

25th ANNUAL DAY IN APPLIED PSYCHOANALYSIS

Becoming Oneself: Exploring the Process of Transformation through Artistic and Psychoanalytic Engagement

A Hybrid Symposium
(pre-registration required)

SATURDAY, September 19, 2026
9:30AM TO 2:45PM (ET)



**Between Hours/
Interdisciplinary Dialogues**

Applied Psychoanalysis
Programme

tps&i
toronto psychoanalytic society & institute

Venue: 40 St. Clair Avenue East, Suite
203, Toronto Ontario M4T 1M9
(In-person attendance is limited to 50/ light
lunch provided) and

On-line via Zoom

Michele Beck | Vivienne Pasioka | Marilyn Charles | Nahaleh Moshtagh

Wilfred Bion had long envisioned psychological growth as occurring through a process of mentally digesting raw elements of experience, initially through the mind of the other engaged in *maternal reverie* and ultimately through adopting this process within one's own mind. He later emphasized the requirement of the analyst to remain receptive to learning from the experience of discovering primordial aspects of the self through the process. As such, growth is viewed as an ongoing process of self-discovery through engagement, with art and psychoanalysis offering potential catalysts for change.

This symposium will explore the experience of symbolic transformation set in motion through the process of coming into contact with different aspects of the self, whether through artistic endeavour or psychoanalytic encounter.

The morning session will showcase the 2025 film, *Learning to Speak*, by Michele Beck:



Learning to Speak, 2025
After a breakdown in her twenties, the filmmaker returns decades later to the psychiatric hospital where she was once a patient—seeking to understand how that experience shaped her life, her art, and her voice. *Learning to Speak* is not a story of overcoming, but of becoming—an exploration of how one makes meaning from the fragments of a life.

A dialogue between **Michele Beck** and **Vivienne Pasieka** will follow, focusing on the filmmaker's experience of making the film, the opportunity it affords for making further contact with evolving aspects of the self, including a second look by the filmmaker, and what we as participant observers might discover of our own evolution through the experience of engaging the film.

The afternoon session will elaborate on the theme of symbolic transformation from the perspectives of psychoanalysts, Marilyn Charles and Nahaleh Moshtagh:

In her presentation, *Language and Lyricism: The Aesthetic Underbelly of Psychoanalysis*, **Marilyn Charles** will discuss ways in which psychoanalysis, philosophy and literature, together, help us to better understand the interplay between primary and secondary process in artistic creations.

Then, drawing on Bion's concepts of *alpha function* and 'O,' where becoming oneself is linked to the mind's capacity to transform raw emotional experience into thinkable form, **Nahaleh Moshtagh** will explore how analytic and artistic engagement create conditions for such transformation to occur. Her talk will focus on moments in which experience shifts from unrepresented affect to symbolic presence, allowing a different relation to truth and to oneself to emerge.

Following these presentations, the two speakers will engage in dialogue with one another after which the morning and afternoon panel will reconvene for further commentary and engagement with the audience.

This symposium has been structured to allow participants ample time to engage the film, reflect on the theme and participate in the discussions. In-person attendance is limited to 50 so early registration is recommended to secure your place on-site.

We welcome you to join us for a day of stimulating dialogue!

About the Speakers:

Michele Beck LP, MFA is a visual artist, filmmaker, and psychoanalyst in private practice in New York City. Her work moves between documentary, installation, and performance, exploring the body as a site of language, memory, and psychological experience. Her films and installations have been presented internationally at venues including the ICA, London; Galerie Chez Valentin, Paris; the Bronx Museum; the Queens Museum; PS122; and on Amazon Prime. Her documentary *My Erotic Body* (2018) screened at the Austin Film Festival, Anthology Film Archives, the Berlin Porn Film Festival, the New York City Independent Film Festival, and the Chain Film Festival, where it received the award for Best Short Documentary. Her most recent film, *Learning to Speak* (2025), has screened at Film Forum, the American Psychoanalytic Association National Meeting, Division 39 (APA), the International Bion Conference, and other psychoanalytic institutes. She holds an MFA in Sculpture from Parsons School of Design, a BA in Art History from New York University, and a Certificate in Psychoanalysis from the Manhattan Institute for Psychoanalysis. She teaches at The New School.

Vivienne Pasioka PhD, C.Psych is a psychoanalyst and a member of the Toronto Psychoanalytic Society and International Psychoanalytical Association. She trained as a clinical psychologist in Dublin (a graduate of University College Dublin) and Toronto, holding a PhD in clinical psychology from the University of Toronto where her developmental research on maternal/infant dynamics propelled her ongoing involvement in psychoanalytic community outreach, specifically in infant mental health and postnatal care. She is a faculty member of the Toronto Psychoanalytic Institute and Society and is Chair of *Between Hours: Inter-disciplinary Dialogues* and *Freud Café Canada*. Her recent contribution, *Babushka Dolls: the Infant in the Toddler in the Mother (in the Analyst)*, will appear in the forthcoming book by Meg Harris Williams, entitled *Our Eternal Home: Bion's idea of the Self*, published by Routledge. She maintains a practice in Toronto in infant, child and adult mental health.

Marilyn Charles PhD, ABPP is a psychologist and psychoanalyst at the Austen Riggs Center, Co-Chair of the Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society (APCS), and Scholar of the British Psychoanalytic Council. Affiliations include the Chicago Center for Psychoanalysis, Universidad de Monterrey, Harvard Medical School, and the Association for Psychosocial Studies. Marilyn is also an artist; her work was featured at the George Mason University Gallery and in her book chapter in DellaPoetra's *Perspectives in Creativity, V. II.*; and a poet, with a volume of her poetry from her years on the couch forthcoming, titled: *Orphans of the Real: Reflections on Love and Loss* (Mission Point Press). Her research interests include creativity, metacognition, the intergenerational transmission of trauma, and the impact of devaluation on women and other marginalized groups, and she is committed to mentoring future generations of psychoanalytic scholars, clinicians, and researchers. She has consulted with many groups including *Gunawirra*, in New South Wales, which resulted in the publication of *The Importance of Play in Early Childhood Education* (with Jill Bellinson) and has presented her work nationally and internationally, publishing more than 150 articles and book chapters and six books, including *Patterns: Building Blocks of Experience*; *Working with Trauma: Lessons from Bion and Lacan*; *Psychoanalysis and Literature: The Stories We Live*; and, most recently, *Echoes of Trauma: Meaning and Identity in Psychoanalysis*. She has also published five edited volumes, including: *Introduction to Contemporary Psychoanalysis*; *Fragments of Trauma and the Social Production of Suffering* (with Michael O'Loughlin); and *Women and Psychosis* and *Women and the Psychosocial Construction of Madness* (with Marie Brown).

Nahaleh Moshtagh PhD is a psychoanalyst and clinical psychologist based in Toronto. She is a graduate of the Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute and Iran University of Medical Sciences. Dr. Moshtagh is the recipient of the 2022 Edith Sabshin Teaching Award from the American Psychoanalytic Association. She is the Director of the HamAva Institute for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy in Tehran, Iran. She serves as teaching faculty and supervisor at the Toronto Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis. She is also a member of the Editorial Board of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. She has published in *JAPA*, *Psychoanalytic Review*, *Modern Psychoanalysis*, *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, *American Imago* and *Clio's Psyche*. Her book *Becoming a Listening Mind* (Karnac) is forthcoming.

Images, by Michele Beck
Titled, 03.14.2026 and 03.09.2026 respectively, in their order of appearance

Program

- 9:30 Welcome and Introductions:
Gordon Yanchyshyn MD
- 9:40 Film Showing: Learning to Speak (50 mins)
Virtual attendees will receive a link in advance
- 10:30 Coffee Break (15 minutes)
- 10:45 Michele Beck and Vivienne Pasieka in conversation
- 11:30 Discussion with the Audience
- 12:00 Lunch Break: light lunch provided on site (45 minutes)
- 12:45 Marilyn Charles
- 1:10 Nahaleh Moshtagh
- 1:35 Marilyn Charles and Nahaleh Moshtagh in conversation
- 1:50 Open Panel Commentary and Audience Discussion
- 2:45 Closing Remarks



Registration:

On-line: www.torontopsychoanalysis.com

Registration deadline: September 10, 2026

Or email: admin@torontopsychoanalysis.com

Early Registration: **In-person attendance:** (before July 31, 2026) \$190 Canadian

(light lunch provided) (after July 31, 2026) \$225

On-line: (before July 31, 2026) \$175

(after July 31, 2026) \$200

Full-Time Students in universities and colleges, and Full-time mental-health trainees are eligible for a 25% reduction in course fees. Proof of 2026/2027 status needs to be provided. Please contact the tps&i directly to register at a discount.

In-person attendance is limited to 50 and will be on a first-come-first-served basis. Please register early to secure your place in this intimate dialogue.

This event is eligible for Section 1 CME credits (0.5 credits/hour)

Refunds must be requested in writing 2 weeks prior to the beginning of the event, after which fees cannot be returned. A handling fee of \$50 will be retained.

Organizing Committee: Vivienne Pasieka PhD, Chair, Gordon Yanchyshyn MD, Simran Chahal MA, and Vesna Krstich MA