



Seasons of Repair, Reconnection and Resourcing: The journey home from an African South perspective.

Seisoene van Herstel, Samekoms en Veerkrag: Die reis huistoe vanuit 'n Suid-Afrikaanse perspektief.

Marlize Swanepoel

This workshop offers participants an arts-based experiential process that explores Cavafy's poem *Ithaca* from an African South perspective, referencing both a geographic and epistemic location. It approaches the monomyth from a perspective of collectivism and draws on the work of sp(i)eel arts therapies collective, a non-profit organisation (NPO).

As a group of arts therapists, applied arts practitioners, and community arts facilitators, they have been delivering culturally relevant, trauma-informed programmes in South African communities for the past decade. Their community model of mental healthcare works with family and social systems to develop collective resilience and address transgenerational trauma in a culturally relevant manner. Their practice is rooted in an African philosophy of collectivism, inviting arts therapists to engage with psychological practices outside of an individualistic focus, offering a practical approach to considering the ecosystem that influences health and well-being.

The workshop is framed by theories of social anthropology, polyvagal theory, and African Psychology, following three core principles: cyclical work of repair through the arts, embodied knowledge, and collective health. Parallels will also be drawn between the organization's focus on the repair of transgenerational trauma and the conference setting.



Participants will engage in creative and embodied processes such as movement, breathwork, and collective image and story making. These activities are designed to foster connection to self, others, and the natural environment, inviting access to innate knowledge of intergenerational strengths as a resource and source of support gathered along the journey home.

Biography

Marlize Swanepoel is a dramatherapist and the founding director of *sp(i)eel arts therapies collective*, an NGO that addresses intergenerational trauma and co-create community-based models of mental health care that are culturally informed and relevant to the South African context. She is a guest lecturer, examiner and supervisor at the Universities of Cape Town and Witwatersrand and an enthusiastic advocate for the Arts for Health movement in South Africa that speaks to healthcare from an African South perspective. She loves being in spaces of learning, unlearning and dancing.

Recent publications and conference presentations:

Swanepoel, M (2025). Masterclass: **Anchored in Humanity: Arts-Based Well-being in Museum Spaces**. At the International Conference of Museums: *A Space for Revival: Museums for Mental and Emotional Wellbeing*, Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center, June 2025

Swanepoel, M (2025). Presentation: **Rupture and Repair: An interdisciplinary and embodied approach to Arts and Health Practices in a post-conflict South African context**. At the *Drama for Life Conference: Human Change! From Global ideas to Just(ice) (us)?*, October 2025

Swanepoel, M., & Conradie, U. (2023). **The medicine in the circle: A case example of embodied arts-based community practice to address intergenerational trauma in rural South Africa**. *Dramatherapy*, 44(2-3), 119-131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02630672231214649> (Original work published 2023)