

Curriculum Vitae

Biographical note Dr. **Maria Saridaki**

Paper proposal for the Multidisciplinary Congress PHI Utopias (Lisbon, Fundação Oriente, 20-22 October 2016):

“Eros and the struggle for reason: Our mind as the vehicle of the Universal Mind’s enfolding meaning”

I was born in Iraklio, Crete, Greece in 1973. I began my undergraduate studies at the Mackintosh School of Architecture in Glasgow in 1991 and transferred to Edinburgh College of Art (Heriot-Watt University) in 1994 where I obtained a Master’s in Architecture with Distinction in 1999. After commencing a PhD in Edinburgh under the supervision of Dr. Faozi Ujam, I moved to Belgium for personal and professional reasons. I am a registered architect both in Greece and Belgium, having worked at the offices of Skoutelis & Zanon in Crete and Poponcini & Lootens in Antwerp for several years during and after my studies. After juggling motherhood with a professional and academic career for several years, I finally received my PhD in the College of Humanities and Social Science in 2012 at the University of Edinburgh with the thesis: “BOUNDARY: an expression of the dynamic unity between man and environment. Building a paradigm to unravel the mind’s fundamental kinship with the cosmos and its role as the vehicle of the universe’s unfolding meaning”.

Having left Greece since my teens, the realisation of difference has formed my thinking and has subconsciously influenced my chosen subject of research. As a way of reattaching myself to my culture, I started teaching my native language Greek in Belgium. I have spent several years teaching Greek at Encora in Antwerp, while writing my PhD thesis until the present. I have always been passionate about languages and speak Greek, English and Dutch fluently. Since I became a mother, language and culture have engaged a more extensive part of my life. In 2014, I became a founding member of a non-profit organization (Orama vzw) that offers children from mostly mixed Greek/Belgian families and Greek immigrants the opportunity to learn the Greek language and come in contact with their shared heritage and identity. The last couple of years I felt the need to strengthen myself as a teacher. I completed a Teaching degree (magna cum laude) at HBO5 in Antwerp in 2015, an experience that has enriched my appreciation and thirst for knowledge.

Architecture, however, has always been my passion and I am slowly reattaching myself to it while extending my research, which actually stems from my diploma research on the Venetian Fortress of my hometown of Iraklion. I have since then been driven towards examining the fundamental meaning of boundary. Through the lens of an explorative methodology, I approached the genesis of ‘boundary’ in the birth of human consciousness and followed it along its progressive complexity as an inherent dynamic between our mind and our world. I widened the field of research to include myth, religion, language, culture, philosophy, science and architecture as manifestations of humanity’s gradual attempt to understand, adapt to and transform our world and ourselves within it

and in reference to it, displaying an inherent dynamic between our mind and our world.

After receiving my PhD I presented a paper at the 'Spaces and Flows: An International Conference on Urban and Extra Urban Studies' in Amsterdam (22-23 November 2013) with the title "Boundary: Towards a Rediscovery of Self through an Interactive Evolving Equilibrium". I am currently in the process of writing articles for presentation and publication originating from my thesis as an independent researcher. In the course of 2016 I will be presenting two more papers: at the 'Spatiality and Temporality' International Symposium, (22 April 2016) in Warsaw "The Self in flux: Approaching Resilience - Understanding Transition" and at the 'Place of Memory and Memory of Place' International Conference (10-11 June 2016) in Krakow "Embodied memory and world-view: The intertwining of mankind and the cosmos".