



“I don’t like travelling” – Ithaca for ever?

Irina Katz-Mazilu

When Odysseus returns to Ithaca, he has to fight the pretendants so as to recover his royal place and role. He is gratified with his wife’s fidelity and love. He managed to fulfill the Gods’ mission. He is supposedly satisfied. But he loses his son as tradition requires adult sons to travel far away, avoiding rivalry with the father. Nothing is told about his feelings, about the time he did not spend with his son, about aging. This story was born in patriarchal times. Centuries later, how can we consider Odysseus’ journey?

Why do we strive to travel back home, when space and time put it at distance? What is home? Surely a space for attachment and safety that we regularly need to revisit, either real or symbolic. Children are striving to grow, innocently unaware that every second of our lived time is gain and loss simultaneously. Loss and gain merge in a complex movement at the core of the human temporal paradox, with the past never coming back yet never being lost. Repetition is never identical, return to origins is impossible.

This creates a perpetual inner battle - symbolized either through fights, as Ulysses often delivered, or through lies, stratagems and manipulation. Did Odysseus also lie to himself? Yet there is no doubt about the authenticity of his motivations: satisfy the Gods and survive/be happy himself. Ours are not so different...we can also experience compulsion to leave and nostalgia for loss.

How can art and art therapy help us with the temporal paradox and the impossible return? How can we face and treat the reverse culture shock and vicarious traumatization? This workshop will offer an opportunity of symbolizing, through visual and tactile creativity, our challenges in moving on through time and space.



Biography

Irina Katz-Mazilu is a senior arts therapist, trainer and supervisor living in Paris, France. She is a full member of EFAT and of several French arts therapies associations, a founder and a Board member of the Romanian Art Therapy Association. She has practised with clients of all ages and condition in clinical and social organizations and is currently working in private. She has published articles and chapters in professional journal and books. Irina is also an active visual artist, member of the House of Artists in Paris. Art practice is at the core of her humanistic person-centered approach in art therapy.

Recent Publications

Katz-Mazilu I. (2025) **Aesthetics and Ethics in Art and Art Therapy**, *Aesthetics in Cultures, Materials and Philosophies*, 253-261, IntechOpen, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.1009507>

Katz-Mazilu I. (2025) **Art is Medecine - not Placebo**. *Trends Gen Med.*; 3(3): 1-4.

Katz-Mazilu. I. (2025) **Creating Beauty in Prison: Mona Lisa & The Milky Way**. *Int J Forens Sci Res.*; 2(1): 1-4.