

BLACK SAND PLAY

For this technique, we are provided with a box filled with plain or colored sand, and a myriad small objects that can represent anything we want to bring into the session. We invite a part of ourselves to tell a story, perhaps our child self, or our Higher Self. We can deal with our issues, perhaps our shadow, or our inner critique. In this process we identify with the scene we create, and discuss it in the present tense. It's a profoundly healing experience.

For my class project at Hypnosis Clearing House, I chose the tray of black sand, to represent the night sky. I set up a wicked looking creepy tree, with a menacing ghoul in front of it at one corner, a moon temple surrounded by three birch trees, with three guardian spirits at the other. There was a raven (representing Morgan le Fey) in one of the birch trees, a black dog (the Greek Goddess Hecate) and black cat (the Egyptian Goddess Bast), lying together outside the temple. These are three Dark Goddesses that are my protectors and guides.

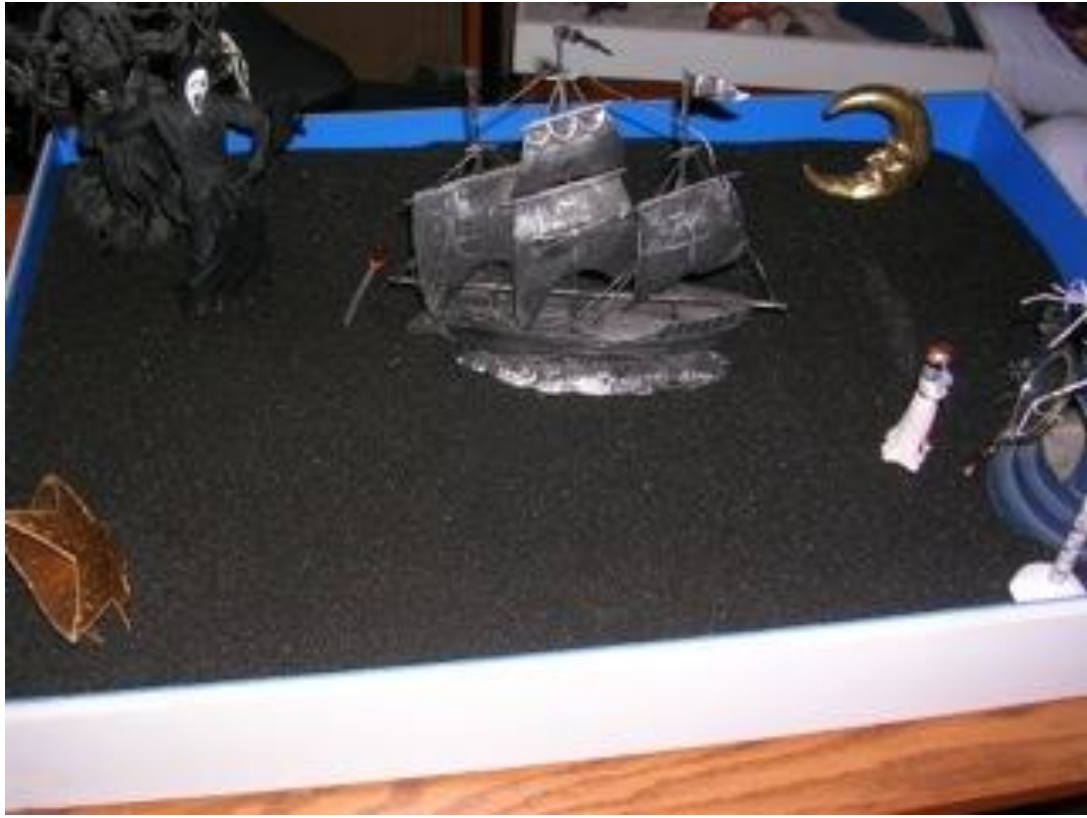
I chose a golden tin waxing moon in the upper right hand corner, and a gold tin star in the lower left corner. In the middle of the tray was a grey metal "ghost ship", sailing away from the isle of darkness (depression) toward the moon temple. I see myself in the Egyptian girl holding a gray cat was at the helm, facing the moon temple. In front of the temple is planted a mirror, and behind the mirror is the temple with a quartz hexagram pendant (actually the one I was wearing that day.) Behind the ship is a longsword, planted in the sand.

In my imagination, this was the night sky, but also a dark ocean, with floating moons, stars, trees, ships, buildings. The main character is the girl with her beloved pet (me and my departed cat, Ceilidh). The girl (who was me) boldly boards the ghost ship, and goes sailing away from the deathscape of depression. What I had to leave behind was the star of my old dreams (being a professional writer, and all the creative projects that never got published or recognized). I perform the magical act of severing the past with a sword, so that I will not get re-entangled in old scripts and depression. Note, that the gold star was not part of the land of depression. It had played an important part in keeping me from being devoured by the ghoul of depression, but it's time has past. In gratitude, it still remains in the night sky, visible, but dim.

I move toward a moon temple surrounded by birch trees and the totem animals of the Dark Goddesses. The birch trees offer me a sense of renewal. I have to see myself as I truly am (thus the mirror) in order to enter the temple and claim my true star.

The night that I did this process, the whole scene came alive in my dreams, and I woke up with an "epic poem" (see below) that encapsulated the experience.

For more information about Sandplay, see the article by Holly Holmes:
<http://www.openexchange.org/features/JFM11/holmes-meredith.html>



JOURNEY TO MY TRUE STAR

A silver masted sailing ship appeared tonight
Moving through a sky of black speckled sand
A spectral ghost ship, gleaming bright
Come to rescue me from the Dismal Island.

I was trapped under the Tree of Misery
Wrapped in the arms of a suffocating ghoul
Every attempt to escape and break free
Ended in defeat, shame, and ridicule.

A battered golden star lay beyond my reach
The last ray of hope floating far away
I had lost all my powers of speech
My story over, nothing left to say.

Before I was swallowed up by the demon
Silenced, my throat slit from ear to ear
I felt a wind stirring out of season
And the eerie ghost ship did appear.

A small grey kitten roared, like a Lion
And the ghoul, startled, let go its grasp
My throat sealed, and I was crying
Gulping sea salted air with every gasp.

I broke the arms that held me with a snap
And ran across the broken Dismal Shore
With a bound, I leapt across the gap
And landed safely on the silver floor.

The golden waxing moon was my guide
But there was one more battle, my last stand
I drew a sword from its leather hide
And cut the chord 'tween me and Dismal Island

I threw the sword into the sea behind
To stand guardian between me and hell
The sword is a symbol of the mind
And thus I have cast a magic spell

Liberated, I was free to start anew
And with my small companion, seek
A new star, "To my own self be true"
And find my own voice, and to speak.

The waxing moon showed me an island
Which promised magic and empowerment
A blue moon temple rested on black sand
Three white birches planted in the sediment.

A Raven perched in the bright birch tree.
A black hound curled around an ebon cat
I greeted the Dark Goddesses, Holy Three.
Celtic Morgan, Egyptian Bast, and Greek Hecat.

I tried to peek inside the temple, but could not see
My way was blocked by a shining mirror
They told me that ***until my only judge is me***
Upon my true self I cannot peer.

The kitten jumped, and fled into the shrine
And I was alone upon the clipper's prow
I finally saw the soul I recognized as mine
Shining from the mirror, smiling at me now.

Like meeting my oldest friend, for the first time
She'd been inside me all along
I disembarked the vessel, and began to climb
The journey to myself, made me strong

The mirror shimmered and I walked through
And in doing so, I became one with my own soul
Then I heard my kitten, calling "mew"
And realized there was one more step to being whole.

I walked inside the temple's arched door
And looked around to see what I could see
And there it was shining on the marble floor
A crystal star made by the Divine, just for me.

I picked it up and held it close to my heart
And heard a symphony of music, from inside
I realized that the star embraced every part
Of my being, and was my "safe place" to reside.

My kitten pawed my ankle, demanding I pay heed
And I picked him up and hugged him joyously
I realize now, I have everything I need
My own soul star is my special key.

(8/20/12)