



EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM OF ARTS THERAPIES EDUCATION

ECArTE

18TH EUROPEAN ARTS THERAPIES CONFERENCE

8-11 SEPTEMBER 2026

PULA, CROATIA

The Evolving Archetype of the Internalized Laestrygonians and Cyclops: Transforming through Systematic Deconstruction and Reconstruction

Diana Zuican

This experiential session is grounded in the powerful psychological insight of the C.P. Cavafy poem: “The Laestrygonians and the Cyclops... you will never encounter, if you do not carry them within your soul.” This therapeutic process uses the systematic repetition of construction and deconstruction to achieve agency over internalized fears, transforming the psychological monster from a static threat into a dynamic teaching resource. The methodology begins with an act of confrontation.

Participants first identify their personal Cyclops, an archetype of an internalized fear, and then use kinesthetic empathy to find and embody the physical movement, restriction, and shape of that monster within their body. They then build the monster's current, most powerful archetype (the initial, large form) using modular materials such as wood blocks, collage, or clay. The core of the workshop is the ritual of repetition and transformation.

Each participant engages in three to four iterative cycles of construction and deconstruction. In each cycle, they consciously remove one piece from the monster, symbolically shedding a facet of the fear. They then reconstruct the remaining parts into a new, smaller, more nuanced form, symbolizing how the fear still manifests in a different life context. Crucially, they reflect and assign a new meaning or purpose to the removed piece.

This continuous breaking and building demonstrates that the individual possesses the power to mould and transform their fears, moving them from a force of destruction to a source of insight. In the final cycle, the physical monster disappears entirely through deconstruction. The



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participant is ultimately left with a collection of lessons and new meanings, no longer needing an external structure to hold the fear, fostering inner resilience.

Biography

Diana Zuican is a Romanian visual artist based in Amsterdam whose practice spans surreal, conceptual, and documentary photography and illustration. Currently training in Intermodal Expressive Arts Therapy and advancing her studies in psychology with the Open University (UK), she focuses on trauma-informed care and the therapeutic role of creativity. Believing that self-knowledge is a playful, ongoing enquiry rather than a fixed state, she brings this ethos into community practice through urban foraging, whittling, and art workshops at a homeless shelter. She also serves as Secretary on the Board of NEXAA (Netherlands Expressive Arts Association).

Recent publications and conference presentations

Zuican, D. (2024). **Adult = the servant of the inner child**, at Paint a Future Pop-Up Gallery - this recent solo exhibition showcased a thematic body of work developed through photographic documentation of interviews. The project aimed to systematically explore the psychological landscape of intergenerational trauma and human conditioning, framing the adult persona as a construct shaped by the needs and experiences of the inner child. The resulting publication documents this exploration, offering insights into subconscious drivers of behavior.

Art Bruut Workshops (ongoing): Regular creative sessions conducted in partnership with Art Bruut at the Regenbook Shelter Amsterdam. These workshops focus on non-clinical therapeutic engagement and artistic self-expression for vulnerable populations.

Wild Spirits Workshop (October 2025): The first in this series of workshops is centred on practical urban foraging and home-made herbal tincture techniques.



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