



# Filmmaking as an Alchemical Vessel: A Journey Inward

**Judyta Daria Potocka**

This presentation explores filmmaking as a therapeutic process, functioning as a metaphorical vessel - a contemporary container for projection, amplification, and transformation of psychic life. This approach is grounded in analytical psychology, borrowing from what has already been established in film/video-based therapy and my dual experience working with children and young people as an art therapist using the medium of film, as well as a filmmaker involved in large-scale collective processes. At its heart lies an arts-based case study with an adolescent boy on the autism spectrum, where the entirety of communication was encapsulated in the process of filmmaking - working together to tell his stories.

The case study exemplifies how filmmaking allows insight into the participant's inner world. By tracing the recurrence of images, themes and motifs of home, adventure, and friendship in his stories, it illustrates how the psyche finds opportunities for expression. Through the collaborative process of filmmaking - experimenting with the camera, taking up filmmaking roles, storyboarding, and editing - the participant progressed from solitary play and echolalia to sustained engagement, unlocking verbal language in bilingual speech. Underscored is the significance of therapeutic presence, emphasizing its role in mirroring and the importance of a 'journey companion' in the process.

Filmmaking is framed as a journey inward toward self-discovery through the emergence of a personal system of references akin to archetypes already present in film worlds. With each new generation's closer relationship to film and video media, it becomes not only a language - one that is familiar and full of symbolic content but also a creative bridge. The presentation will position the act of filmmaking as an activation of imagination within a structured yet flexible container, where the language of film is unifying and allows one to travel between modalities and the array of different tools filmmaking has to offer.



## Biography

**Judyta Daria Potocka**, MA, is an art therapist, pedagogue, filmmaker, and lecturer exploring filmmaking as a vessel for therapy and research. She teaches Film and Photo Therapy at WSB University in Poland and co-founded the international artistic collective Without a Head. She holds an MA in Filmmaking from the University for the Creative Arts, Farnham, and an MA in Art Therapy from Ignatianum University in Kraków. Judyta integrates new media with traditional and expressive arts in therapeutic and educational settings; using film, grounded in analytical psychology, as a bridge for communication, imagination, and self-discovery with children, adolescents and people with disabilities.

## Recent Publications

Potocka, J.D. (2026). **Filmmaking as an alchemical vessel in the process of art therapy.** *Post-Traumatic Growth and Film/Video-Based Therapy: Cultivating Resilience Through Storytelling and Media Psychology.*

Potocka, J. (2022). **I'm different when you watch me and on being watched.** *Surveillance & Society.* 20(1), pp. 125–126