

## Introduction to a Visual Literacy Workshop

**“Reframing Stereotypes”, Tuesday September 26, 12.00-14.00**

Why do we find it difficult to change what limits us in our daily lives? How and why has experience convinced us that the way we think and act, the structures, habits and conditions we live in and with are inevitable? Or, why are they so difficult to change?

We are surrounded by a complex and multi-layered world. Images, words, sounds, ideas flood our daily lives. They have convinced us that we freely choose among them, but, in reality, they communicate with us in subtle ways, sending messages that we decipher without even being aware of it. Result? We end up perceiving ourselves within their limiting concepts and thought-lines.

Visual literacy (VL) workshops stem from the concession that all beliefs and stances are limiting. With an aim to open to new ideas, possibilities and approaches related to our personal or professional lives, the interactive and participatory VL workshops explore our perceptions and assumptions.

Visual Literacy is the ability to read critically behind the visual images of our world. By doing that, we understand the hidden messages and how they trap us in a comfortable, familiar state. The VL process helps us to develop 'antibodies' to the influence of narratives that dominate our social space and insist on 'recruiting' us, not necessarily for our benefit.

During this introductory Visual Literacy workshop, "Reframing Stereotypes", we will take a glimpse of how collective images speak to our emotional domains, dictate our choices and walks of life keeping us bound to certain frameworks of thought. Through participatory and interactive steps, we will get a brief idea on how to explore our own perceptions and we will briefly experience the mechanism to abandon old ways of thinking by discovering more and different versions of the present and the future, building a more complete life.

The participatory and interactive Visual Literacy Workshops respond to the urgent need to realize that we can always choose how we interpret the events around us, how we position ourselves towards them and, obviously, how we act.

VL workshops are suitable for anyone interested in better understanding thyself and the world, ima(gi)ning a different and better one.

**Pre-workshop task:** Please, send a couple of images that depict what a 'stereotype' means to you. Although stereotypes are different, depending on the domain they refer, please choose the first version that comes in your mind and associate it with a picture that best represents how you feel and think about it. The picture can be the product of your camera or mobile, or derive from any other source as far as it really captures your thoughts and feelings.

Please send the images latest by September 23 at [v.karaiskou@ouc.ac.cy](mailto:v.karaiskou@ouc.ac.cy).