try to keep your mind empty.
- With a child’s energy and freedom, pick random materials, colors, and stickers, and put them together on the paper in front of you. Let them guide you and tell you where and how they need to be combined. Enjoy the process with no particular goals.
- When you feel that your creation is completed take a distance from your work.
- As a visitor in a gallery, enjoy the art you see in front of your eyes, and let yourself choose two spots. A familiar one, and an unexpected /unknown /weird one.
- Let each of them talk about themselves (colors, shapes, energies, past stories, present).
- Which part of yourself does each of these spots touch? How do these two spots/ parts of yourself connect, or not, in the art, and in yourself.
- What do each of these sides have to offer one another and the bigger self?
- Share your experience (only the things you feel safe to share)

*In my first memory I am with my family outside, in our garden feeding carrots to a rabbit that just came, maybe lost from another house. Everybody is very happy playing with the cute little rabbit. I am excited too, but at the same time I’m worried because our picky and wild cat “Tzitzzi” has left the house, maybe angry at us that we care for the new visitor so much.*



*I start my collage with stickers because they always make me feel happy and free as I child. When I finish my work, I already feel familiar with a few things, but there are others that I made unconsciously. I let them speak to me like they are alive, having voice of their own.*

*The cute little bunny I know<sup>37</sup>; it represents my well-known everyday self. I used to identify with this figure in order to be accepted by my family and friends. A safe option that everyone liked to have around.*

*But why is its ear cut in half? In reality, I know that this happened in the beginning, by accident<sup>38</sup>, with my scissors, but I chose to keep it that way.*

*If the ear had a voice what would it say<sup>39</sup>?*

*Bunny ear: "Ha! I gotcha! I'm not part of this silly cuteness. I never was. I pretended to be, but now I'm free!" It's playful, happy, choosing its own rules of existing<sup>40</sup>.*

*And now the cat<sup>41</sup>. I know a lot about her and her ability to feel angry and do what she wants. I was always judging her while I was growing up. "Too picky, difficult, wanting what she wants, with a great ability to get angry at others and even pull-out nails, if needed. Stubborn and bad behaved." Lately, I'm learning to love and appreciate her more allowing her to advise and guide me too...*

*But why this crack on her face? Again, in reality I know this happened from an accident with my black pen. A smudge, which I allowed to grow and become a clear crack on my cat's sad face.*

*If this crack had voice, what would it say?*

*Crack: "I'm expanding myself, opening doors, letting things come out. Wonderful things like desires, creativity, breathing, acceptance, my kind of self at the most enjoyable, happy and comfy way."<sup>42</sup>*

*Thank you cat for safe keeping and validating all my wants; now they can be free.*

*Note to the self: Allowing myself to crack and let things out. Let myself be out the way it is and enjoy.*

*So, I'm doing that! And sharing myself, my way, my journey with you. This is my final project. Enjoying and exploring myself through art exercises that Process Work knowledge inspired me to create. I'm sharing these five exercises with those of you reading this, and I shared them with the six people who came to my place for a two-day art inner work "retreat".*

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<sup>37</sup> Primary figure

<sup>38</sup> Indication of a secondary process (unintended)

<sup>39</sup> Using audio channel to unfold the experience

<sup>40</sup> Secondary process

<sup>41</sup> Secondary figure

<sup>42</sup> Secondary process

## Art inner work retreat

These were two days in which I allowed myself to bring out my way, with no fear, and share it with people.

The six individuals who participated in the workshop were in an age-range between 25 and 47 years old, they self-identified as male and female, had different professional backgrounds (teaching, sales, engineering, marketing, event planning, and more), and, mostly, no previous experience of psychotherapy.

They each brought their uniqueness, trusting the process and exploring in their different ways, going as deep as each chose to go.

The outcome was two amazing days of getting to know each other and ourselves, in different dimensions of our experiences, in such a fun way, dipping into paint, words, stickers and clay.

We ended up sharing a special kind of love, supporting each other, and laughing with emotional tears in our eyes.

Below you will find creations of each of the six participants, and a few words that they wanted to share with you, and themselves.

For confidentiality reasons, I refer to each of them with the color they chose in the beginning of our process, having their consent to share their creations, sayings, and experiences.

# Workshop participants' artwork, experience, and process

White:



Translation: I want to play! Let me free!

Insight: I want to be happy and free.  
Free to jump into the water...



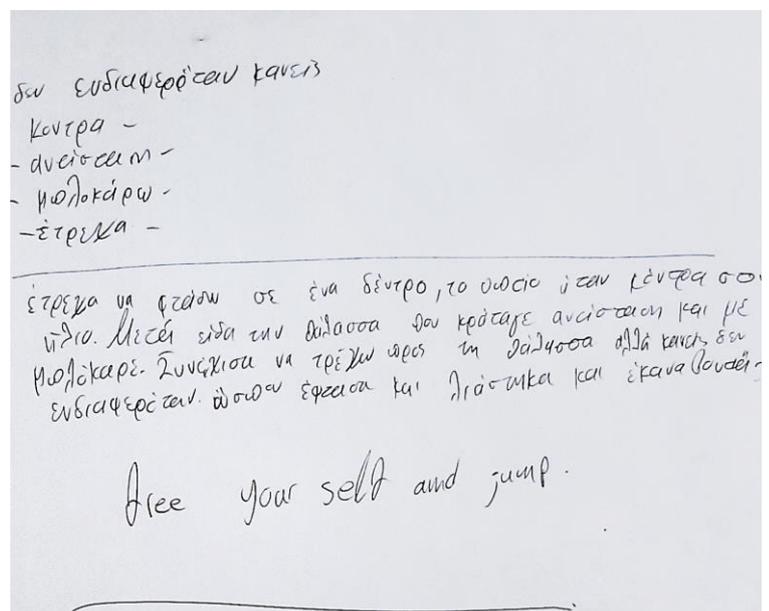
Insight: Many Colorful "walls" give a symmetric result which all blends in together

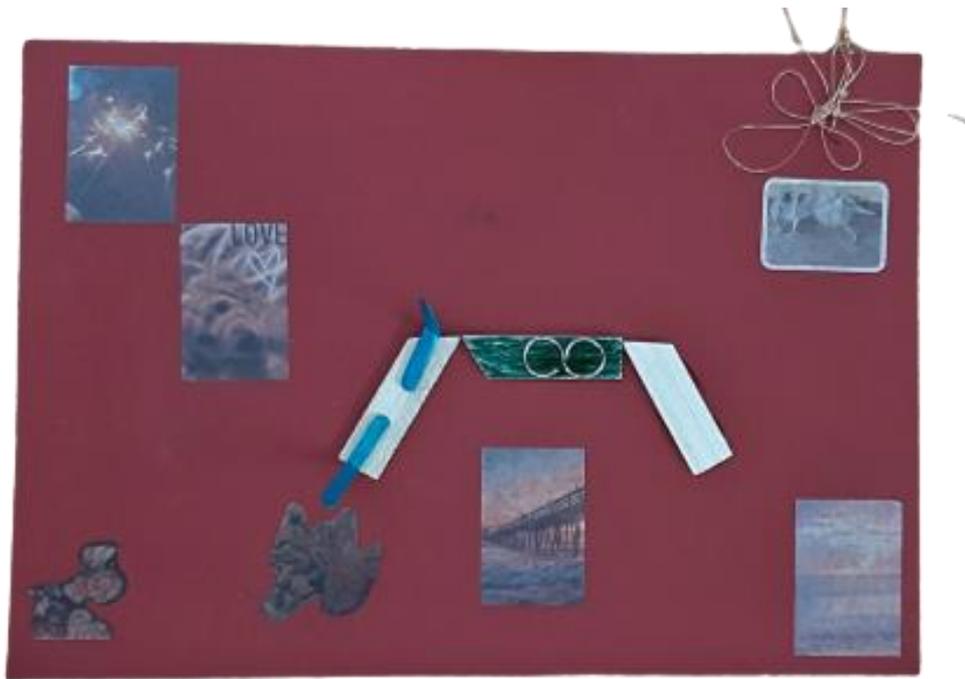
Translation:

- no one used to care
- against-
- resistance-
- block-
- run-

I was running to reach a tree which was against the sun. Then I saw the sea that was resisting and blocking me. I kept running towards sea, but no one seemed to care, till I arrived, sunbathed, and jumped into the water – free yourself and jump

Insight: Don't pay so much attention on what everyone says and thinks about you, just do what you wish and feel free





*Insight: Life is all about appreciating the little things like flowers, the lights from a celebration, the water. Life has multiple dimensions and we should look at it like this, from different angles*



*Insight: The "little pig" looks back evil but also smiling, like life is always about. Always good in the evil.*

*The "big frog" is walking confident surrounded by little ones. That's how I should act. Confident even when surrounded by people "less" than us.*



### **White's process in a few words<sup>43</sup>.**

While white was exploring herself through these art works, she experienced the same pattern again and again. A part of herself wanted to be free and happy, follow her way of being<sup>44</sup>, and another part was hiding, scaring her with an evil eye, blocking her way<sup>45</sup>. This blocking figure was always seen as the others who were judging or expecting her to be different than she was. At the end of this work, it was clear to her that this "others" figure lived inside of her too, and she now had the chance to say with a clear voice "I am a multi-colored person with a lot of layers and that's perfectly ok. I can live happy just being who I really am, trusting this is how I should be<sup>46</sup>." She can walk feeling confident like her frog, and no evil eye can really affect her way of being, if she doesn't carry this "eye" inside herself. Using the evil's eye energy White found the power to see and "judge" the life she doesn't want to follow. She can choose now to be free to jump in the water, be silly, happy and enjoy all the "little," amazing dimensions of this world.

### **White's words about her experience of this art project.**

The group art therapy was a unique experience for me. It was impressive to explore the connection of the unconscious to the art expression.

It was definitely an amazing experience, which taught me that art is in every aspect of ourselves, and that our thoughts and concerns are always in our minds ready to pop out at every chance.

I hadn't heard before of art therapy and I was very interested to see how it would work, and I was so amazed by the whole experience and the outcomes.

It was revealing to belong to a group of others who share the same or similar thoughts and express yourself through art.

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<sup>43</sup> My analysis of each person's overall process is a result of putting together all the information I have from the various artwork outcomes from the exercises they did, and the things they shared in the group after each exercise.

<sup>44</sup> Secondary process (The primary process is implied here. It is the one who feels blocked by the edge figure)

<sup>45</sup> Edge figure

<sup>46</sup> Secondary process

**Green:**



*Insight:*

*Freedom is the definition of life.  
Freedom in expression, in creation, in choices, in decisions.*

*Being true to myself is something I have in my mind as a compass for the times I feel lost*



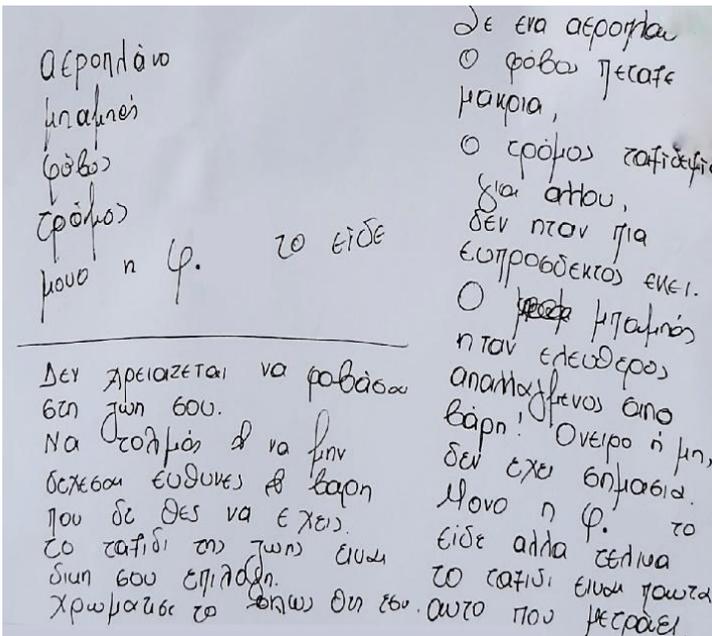
*Insight:  
Two people become one while maintaining their uniqueness.  
Two whole who meet and complement each other*

*Translation:  
Airplane  
Dad  
Fear  
Horror  
only F. saw that*

*On an airplane fear flew away  
The horror traveled to elsewhere, he was no longer welcome there  
Dad was free, relieved of weights!  
Dream or not, it doesn't matter.  
Only F. saw it, but in the end the journey is always what counts*

*(Notes for the self) There is no need to be scared in your life.  
Dare and do not accept responsibilities and weights that you don't want to have. The journey of life is your choice.  
Color it as you wish.*

*Insight:  
We are the captains of our lives.  
We define it and we create it.*





*Insight:*  
*As long we are hosted on this planet, we have the obligation to ourselves to offer us everything we desire and dream of*

*Insight: Hug your fears tightly and everything will be fine*



### **Green's process in a few words.**

Green is a woman who always identified herself as responsible and capable of carrying and solving all her family's and friend's problems. She wanted the best for the people she loved and was willing to sacrifice herself, and her desires, in order to take care of all the other people's needs<sup>47</sup>. Lately something had been changing inside her, which hadn't been clear to her. In these exercises, herself and her needs were at the center of her interest. Something had already shifted, and now she could understand it and face it with acceptance and no fear. Being the captain of her life, holding her "house", hugging her fears tight, she can leave the burden of others' needs with no guilt<sup>48</sup>. It's clear that she can now identify more with someone whose only obligation is to follow her dreams and enjoy her journey in life, in a free state of mind<sup>49</sup>. Now the idea of great relationships with other people means that both parties can be connected, while maintaining their uniqueness.

### **Green's words about her experience of this art project.**

Through her approach and our contact with different kinds of art, I managed to bring to the surface, things, memories, and hidden confidences.

It helped me discover a part of myself which has not been expressed freely before.

So, this procedure offered me a lot and revealed to me thoughts & pieces of my way of thinking that need healing or just a recognition.

I'm more than grateful that Dafni choose me to be part of this.

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<sup>47</sup> Primary process

<sup>48</sup> Edge (feeling guilty was the edge)

<sup>49</sup> Secondary process

Blue:



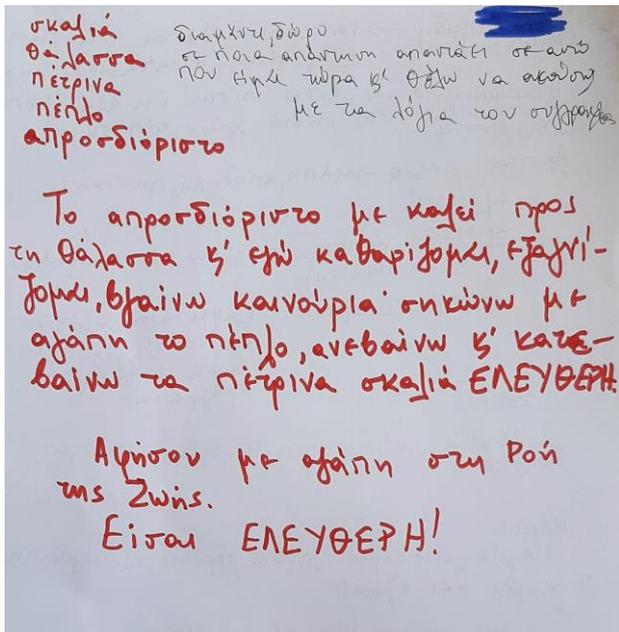
**Translation:**  
 Fuck you!  
 Oust!  
 Go away now!  
 You are dead. (I'm scared. Go away. What are you afraid of?)

**Insight:**  
 I want to shine bright in any level with my black hole too

So I decide to speak openly no matter what



**Insight:**  
 My heart knows how to bloom day by day



**Translation:**  
 stairs  
 sea  
 stone  
 veil  
 unspecified

The unspecified is calling me to the sea and I am cleansed I am purified, I get out new; I lovingly lift the veil, I go up and down the stone steps FREE.

Let go with love in the flow of life  
 You are FREE!

**Insight:**  
 I choose. I'm free.



*Insight: The flow of life always takes care of me.*



*Insight: Pay attention to detail. You can fly.*

### **Blue's process in a few words.**

Blue is a very spiritual woman with a lot of pain hidden in her past life. She has always been a fun and loving person to be around<sup>50</sup>, hiding all the painful experiences (her “dark side”, as she calls it) that needed to be shared with others and embraced and supported by her<sup>51</sup>. After a lot of work with her family's past and her “dark side” (unspoken painful experiences), she now walks in a path of accepting the fear and the pain she has been carrying, and sharing it with pride with the world. In this workshop, she worked with her ability to trust herself and the world, that they will keep her safe, no matter what. Through dealing with a scary figure that emerged in the exercises, to whom she shouts loudly to go away, she picks up the essence of the energy of this figure, taking her strength back, and decides how she deserves to be treated, even by her worst critic, who deeper underneath is scared of life (due to past experiences) and is trying to keep her safe. This strength is the key that will keep her safe when things won't be bright and loving outside. That's her path of freedom right now. As she said “Loving me as a whole. Trust inside and out.”<sup>52</sup>

### **Blue's words about her experience of this art project.**

It was an eye-opening experience, which I appreciated very much.

I came in touch with my artistic side, which brought up shadows and resources, which now I own more.

I loved your approach as an organizer and therapist too. It was loving, soft, accepting, containing, insightful. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

---

<sup>50</sup> Primary process

<sup>51</sup> Secondary process

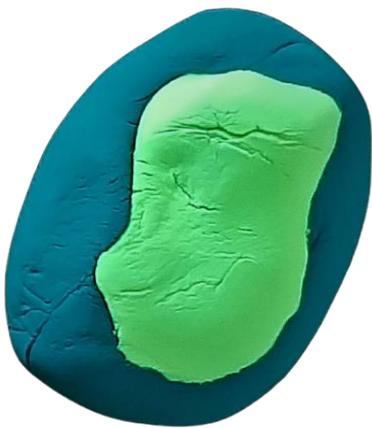
<sup>52</sup> Insight after unfolding the secondary process

**Red:**



*Translation:  
Run!*

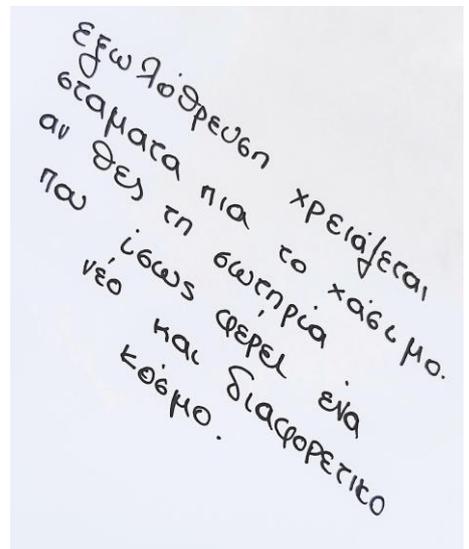
*Insight:  
Think creatively and use what is offered. Stick man knows the way.*



*Insight: Sea sounds knows better*

*Translation:  
Extermination is needed  
stop getting lost  
if you want salvation  
that may bring a  
new and different world.*

*Insight:  
Trust your quick reactions that lead  
to great decisions*



*Εφωροίθρευσή χρειάζεται  
στάματα για το καέμο.  
αν θες τη σωτηρία  
πρω λώως φερει ένα  
νέο και διαφορετικό  
κόσμο.*



*Insight:  
Your smile fits everywhere*



*Insight:  
Look at the problem again it might be smaller than you think.  
You may hold already your solution.*

### **Red's process in a few words.**

Red is a woman committed to her family in order for all its members to survive. They had experienced a difficult past and the way of enduring the difficulties and the pain was to really stick together tight as a family. So she was holding this piece of "advice" as the ultimate truth, and she became a woman who would give her life and her happiness in order to keep her old and new family tight together.<sup>53</sup> She has been struggling over the last years between an angry part that wants better things for herself and her reality<sup>54</sup>, and the other, well known for her part, which demands all her energy to keep the family structure strong, at any expense. In this workshop she discovered, in many ways, that her smile/happiness can be at the center of her interest too, and that in order for this to happen she might need to run away from, or destroy something, and that might not be such a big deal, as she has always been afraid. As she found out in one of the exercises, "The problem when you drive/lead your life might not be so big. I might already hold the solution."<sup>55</sup>

### **Red's words about her experience of this art project.**

An incredible weekend, full of creative activities, which gave me the opportunity to express myself and present pieces of myself, overcoming difficulties.

An inspiring workshop that encouraged me to engage with my feelings and gave my ideas to go on.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate.

---

<sup>53</sup> Primary process

<sup>54</sup> Secondary process

<sup>55</sup> Insight after unfolding the secondary process

**Yellow:**



*Translation:  
Movement-liveliness-freedom-motion-joy*

*More serious  
steady  
methodically*

*Insight:  
Instead of "too bright"  
choose 2 worlds in 1*

*Insight:  
stranger things*



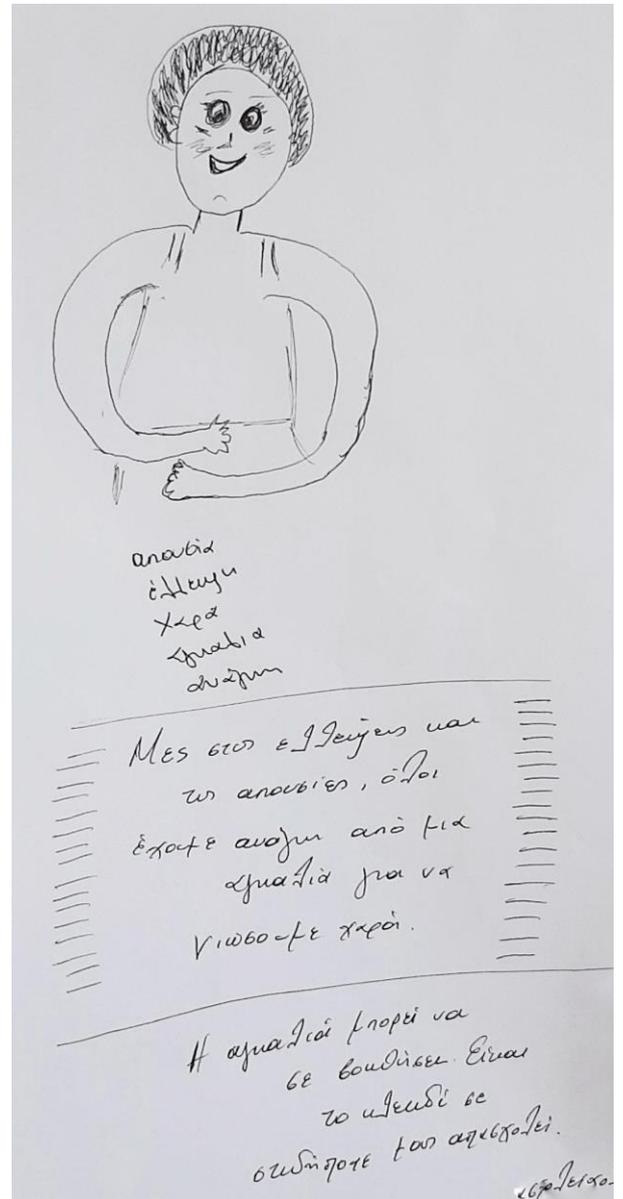
*Translation:  
absence  
deficiency  
joy  
hug  
need*

*In the deficiencies and  
absences we all  
need a hug to feel joy*

*A hug can help you.  
It's the key in whatever concerns us.*

*security.*

*Insight:  
sensitive and calmness*



*ανάβια  
έλλειψη  
χρησ  
συνάβια  
αυτοψυχή*

*ΜΕΣ ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΕΙΨΗΝ ΜΑΣ  
ΤΩ ΑΝΑΒΙΩ, ΟΙ ΤΟΙ  
ΕΧΟΥΝΤΕ ΑΥΤΗΝ ΑΝΟ ΤΗΝ  
ΑΓΑΠΗΝ ΠΑΝΤΑ  
ΥΠΕΡΒΟΛΕ ΧΡΕΙΑ.*

*Η ΑΓΑΠΗ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΠΙΩΝ  
ΟΙΣ ΕΒΟΥΛΗΘΕΝ. ΕΙΣΤΑΙ  
ΤΟ ΑΓΑΠΗΝ ΟΙ  
ΟΛΩΝΤΟΤΕ ΤΩΝ ΑΓΑΠΗΤΩΝ.*



*Insight: proudness for remembering*



*Insight: Matchy or not?*

### **Yellow's process in a few words.**

Yellow is a woman who in her early childhood life started being followed by a very strict and demanding inner critic who was expecting perfection, and only perfection by her, in appearance, school, work, behavior and actually in every aspect of her life<sup>56</sup>. The process of making her first drawing brought up this issue, right from the beginning, as she struggled to create a perfect big self-image. After an effort to leave her critical voice to the side, a new, little, and extra flexible figure<sup>57</sup> arose calling her to experience herself as a different, less bright, but more alive and fun self<sup>58</sup>. This "little" figure followed her as an ally in the following exercises, as evident in the recollection of memories that explained her way of being, and the arising of another, very important, way of thinking. Now, this figure is telling her that she needs to hug herself together with her deficiencies and, in that way, joy will come to her life<sup>59</sup>.

### **Yellow's words about her experience of this art project.**

After a long time, I took again in my hands markers, wood paints, crafted things and watercolors, and tried to paint without caring if what I will make will be nice, have lines that are considered "correct," and what will eventually come out.

At first, I found it very difficult to convince myself to start and not judge how my drawing will end up; maybe because I could never follow what I saw. I always judged myself strictly on how I depict something. I only made abstract drawings, and now I had to portray my great self.

But Daphne, helped us feel comfortable and create what we feel. That's how I understood the importance of art in expression without restrictions and judgments. I saw how we painted, created, and thought about things that we believed about ourselves, which during the process were negated; or how issues that we could not think of, ourselves, or did not want to face, surfaced.

---

<sup>56</sup> Primary process (identifying both with the demand for perfection and the experience of being under the effect of this inner voice)

<sup>57</sup> Secondary figure

<sup>58</sup> Secondary process

<sup>59</sup> Insight after unfolding the secondary process

I very quickly felt confident to express my feelings and thoughts in the group, which was receptive to listening and understanding what each of us wanted to say. Everyone was there to help, in their special way.

I realized how much people differ. Some are more ready to go deep inside and analyze or face what they think and feel; some stay steadfast in the problem as it appears at the surface, superficially (perhaps), and do not see the deepest problem that may exist.

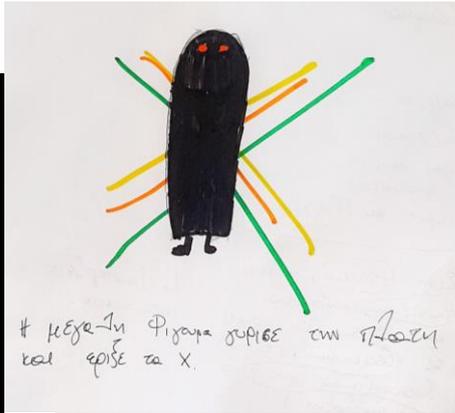
In any way you engage, art is a method that is effective, at whatever stage you are, to express what you want to say, and surely there are many of us who need more help, and another push from ourselves, to express ourselves.

It was a full two days. We did not understand how the time passed. We had in our hands all the materials to do whatever we could imagine, and I will keep:

1. The need for art to get back into my life
2. The need to judge less the result of our actions and even the result of those next to us.
3. The need to focus and "listen" to my thoughts, coming out of, even for a little bit, my natural habitat. I think this was the most demanding thing that I have asked of myself to this day...

Daphne thanks!

**Black:**

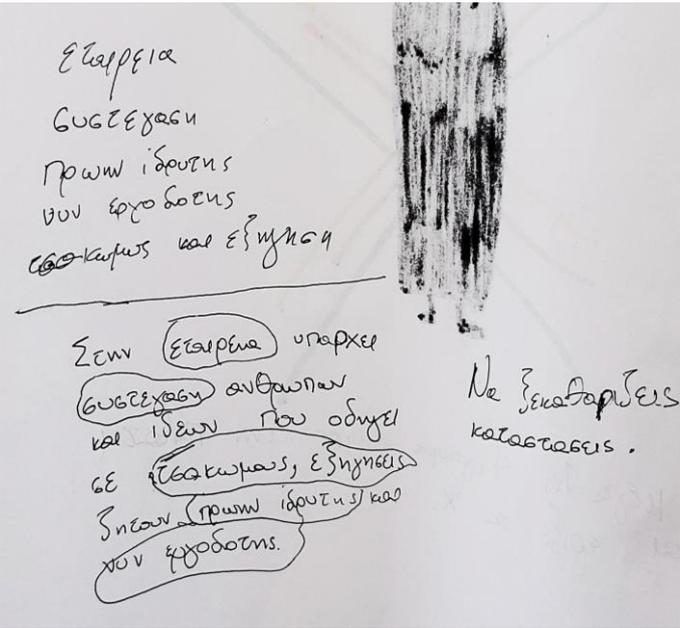


**Translation:**  
*The big figure turned her back and has dropped the Xs*

**Insight:**  
*Colorful personality hides well my shadowy thoughts*



*Insight: Infinite possibilities inside*



**Translation:**  
*company- co-housing -former founder - current employer - quarrel and explanation*

*In the company exists co-housing of people and ideas leading to quarrels, former founder and current employer ask for explanations*

*Clarify situations.*

**Insight:**  
*Clearing messy situations*



*Insight: My power lives in my memories*



*Insight: Inspiration is my solution*

### **Black's process in a few words.**

Black is a man who is trying to find a balance between his angry side<sup>60</sup> (black figure in one of the drawings above) and his ordinary pleasant identity<sup>61</sup> (multicolored figure in one of the drawings above). He experiences a difficulty around how to support all the anger that he feels toward "difficult people" in his life, while feeling the burden created by his family members who expect too much from him. In this workshop, he focused on finding his power, searching for it in his memories, especially in his late father's "chair," which for him was a symbol of all that connects him with his father figure."<sup>62</sup> The insight he had from doing the exercises was that the solution that he needs in so many aspects of his life lie in his inspiration.

### **Black's words about his experience of this art project.**

I was lucky to participate in Dafni's workshop this weekend. The workshop was based on art activities that gave me the chance to express my past, present and future thoughts.

The interactive process used, motivated me to understand and express different aspects of myself and ignited different feelings.

I would definitely participate in a similar workshop!

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<sup>60</sup> Secondary process

<sup>61</sup> Primary process

<sup>62</sup> The perspective of the primary process - the identity's' idea about what the problem is and how to solve it.

## Findings, thoughts, limitations, and conclusion

Working with myself using these five exercises that I created gave me the chance to connect with voices and feelings that usually stay in the dark during my everyday routine. I got the chance to spend time with my inner self, explore it, appreciate it and rediscover my own resources. It was a fun procedure, and scary sometimes, through which I was able to shift from the person I used to be, scared about the results of my work, seeking an unreachable kind of perfection, to a flexible, free one, who acknowledges the experience that is there, and trusts my unique way of being, keeping as the only goal, being present the way I am.

Sharing these exercises with a group of six people, I observed their uniqueness in how they perceived each exercise, and focused on the aspect that was important to them, at that point in time.

At one point, I had to let go of the expectations that I had for each of them to reach a high state of awareness, to follow the steps of my exercises exactly, and to enjoy discovering their hidden secondary energies. I realized these were each different people, with different stories, ways and goals about their engagement with the exercises.

I ended up enjoying their unique ways of interacting with my steps and art tools. Some of them were trying to create beautiful and clear images, wanting perhaps to enjoy more their primary identity. Others perhaps felt the need to show their anger toward their secondary figure, which had just arisen in front of them, and feel their strength through that.

I could keep going with my hypothesis around how they engaged with the exercises, and how that connects to their process, but the truth is that I couldn't follow each person's process, as it manifested in the process of doing each of the exercises, because there were some limitations in the design of this research project.

I was on my own, observing six people simultaneously, so I didn't have the possibility to focus on each of them separately to support them with their edges and help them gain a better understanding by following their process in every exercise.

This could have been possible had I arranged for other process workers to be my helpers in the workshop, being present with each person doing the exercises.

The lack of a sense of safety may have been another limitation for some of the workshop participants. People were unfolding their experiences, revealing themselves, while working next to other people, whom they didn't know. This may have affected how deep some people allowed themselves to go, while doing the exercises.

Yet another limitation may have been that the six people who participated in the workshop were not acquainted with the tools and philosophy of Process Work, which may have affected the way they followed the steps of the exercises.

Judging by the reactions of the six people who participated in the workshop to the exercises, the feelings they expressed, and the feedback they gave me after the workshop, I can answer for myself my initial question with certainty. Yes! Art can be utilized as a great means for following our dreaming process, in a fun way, through inner work exercises.

## Contribution of my project

Writing this section is the most edgy thing I had to do in my project.

Contribution is a very heavy word for me, one that I would use only for people whom I admire deeply, and who I feel have something great to offer to this world. Working with my critics, I now know that every single person has something to offer through their uniqueness, and that made me think that that includes me too!

So, my contribution with this project is that I offer five unique art inner work exercises, which anyone can use for themselves, or with their clients, if they are therapists, to gain access to their dreaming process.

These exercises can also function as an example, or as an inspiration, for each of you to create your own ways to use art as a therapeutic tool for yourself.

Another contribution I can now see is that the description of the way that I used my exercises to work on the difficulty that I was experiencing when I was trying to do my final project, also functions as a teaching of how the Process Work paradigm is applied in inner work.

Offering my five exercises to the people who participated in the workshop I offered, and enjoying traveling with them through their realities, teaching them tools and ways to explore themselves through a fun artistic way, is yet another contribution.

Closing my pondering about my contribution to the field, I feel the need to add that this project is proof that everyone has a unique way to bring themselves and their discoveries to life and share them with the world.

In the beginning of this project, my unique way was marginalized by the idea that I had, that the “academic way” I had learned and admired throughout my student life, was the only “right” way.

Yet, as was revealed to me by my inner work using my own exercises, there isn't only *one* way that things should be shared!

So, if I could do it, you can do it too!

Let yourself show you *your* right way, and follow it fearlessly!

This is *my* “right” way, and my wish is that it can help you discover *yours*!

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# Appendix

## My Five Exercises

### 1. Painting-body symptoms

- Close your eyes and take a few moments with yourself. After a few deep breaths scan your body from toes down at your feet till up the top of your head. Give your body parts voice and let them inform you how they feel in the present time. Are they sore? Are they relaxed? Do they feel a pain? A pulling? A pinch? A warmth or a coolness? Let them inform you and give them the attention they need. When you reach the top of your head thank them all for their ability to know what's they're experiencing and informing you so you can have a better sense of the self. (Now you can have a moment to write down any insights you may have had)
- Leave all the thoughts that you have had already and with an "empty" mind, take a big piece of paper and draw with a pencil the outline of your form. Stick the paper on the wall, at the height that's needed so that you are facing the face of your body. Take whatever form of paint you feel attracted to and trust your hands to guide you and fill with color the body on the paper, enjoying the moment and your body movements while creating. Your hands are following your body's need to express the self.
- When you feel you have completed your work, take two steps back and look at your drawing from a distance. Let your eyes be attracted by something unknown in your artwork.
- Look at it and let this part of your work transform in front of your eyes into a figure, with its own energy, and see it step out of the painting. Notice the colors of this figure, its vibes, the way it moves. Notice if it's outward oriented toward the world or inward oriented toward its internal life. Become this figure. Walk around as this figure, and notice your experience, your sense of yourself as this figure.
- Now take a small piece of paper and draw this figure.
- Holding this paper let it interact with the big artwork. How does this figure feel next to the "big" self? What does it want to say to it?

- Now become the “big” self and notice, how do you respond? Trust and follow any insight you may have until the “big” self and the figure complete their interaction.
- On the big drawing of the self, write anywhere that feels right to you, any words that have stayed with you from the relationship interaction that just happened, or any other insight you had that you may want to keep for yourself.
- Share your experience (only the things you feel safe to share)

## 2.Poem-dream

- Think of a recent dream that has stayed in your mind.
- Share it with your group partner.
- Your group partner is going to write down 5 words that you used in your description of the dream
- Take these 5 words and let them guide you into creating a poem out of them. In the process try to keep an empty mind with no particular goals.
- Now read your poem, like the author left it in front of you, knowing there is something hidden inside that you need to hear.
- Reflect on the gift. What new does this poem offer to who you are today?What question is it answering that you haven't asked yet? Where do you need it in your life?
- Share your experience (only the things you feel safe to share)

### 3. Sculpture-empty mind

- Pick the first color of clay that flirts with you in the moment and take it in your hands.
- Let the music take away all the thoughts that come to visit you. Try to keep your mind empty.
- Enjoy the pleasure of your sensation of touch. Put your attention on the energy that comes out of your fingers.
- Trust this energy and let it free to guide your fingers and give shape to your formless clay.
- When you feel that your movement has completed, take distance from your creation, and admire it
- Notice the spikes and the curves, the symmetries, and the asymmetries.
- Add any other color to your art if you feel it's needed.
- Now give this creature soul and voice; let it free to speak to you.
- Ask it the question that arises from within, and let it answer you, in any way and temper it wants.
- Thank it for being itself and write down its words.
- Share your experience (only the things you feel safe to share)

#### **4.Cards-problem in Consensus Reality (everyday life)**

- Take some time and think about your life these days.
- Is there anything that pops up, small or big, that occupies your mind? Give it time and acceptance.
- Close your eyes and trust your hands to choose the right card that describes the issue that has already risen.
- Give attention to every clue that you perceive on the card. How does this drawing describe your feelings? Do the figures on this card remind you of any parts of yourself, and how?
- Now take a better look at this card and put your attention on that one thing that you didn't notice before. What new does this energy bring?
- When you are ready choose a new card. This one is going to bring something needed in the situation you are working on! Check this new energy that this card brings to you, and that is missing in the field. This new energy is going to support you.
- Close your eyes and let this new energy move your body (or a part of it) filling it with its vibe. Let go into the movement and let it develop into a dance. Stay deeply in that dance and let insights visit you!
- Share your experience (only the things you feel safe to share)

## 5.Collage-1st memory

- Connect with your first memory (or the one that comes first in your mind now when you hear me say “first memory”)
- Now let the music take away all the thoughts that came to visit you. Try to keep your mind empty.
- With a child’s energy and freedom, pick random materials, colors, and stickers, and put them together on the paper in front of you. Let them guide you and tell you where and how they need to be combined. Enjoy the process with no particular goals.
- When you feel that your creation is completed take a distance from your work.
- As a visitor in a gallery, enjoy the art you see in front of your eyes, and let yourself choose two spots. One familiar and one unexpected /unknown /weird.
- Let each of them talk about themselves (colors, shapes, energies, past stories, present).
- Which part of yourself does each of these spots touch? How do these two spots/ parts of yourself connect, or not, in the art, and in yourself.
- What do each of these sides have to offer one another and the bigger self?
- Share your experience (only the things you feel safe to share)

## Consent to Participate in Research

### **Group research study for the final project “Art Of Myself”**

You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being done by Dafni Asimakopoulou-Kouloulia. This research is exploring the idea that art is not only a tool to create beautiful artistic creations but also an enjoyable way for self-exploration.

If you have any questions, please ask the Project Leader

#### **What will happen if I decide to participate?**

If you agree to participate, the following things will happen:

- 1.You will be asked to participate in 5 art inner-work exercises
- 2.You will share with your group partner or the whole group your discoveries from the exercises
- 3.At the end of the seminar you will be asked to write down your experience and share it with the researcher.

#### **What are the benefits of being in this study?**

You will have the space, time and tools to experience a guided art therapy seminar and you may have the chance to self-explore new information about your inner self.

#### **How long will I be in this study?**

Participation in this study will take a total of [8] hours over a period of [2 days].

#### **What are the risks or side effects of being in this study?**

There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study.

For more information about risks and discomforts, ask the researcher.

### **How will my information be kept confidential?**

We will take measures to protect the security of all your personal information but as the researcher I can only be responsible for the confidentiality of the data collected by me and confidentiality may be breached by others in the focus group. So as a member of our group I'm encouraging all of us not to speak of what was discussed during the group. But once the group ends, I cannot be held accountable for other member's possible indiscretion

Information collected by this research project will be used by Dafni Asimakopoulou-Kouloulia and reviewed by Lilly Vassiliou and Gill Emslie as part of the evaluation of the project. Process Work Institute faculty and staff and/or other entities may be permitted to access your records, and there may be times when we are required by law to share your information. It is the investigator's legal obligation to report child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, harm to self or others or any life-threatening situation to the appropriate authorities, and; therefore, your confidentiality will not be maintained.

Your name will not be used in any published reports about this study.

### **Can I stop being in the study once I begin?**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study.

### **Whom can I call with questions or complaints about this study or about my rights as a research participant?**

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints at any time about the research study, Lilly Vassiliou, will be glad to answer them at [lvassiliou@gmail.com](mailto:lvassiliou@gmail.com)

**CONSENT**

You are making a decision whether to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided (or the information was read to you). By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant.

You have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to your satisfaction. By signing this consent form, you agree to participate in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Adult Subject                      Signature of                      Date  
(print)                      Adult Subject

**INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE**

This research study has been explained to the participant and all of his/her questions have been answered. The participant understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_

Dafni Asimakopoulou Kouloulia                      Name of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of Investigator/ Research Team                      Date  
Member)