

First Impressions

Below are our impressions of being at Worldwork 2008

The experience, unique. The human psyche, an abyss. The mind, a labyrinth... We want our whole world and we want it NOW. (Gerasimos Spyridopoulos)

A window with a view of the world. (Babis Kuyurukis)

When you surrender to the journey, then you'll surely step into impassable territories. (Christina Tsimoudi)

We have to be open-minded in order to work with world problems, and give the time for something new to take place inside us without criticizing. (Seval Osmanoglou)

May our steps return from all corners of the globe under the guidance of the star that points to home... (Ayşe Kiracı)

So many feelings - how to fit them into a phrase? Into a paragraph? Into an expression? How to express something so complex in a linear way? Impossible! And so, I feel the need to search the 'wider' world of the internet, for something which flirts with my psyche while I bathe in the feelings of these six days. And I find this image. It grabs me. It fills me up. It expresses me. I within you and you within me. Without and within simultaneously. The socio-political level transforms into the personal. Delineations lost. Boundaries lost. Born is the unique difference, the personal moment. And once again, like the wave withdrawing from the sand toward the ocean, the personal transforms into the socio-political. I feel deeply moved to have experienced conflict as relating, in a sea of so many people who, with all their souls, struggled to keep the relating alive, while conflict was tearing us apart. A soul-stirring experience. And something unexpected, which took me by surprise: a real sense of 'belonging', a real sense of a home (earth), of a nest. I feel it will take me time to digest. To act in the world respectfully and honor the experiences of this week. A deep gratitude to my fellow-travellers on this communal journey - 'within' and 'without' us. I miss you already... I seek you... with love, Anni Vasileiou





Integrating the journey...

Upon returning 'home' - we each took our time to make a first attempt at integrating the journey to London and our Worldwork experience... These then became part of a special issue of our workshop's magazine "POLYPHONIES"...

What is Worldwork?

It all began with this question. It was a far-away dream in which I didn't know if I could participate. But good luck came to my aid and I began the journey.

Leaving my daughter felt really bad. However, during this journey I realized that it was a once in a lifetime opportunity, an experience I can hardly describe in words.

Everything that we experienced there was very strong, all the issues we processed so important, that in the journey back – trying to assimilate all that we had experienced - I realized that I had really changed. What I enjoyed most were the relationships that evolved between us. *Seval Osmanoglou*

A journey unlike all others.

Thoughts and questions seek answers... how shall we come to an understanding? Since I skipped class in English, now I regret it! How will it be in the conference? What will I meet? I will certainly meet people of different cultures and views. But how will I make contact?

"What are you thinking?" I was saying to myself, "Who told you that they are looking for a judge? Open up your eyes, let your soul free and feel the energy of what is happening around you." Days after getting back home I live this dream again.. every moment, every glance, every word, but above all, this incredible company comes to my mind.

A thank you seems too little to reflect the feeling. A thank you is too little for everything life abundantly offers to me. *Makis Spyridopoulos*

It seemed like a dream this proposal for Worldwork. A dream which, for many reasons, might not have come true. Like true 'dream-acrobats', however,... we reached our destination. The river began its journey carrying 8 psyches ready for every challenge. In the process, we became 21... and then around 400...

For most of us, this was an unprecedented experience, as it was for me. What is this thing that I will participate in, with will and desire as my only guides? And I couldn't have known that the most difficult questions would come at the end, when everybody would be asking how Worldwork was.

Tough to answer.

All I can say is that what I have experienced all these days, has touched parts of me and changed a lot in my way of thinking and doing. *Christina Tsimoudi*

Worldwork... World and Work.

World, as in the people, the animals, the plants, the seas and the mountains... as in the words, the sounds, the dreams, the feelings... as in happiness, pain, love... as in the self, friends, family, partners...

Work, as in responsibility, energy, will, strength, faith... as in collaboration, solidarity, touching...

Two words that unexpectedly brought myriads of images into my mind and reminded me – because I forget from time to time - how big and complex the world that I live in is.

This is what I did in London... I became aware and I worked. I worked with myself, I worked with others, we worked with the World... I saw the World again, I looked it in the eye and I told it how lucky I am for experiencing every second of its strange time *Ayşe Kirac* /

The way home...

With a deep apology, I want to start these lines. An apology for those that I have made bitter and I have hurt, without understanding by reproducing and by letting existing stereotypes be reproduced, I was perpetuating and causing equal pain to my fellow human. This was one of the main things that I felt deep inside me at Worldwork.

How much we are all participants in the pain of the other, in our unawareness.

We have created a civilization which is vicious, because deep inside, we have not broken free from various forms of domination, so that we remain certain of our existence and all that we take for granted. So that we feel safe. And this structure in every era is supported by various social, political and religious beliefs. As if being just humans and humane is not enough.

However, every time someone is left outside, it reminds me a little of a game that we used to play when we were children. We ran around the chairs, and when the music stopped, everybody had to sit. The one left standing lost, was left outside, and every time some child would cry.

In London, it was as if all these children who had lost in a game like this, got together to share their pain. Children from 35 different countries. The room was full and the audience impatient. Who will get to the center to have their voice heard, to talk about what they were deprived of?

Not an easy thing at all, neither for the facilitator, nor for the participants.

In London, a safe space was structured, and we had the opportunity to talk. To talk about our inner polarizations. It wasn't easy to that extent that we did it. It is difficult to see that what is happening inside is also happening on the outside. Many spoke about anger that needs to be expressed. Personally, I am still searching where mine is. I hope I won't be surprised. Because, since I got back I express my anger more easily, and I have less endurance for abuse. I speak out more easily about issues that are considered as taboos. *Dilek Habip*

Worldwork: a life seminar

When I started to write about my experience of participating in Worldwork, I had a hard time. I didn't know what to say first and which words to choose to reflect this experience.

Then I decided to trust my feelings and let them guide me.

Worldwork was a journey. A journey to England and specifically to London. A multicultural city with people from all over the world. Different cultures, identities and backgrounds co-exist, creating the scenery of London. The cohabitation of all these people seems in harmony. But, if you become more observant, you will see that there are a lot of real, visible problems asking for solutions.



At the same time Worldwork was a journey to the whole world. People from America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia were participants. Different people, but at the same time they were the same. People with different languages, religions, colours, but with the same needs, anxieties, fears and insecurities.

One world and one humanity. Many problems. Many and different. But the same in their essence. Exclusion, racism, stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination are what trouble today's world.

Worldwork is a beginning. The beginning for people to come closer. The beginning to talk about the problems that the rest of the world won't talk about, even though they concern it. The beginning to listen to each other. The beginning of a transaction between people that leads to the change of all the world.

I have many and various feelings from my participation in this process. Emotion, rage, anger, exasperation, love and appreciation. Ambivalent feelings. Feelings I didn't try to quiet down, or pretend they didn't exist. I created the space inside me and gave the time to have all their aspects expressed.

Worldwork was the occasion to make a journey in the past. I went almost 5 years back, when the youth-worker team of the Creative Youth Workshop was first introduced and composed. I followed the route of this team with all the pleasant memories and the difficult moments that it faced.

Thinking about the worldwork experience, I felt a deep gratitude and appreciation. All the youth-workers of the CYW deserve a big thank you for being in the team, for sharing the experience, for putting in their energy, for the interest they have shown and their active presence in the team. A big thank you to the facilitator of this team for envisioning it, inspiring it, trusting it, supporting it on every step of the way and for giving a way out at moments that seemed like impasses. Essentially, she deserves a thank you for creating it and helping it grow as a team.

Finally, my self deserves a thank you for being open to and accepting new stimuli, difficulty, ease, obstructions, successes and failures. This is how I have learnt. knowledge and skills useful for life. My self deserves a thank you for growing and maturing.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Worldwork was a journey. A journey to the past, a journey to the present, an inner journey and a journey to the future. All these were aspects of a journey called life and the common root was how we can make our lives better in today's world.