

The geometry of healing

Points, Lines, Circles: Pathways of Transformation in the Arts Therapies

Salvo Pitruzzella

Let me invite you to embark in an imaginative journey through the themes of this year's Conference. We will take our first steps from the realm of geometry, beginning with the point: invisible, incorporeal, yet brimming with expressive potential, the silent origin from which all form and meaning emerge. When a force moves the point, the line is born, bestowed with movement and intention. Lines can intersect, making webs and networks arise, mirroring the entanglement of experience and relationship. Soon, the curved line closes upon itself, forming the circle: the Ouroboros, the eternal cycle of time. Here, geometry turns into symbol and archetype. The circle is perfection, eternity, and return; it is the mandala, the round dance, the recurring structure of a session. Cycles and rituals create safety, equality, and community, offering a frame for exploration and change. Yet, repetition is not always benign. Sometimes, the cycle becomes stagnant, endlessly revolving around the same issues and difficulties. Accordingly, we will call on nostalgia, the longing for return. We will discover it as a double-edge blade, through Zygmunt Bauman's sombre prophecies and Georgi Gospodinov's humorous yet acid narrative, echoing Nietzsche's portrait of humanity as ensnared within cycles of recurring sameness. We will see how Gilles Deleuze offers a contrasting perspective, seeing repetition not as the return of the identical, but as the production of difference: an act of creation, generating new meanings and experiences, breaking the logic of representation and identity. True repetition is the cradle of becoming and multiplicity. Finally, our journey carries us back home, to our everyday work, where the cycles of repetition and return are not abstract concepts but living processes. Clients may revisit the same image, movement, or story, but each encounter is unique, shaped by the present moment and the evolving self. Repetition becomes the engine of transformation, where the act of returning enables new insights, emotional shifts, and creative breakthroughs: each cycle is a new experience that brings us closer to Ithaca.

Bio

Salvo Pitruzzella was born and lives in Palermo. He is one of the pioneers of dramatherapy in Italy. Starting from his previous experiences as actor, playwright,

puppeteer, applied theatre trainer and psychodramatist, he developed his own methods and has been working as dramatherapist in various fields, especially in adolescent and adult mental health. He has directed the Dramatherapy training in Italy for 25 years and has been tenured Professor at the Fine Art Academy of Bari Palermo. One of the founders of EFD (European Federation of Dramatherapy) in 2013, he has been a member of its Executive Board since then. In 2023, after stepping down from the Board, he was appointed Member of Honour of the Federation. He served as Global Representative at ECArTE (European Consortium for Arts Therapies Education) and collaborated with the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London as External Examiner. He has written and edited numerous essays and manuals on dramatherapy and creativity education and contributed to several international volumes. Currently, he is the co-editor, with Susana Pendzik of the *Dramatherapy Journal*, the scientific journal of BADTh (British Association of Dramatherapists). He is also Lecturer of Dramatherapy in the Master course in Arts Therapies at Milan University.