





**an cuardach seo naofa.  
Nuair a throid na cosa.**

**Meta narrative in Site-specific Performance Practice as a Platform for  
Deconstructive Ecopsychology.**

**Presentation and film sharing by Dr Beatrice Jarvis**



I want to begin this paper with a very short meditation.

Please take a moment to align yourself in your seat; feel the weight of your body pouring and rooting down to your feet. Feel the soles of your feet touching the earth beneath them. Take a moment to sense your breath; feel your lungs inflate and deflate. Think about where on this earth you are. Find an image of this place and yourself in it. We are all here. Now.

Thich Nhat Hanh famously says: Walk as if you are kissing the earth with your feet.

This paper is based on this level of attention, deep listening, attunement and alertness that meditative and connective practice can allow us to have; seeking to develop a deeper sense of self-realisation and understanding which Buddhist practice seeks.

## 1. Locating the roots | Defining the practice

This paper is the beginning of my personal quest to answer the following questions around the development of eco-somatic practice and explorations of dance for camera:

- *Can choreographic work emerging from the experience of landscape create an embodied archive of a place?*
- *How is the experience of the landscape translated into the actions of the body?*
- *How can a choreographer create a process, which enables dancers and non-dancers to actively deconstruct their experience of their environment?*
- *How can site specific performance become a social medium for the study of the political and cultural shifts of embodied terrain?*

The film work which I will play at same time as my paper are my explorations of a ritual walk I have taken many times in Donegal. Reflecting and being guided by the details of the landscape; this work explores embodiment and what it might mean to fuse eco-somatic practice with dance for camera. The use of camera in this film has been as eye; perhaps the eye of a bird or leaf; finding a way to share my practice without removing it from the landscape from which it has emerged from.

**How to become as heather to hill.**

**Towards studies in interaction .**

*so are we to the trees as are they to the rocks and the hills.*

**to the endangered and vanished ones.**

**To hold memory**

**and let it fall.**

To hold dust and let the wind take it.  
to press a cold rock against my lips  
to stick my tongue out into the rain  
to get my feet so wet i can no longer feel them  
to press my spine against a tree  
to mould myself into sand

**How to become a part of this earth**

the metal compositions of blood

**rust, skin, iron, bone.**

rot, decay, birth and growth.

the gift of pen and paper

the gift of a seed.

**The gift of screen.**

The gratitude of seeking to understand place through experience.

Within my work I have taken the definition of somatic practice from Sondra Fraleigh; who explores:

“The eco-somatic concept that body sensibility and conscious action can facilitate planetary awareness”<sup>1</sup>

This research process is seeking to explore what Deborah Bird Rose refers to an ‘emplaced ecological self’ that is permeable where, ‘place penetrates the body, and the body slips into place’ (2002: 312).<sup>2</sup>

My entire practice is seeking to explore the possibility of somatic practice to generate a process through which I can articulate the specific natures, narratives and sensations of the landscapes which I traverse. The real question; one familiar with all disciplines remains constant:

### **How do I embody and articulate my experience of time and space.**

This can be closely shadowed by RD Laing’s writings:

‘We can see other people’s behaviour, but not their experience. This has led some people to insist that psychology has nothing to do with the person’s experience, only with their behaviour.’<sup>3</sup>

‘ I see you and you see me. I experience you and you experience me. I see your behaviour. You see my behaviour. But I do not, never have and never will see your experience of me. Just as you cannot see my experience of you. My experience of you is not inside me, it is simply you, as I experience you. And I do not experience you as inside me. Similarly I take it

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<sup>1</sup> Fraleigh, S (2018) Performing ecologies in a world in crisis. In *Choreographic Practices*. (2018) Issue 9. Volume 1. 10.1386/chor.9.1.3\_2 Intellect Ltd Editorial.

<sup>2</sup> East, A. (2018), ‘Home imagined: Uncovering a sensuous history of people and place through ecosomatic improvisation’, *Choreographic Practices*, 9:1, pp. 145–68, doi: 10.1386/chor.9.1.145\_1

<sup>3</sup> Laing, R. D (1967) *The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise*. Penguin Books. London. P15

that you do not experience me as inside you. I do not experience your experience, I experience you experiencing. We are both invisible men.’<sup>4</sup>

This form of somatic practice does not always have tangible outcomes; as East asks: “What does this kind of somatic research contribute towards the world of knowledge? Can we seek to understand habitation of previous others to a place through our own experience and imaginings? Eco-somatic research lies somewhere amongst this quiet action and contemplative stillness.”<sup>5</sup>

There is a need for stillness in this ever faster world; the need to tread very slowly; to count the grass stalks and to watch the woodlouse cross the wooden table as I write these words. Dance to me is a form of learning; of knowing and of deep listening. This is very much on a personal level and when this is applied with a more socially conscious stance and this process of deep listening is applied to a wider cultural context; as Fraleigh explores: “Dancing can be employed as a language promoting change in the Anthropocene.”<sup>6</sup>

Fraleigh explores somatic work as a regenerative practice<sup>7</sup> and explores: “Ways of moving that stimulate an experience of ‘being part of’, ‘being among rather than being at the centre.’<sup>8</sup> Her work can be seen as key as she describes somatic learning as: “the two-way process of co-creation, ‘inter-learning’ and mutual influence that goes on constantly – how I affect my environment and how it affects me as we adapt to, calibrate with and learn from

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<sup>4</sup> Laing, R. D (1967) *The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise*. Penguin Books. London. P15

<sup>5</sup> East, A. (2018), ‘Home imagined: Uncovering a sensuous history of people and place through ecosomatic improvisation’, *Choreographic Practices*, 9:1, pp. 145–68, doi: 10.1386/chor.9.1.145\_1

<sup>6</sup> Fraleigh, S (2018) Performing ecologies in a world in crisis. In *Choreographic Practices*. (2018) Issue 9. Volume 1. 10.1386/chor.9.1.3\_2 Intellect Ltd Editorial.

<sup>7</sup> Reeve, S. (2018), ‘On the way to regenerative choreography’, *Choreographic Practices*, 9:1, pp. 75–80, doi: 10.1386/chor.9.1.75\_1

<sup>8</sup> Reeve, S. (2018), ‘On the way to regenerative choreography’, *Choreographic Practices*, 9:1, pp. 75–80, doi: 10.1386/chor.9.1.75\_1

one another.<sup>9</sup> This process of exchange and learning is central to my creation of eco-somatic ritual performance.

Through my habitation, working and workshoping in particular landscapes of Inshore in Donegal; I seek to explore the idea that it is indeed: 'possible to move beyond something called ecological or sustainable performance to a consciousness of regenerative performance.

This means aspiring not simply to leave things in as good a condition as we find them, but to create the conditions in which they can begin to revive, regenerate and thrive.<sup>10</sup>

I use the process of making films and workshops in these particular landscapes as mechanism to develop an ecologically aware dance practice which supports, nurtures and enriches a sense of place.

In her seminal chapter *Ritual is everything*, Chappelle asks us to question: "How can we learn from the Salmon"<sup>11</sup> Taking specific parts of an ecological system and tracing how their habits and routes can expand and deepen our understanding of a particular landscape or place and eventually that of ourselves.

Throughout my research process I have pondered upon the notion of what it truly means to connect with ourselves and with landscape. I often feel "without discipline," very disciplined in what I am doing but without a discipline in which I feel this work truly sits. It was through

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<sup>9</sup> Reeve, S. (2018), 'On the way to regenerative choreography', *Choreographic Practices*, 9:1, pp. 75–80, doi: 10.1386/chor.9.1.75\_1

<sup>10</sup> Reeve, S. (2018), 'On the way to regenerative choreography', *Choreographic Practices*, 9:1, pp. 75–80, doi: 10.1386/chor.9.1.75\_1

<sup>11</sup> LaChapell. D *Ritual is Essential in Drengron. A & Inoue . Y ( 1995) The Deep Ecology Movement. North Atlantic Books. Berkeley, California. P222*

a very detailed literature review of Deep Ecology I feel I have almost found a home. Chappelle explores: “If we are truly to reconnect with the land, we need to change our preconceptions and approach more than our location. As long we limit ourselves to rationality and its limited sense of practicality we will be disconnected from the deep ecology of our place.”<sup>12</sup> As Heidegger explains: ‘Dwelling is not primarily inhabiting but taking care of and creating the space within which something comes into its own and flourishes.’ It takes both time and ritual for real dwelling.”<sup>13</sup>

*Light of sun*  
*Radiance of Moon*  
*Splendor of Fire*  
*Speed of Lightning*  
*Depth of sea*  
*Stability of earth*  
*Firmness of rock*

*This search for the possibility of deep peace.*

**I return to standing still in the fern.  
My feet buried deep into the earth.  
I am listening to the sound of trees  
welcoming the light of the day.**

LaChapelle explores: “Ritual is the focused way in which we both experience and express respect. Ritual is essential because it is truly the pattern that connects. ... Ritual provides us a tool for learning to think logically analogically and ecologically as we move toward a sustainable culture.”<sup>14</sup> In my long distance walks, slow improvisations, exploration of movements and delving’s in to the depths of defining the somatic I have feel that ritual is a term best to describe my action; again LaChapelle explores how ritual provides a space for

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<sup>12</sup> LaChapell. D Ritual is Essential in Drengrson. A & Inoue . Y ( 1995) The Deep Ecology Movement. North Atlantic Books. Berkeley, California. P224  
<sup>13</sup> LaChapell. D Ritual is Essential in Drengrson. A & Inoue . Y ( 1995) The Deep Ecology Movement. North Atlantic Books. Berkeley, California. P224  
<sup>14</sup> LaChapell. D Ritual is Essential in Drengrson. A & Inoue . Y ( 1995) The Deep Ecology Movement. North Atlantic Books. Berkeley, California. P225



the mover that is: “Neither opposing nature, nor trying to be in communion with nature, but of finding ourselves within nature, and that is the key to a sustainable culture.”<sup>15</sup>

In terms of defining my practice; I would like to draw your focus to my search for a working definition of deep ecology; Devall most clearly articulates:

‘It can potentially satisfy all our yearnings; faith and trust in our most basic intuitions; courage to take direct action; joyous confidence to dance with sensuous harmonies discovered through spontaneous and playful dialog with the rhythms of our bodies, the rhythms of flowing water, changes in the weather and seasons, and the overall processes of life on earth.’<sup>16</sup>

Gary Snyder calls this practice ; “the real work” the work of really looking at ourselves and becoming more real.<sup>17</sup>

As he most aptly states:

**stay together**  
**learn the flowers**  
**go light**<sup>18</sup>

Let us consider this term; Learn the flowers. I equate this to a strong summary of the deep investigation of self in Landscape which can be linked to the explorations of the self in the

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<sup>15</sup> LaChapell. D Ritual is Essential in Drengrson. A & Inoue . Y ( 1995) The Deep Ecology Movement. North Atlantic Books. Berkeley, California. P222

<sup>16</sup> Devall, B., & Sessions, George. (1985). *Deep ecology*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith. P 7

<sup>17</sup> Devall, B., & Sessions, George. (1985). *Deep ecology*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith. P 7

<sup>18</sup> Snyder. G. For the Children (<http://moralground.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/GarySnyder.pdf> )

Eastern Taoist study. Taoism tells us there is a way of unfolding which is inherent in all things.<sup>19</sup>

The poem; Recovering our Roots in the Tao Te Ching further develops this;

**And see**

**Now all things rise**

**To flourish and return**

**Each creature coming home**

**To recover its roots.** <sup>20</sup>

To give a wider context to the term deep ecology: David Rothenberg describes the term as a way of transforming society; exploring how in order to do this we first need to transform ourselves. Arne Ness also describes the ecological self as: “that with which this person identifies. This key sentence emphasis here is that rather than definition about the self-shifts the burden of clarification from the term self to that of identification.” <sup>21</sup>

The term deep ecology within my practice is a searching, a need for belonging and a quest for a home within landscape. A seeking to connect deeply with the ground under my feet and to feel the soil between my toes; as Rothenberg explores: “We feel estrangement from the Earth because we have imposed complication upon the complexity of nature.”<sup>22</sup>

If one takes to the notion of realisation and expansion of the self seriously it involves considering more and more of nature and one’s environment as an essential part of one’s identity. <sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Devall, B., & Sessions, George. (1985). *Deep ecology*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith. P 11

<sup>20</sup> From Devall, B., & Sessions, George. (1985). *Deep ecology*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith. P 14

<sup>21</sup> Naess, A (1987) *Self Realisation; An Ecological Approach to Being in the World*. The Trumpeter. USA (pp35-42) P 35.

<sup>22</sup> Rothenberg, D. *A Platform of Deep Ecology in Drengson*. A & Inoue . Y ( 1995) The Deep Ecology Movement. North Atlantic Books. Berkeley, California. P160

<sup>23</sup> Rothenberg, D. *A Platform of Deep Ecology in Drengson*. A & Inoue . Y ( 1995) The Deep Ecology Movement. North Atlantic Books. Berkeley, California. P164

By looking towards ecosomatic practice we can transform ourselves and our relationship to environment and be more aware of the multiple narratives which coexist in the texture of place:

Wendell Berry articulates, *'once we see our place, our part of the world, as surrounding us, we have already made a profound division between it and ourselves. We have given up the understanding, dropped it out of our language and so out of our thought that we and our world create one another, depend on one another, are literally part of one another, that our land passes in and out of our bodies just as our bodies pass in and out of the land; that as we and our land are part of one another so all who are living are neighbours here; human, plant and animal, are all a part of one another and so cannot possibly flourish alone, our culture and our place are images of each other and inseparable from each other, and so neither can be better than the other.'*<sup>24</sup>

This work can be seen a ritual pilgrim; a journey of transformation which was a personal ritual and process to overcome the grief of losing my close friend to suicide. In some ways this all began in the process of running away; from turning to landscape in search of answers and healing. Akin to Buddhist practice exploring transformation of suffering into healing and relating this to the principles of deep ecology; sensing **nothing can be changed and everything can be done**. There is a strong optimism and enquiry within my work exploring the concept of healing earth and self through practice.

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<sup>24</sup> Berry.W ( 1977) P 22 In Seamon ( 1979) A Geography of the Lifeworld. Croom Helm. London P159

Linda Bauer; In her key article: Body and Earth as One <sup>25</sup> explores how somatic practice seeks to explore and embody the whole person; physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual. Somatic practice is traditionally defined as; “The body experienced from within.”<sup>26</sup> She goes on to explore significance of adding ‘eco’ to the term: “begins to include an organisms relationship with its environment. Somatic practice in its many forms actively encourages a sense of attentiveness; a process of gradual attunement to the self and environment to allow for deeper sense of presence which seeks to have a positive effect on overall well-being and daily experience of time and space. I feel somatic practice really allows me to question; **what is it to experience being me, being human?**

Bauer also suggests that on going and sustained somatic practice can; “begin a process of self-enquiry and learning that empowers us to a more ongoing sustainable self-care.”<sup>27</sup> This fused to with concepts of Deep Ecology can therefore allow us to: ‘reawaken to our interconnection with nature in a profound and personal way.”<sup>28</sup> These ideas can be traced to Anna Halprin and her seminal documentary; Returning Home in which we see the ways Halprin coped with death, loss and illness of self and earth through seeking union through place. Through her journeys to find the ecological self, there are also generated wider social implications for this mode of practice<sup>29</sup>.

*“One of the things that you learn about working with real life issues is that it can be transformative. You work with an issue because it is unresolved and through the dance we hope to discover new possibilities..... And by doing it you are getting to a different place with the issue and with your life. The dance changes the dancer. The purpose of the dance is to create change. That’s why we started to use the word*

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<sup>25</sup> Bauer, L ( 2008) Body and Earth as One. Concious Dancer ( 2008 Spring edition) Accessed on line: <http://susanbauer.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Ecosomatics-CONSCIOUS-DANCER-8-9.pdf> ( April 2018)

<sup>26</sup> Bauer, L ( 2008) Body and Earth as One. Concious Dancer ( 2008 Spring edition) Accessed on line: <http://susanbauer.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Ecosomatics-CONSCIOUS-DANCER-8-9.pdf> ( April 2018)

<sup>27</sup> Bauer, L ( 2008) Body and Earth as One. Concious Dancer ( 2008 Spring edition) Accessed on line: <http://susanbauer.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Ecosomatics-CONSCIOUS-DANCER-8-9.pdf> ( April 2018)

<sup>28</sup> Bauer, L ( 2008) Body and Earth as One. Concious Dancer ( 2008 Spring edition) Accessed on line: <http://susanbauer.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Ecosomatics-CONSCIOUS-DANCER-8-9.pdf> ( April 2018)

<sup>29</sup> Halprin, A. (1965) *Moving Towards Life. Five Decades of Transformational Dance*. New England USA Wesleyan University Press. p 14

*ritual. To distinguish from dance or entertainment, dance as spectacle. Not that it is not spectacle or that is not entertaining, but that is not its purpose, and that is very important for me.'*<sup>30</sup>

Halprin's emphasis upon choreography as tool for social transcendence and its potential to function as a tool for the deconstruction of social hierarchy have made a seminal influence upon the methodology used in this research, with reference to Halprin's explorations ritual in everyday experience. Halprin facilitated the term performance to become a more open and accepting term; allowing performance to become a mindful state of physical awareness in which concepts and contexts of the body and its lifeworld are embodied and explored with the movement vocabulary available to the mover in question. This new state of performance allowed for an authentic and empowered mover to emerge from the performance process, free from codified technique and perceptive to their own subtle nuances of exploration of the physical self.<sup>31</sup>

Stepping away from dance in its most conventional form of repetitive routines; avoiding learning "step"; avoiding studios and seeking to generate movement material in the heightened state of the ecological self all form a seminal part my own journey.

It is curious to explore the work of Paul Shepard in imaginary dialog with Halprin; he explores;

" Ecological thinking requires a kind of vision across boundaries. The epidermis of the skin is ecologically like a ponds surface or a forest soil, not a shell so much a delicate interpenetration. It reveals the self-ennobled and extended rather than threatened as part

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<sup>30</sup> Halprin, A. (1965) *Moving Towards Life. Five Decades of Transformational Dance*. New England USA Wesleyan University Press. p 14

<sup>31</sup> Ross, J. *Anna Halprin's Urban Rituals*. TDR (1988-), Vol. 48, No. 2 (Summer, 2004), pp. 49-67. The MIT Press. p57

of a landscape and the ecosystem, because the beauty and complexity of nature are continuous with ourselves.”<sup>32</sup>

He goes on to support key ideas within Halprin’s practice; exploring: “ We are conditioned by society and the environment at every stage in the evolution of self-concept. Yet we also shape the environment and co-create the social fabric which supports us.”<sup>33</sup>

Shepard provokes: “Our wild self is waiting” <sup>34</sup> and this self is the self which this practice seeks to locate; using isolation, distance, repetition and deep listening as well as a continuous practice of somatic improvisation as a way to locate through practice a place of self-realisation and consideration as to how the self-functions, responds and reacts to its habitat.

Naess further points to the significance of Deep ecology as a platform to: “ask why and how where others do not.”<sup>35</sup> This process of asking deeper questions to ourselves and landscape as one in order to maximise self-realisation to improve a more active sense of collective being and responsibility.

Bauer furthers supports this idea exploring; “ Embodied presence can potentially support a more ecologically conscious perspective.” Olson, ( Body and Earth 2002) also suggests; “Our bodies know so much. It is our job to listen. We are part of, not separate from the earth we inhabit. Our bones and breath, and blood are minerals, air and water around us. Not separate but the same” <sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Shepard, P ( 1969) p2 In Devall, B. *The Ecological Self in Drenghson, A & Inoue, Y ( 1995) The Deep Ecology Movement*. North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, California. P102

<sup>33</sup> In Devall, B. *The Ecological Self in Drenghson, A & Inoue, Y ( 1995) The Deep Ecology Movement*. North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, California. P103

<sup>34</sup> In Devall, B. *The Ecological Self in Drenghson, A & Inoue, Y ( 1995) The Deep Ecology Movement*. North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, California. P121

<sup>35</sup> Devall, B., & Sessions, George. (1985). *Deep ecology*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith. P 65

<sup>36</sup> Bauer, L ( 2008) *Body and Earth as One. Concious Dancer ( 2008 Spring edition)* Accessed on line: <http://susanbauer.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Ecosomatics-CONSCIOUS-DANCER-8-9.pdf> ( April 2018)



## 2. On Process: Knowing the Body | Knowing the Land

In terms of detailing the specific nuances and scores of my practice, I am keen to remain slightly aloof in the sense that it is a very personal, haptic and evolving process. To explore broadly; my practice seeks to generate a direct sensory perception of surroundings learning to reengage through specific movement rituals which allow for emphasis of the mutual connectedness of body to earth. I am in some ways fusing meditative Movement and awareness of proprioception.

As Steinman explores: “ Becoming conscious of our structure, becoming conscious of our movement habits and bringing them to our attention of the conscious mind allows us to have the opportunity to change our patterning.”<sup>37</sup>

*... Explaining this work is like trying to explain how a strawberry tastes to someone who has never tasted as strawberry.”*

*Gertrud Falke-Heller 1980<sup>38</sup>*

This research has developed a specific approach to ‘ reading’ and writing the experience of the landscape as an embodied spatial practice mapped by screen. Drawing from the work of Mabel E. Todd<sup>39</sup> one can quickly see how the practice of walking in place with specific awareness of the body in relation to self and environment can dynamically improve a sense

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<sup>37</sup> Steinman. L (1986) *The Knowing Body: The Artist as Storyteller in Contemporary Performance*. North Atlantic Books. California. P19

<sup>38</sup> Loukes. R (2004) *Body Awareness in Performer Training: The Hidden Legacy of Gertrud Falke-Hetter (1891-1984)* in *Dance Research Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Summer, 2007), pp. 75-95

<sup>39</sup> Todd. M. E (1937) *The Thinking Body. A Study of the Balancing Forces in the Dynamic Man*. The Gestalt Journal Press. Gouldsboro. USA.



of enhanced connection to place and self. As Todd highlights, walking can become mean of psychosomatic anatomical analysis, allowing the human form be vigorously explored as mechanism by which we adjust to the world. Todd indicates that there is lack of genuine understanding as to the power of the body and the place of the body in daily life.

Studying with choreographer; Laurie Booth; I am fortunate to exploring his development of a “new” movement form: **Primal Modern Movement**; in which we make a detailed exploration of connection of Fascia and our bodies ability to self-heal and self-learn, leading improvisations with Deborah Hay’s question in mind: what do these cells hold?

My practice also draws great strength from my studies of Yoga and the principles of **self-study**. In various schools of Hinduism, Svadhyaya is a Niyama (virtuous observance) connoting introspection and "**study of self**"..<sup>40</sup> The word itself is made up of *Sva*, meaning *own, self*, or the *human soul*, and *Adhyaya*, meaning *lesson, lecture, or reading*, and can imply the practice of studying scriptures, as well as a practice of studying the Self.

Steinman explores: “There is a certain humbleness that comes with working with one’s own body. Every day one must start anew.”<sup>41</sup> Drawing from my understanding of proprioception and the remarks made by Olson who states: “That one’s life is informed from and by one’s own literal body, the gain being that movement or action is home.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> <https://www.ekhartyoga.com/articles/the-niyamas-svadhyaya-or-self-study>

<sup>41</sup> Steinman. L (1986) *The Knowing Body: The Artist as Storyteller in Contemporary Performance*. North Atlantic Books. California. P24

<sup>42</sup> Steinman. L (1986) *The Knowing Body: The Artist as Storyteller in Contemporary Performance*. North Atlantic Books. California. P12

**How to become wave.**

**I watch the cormorant dry his wings.**

**The expanse of feather**

**The wind breathes.**

**I return to breath.**

Duncan explores in her seminal essay, *The Dance of the Future*: “The movement of free animals and birds always remains in correspondence to their nature, the necessities and wants of nature and its correspondence to Earth nature. The movements of a beetle correspond to its form... Even so the movements of the human body must correspond to its form. The dances of no two persons should be alike.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Duncan, I ( 1974) *The Dance of the Future* in *Dance as theatre art*. (ed Cohen) ( NY, Dodd and Mead & Co 1974 ) in Steinman, L (1986) *The Knowing Body: The Artist as Storyteller in Contemporary Performance*. North Atlantic Books. California. P7

### 3. The Screen | Metanarrative: How does the screen hold us

I lie under the blanket of the fern.  
Waiting for the moon.

No one will come here  
I lie in the shield of heather as a ram inspects my feet

I am here  
I walk up the steep bank carrying my wares  
Handmade twine as treasure  
My House  
I build  
My body  
A Shelter  
I pick potatoes and cook them in embers  
I will rise with the sun and  
Fall between the stream and gorse  
Perhaps here I am free.

**How can I move more slowly?**

**How can I write more slowly?**

To write slowly and avoid the chaos of 'another ledge'  
Images fall and rise and fall. They are litter perhaps, they are confetti, they are abundant, and they are crop, sheer, mass, but what are these forms? What appears to the view?

Does the image have a use?

You were not present with me between the heather and fern, you did not have the same knots of moss, which I have tied into hair, your fingernails do not contain the same dirt, but I want you to be here.

Writing this now for you, I am still there and there, is what remains.

Perhaps this text is my realization that you will never be beside me, and I will never quite be in that state again. Less the screen permits.

As I sit in the warmth of the studio as the rain falls and I see the footage again of the forest; I ask: Does the collaboration with a camera shift or realign position within landscape and how far does the re-ordering of narrative and environmental structure shift the construction of environmental awareness. The narrative of my being in place and the place being in me comes to a wider meta narrative of complex dichotomy, as Rosenberg describes:

His text; *Screen Dance; Inscribing the Ephemeral Image* details closely the work of dance scholar John Martin who 'theorized that dance was the art of expression, he uses the term metakinesis to describe the situation in which the viewer is drawn into dance. The most intangible emotional experience the dancer is able to convey through metakinesis is made all the more potent in the use of screen dance with the addition of first person narrative, the use of editing techniques, all of which allow the makers to cite or acknowledge what is particular to the possibilities of moving image, adding depth to the narrative or text of the work, metaphors of place, memory and site encouraging the viewer to feel a kinestronic response.'<sup>44</sup>

The process of creating site specific performance within my practice is to both Identify, communicate and value nature; through my devised and improvised processes of embodiment, landscape awareness, use of camera, the use of self-strives to become a mechanism of both heightened self-awareness and awareness of specific ecologies and sites through movement practice. The role of the screen and camera within this process is then to in some ways immortalize that moment experienced.

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<sup>44</sup> Rosenberg, D ( 2012) *Screen dance. Inscribing the Ephemeral Image*. Oxford University Press. Oxford. P 69

Through the documentation of landscape and body, this process seeks to draw awareness to the basic concept that each individual human being is a complex organism living in an environment. What each individual becomes during their lifetime is a product of their engagement with that environment, a process in which they learn about the world and about themselves; perhaps human society is human ecology.

Our emotions and experience towards and of place as individuals, what we learn through experience, touch, texture, sight and interaction, informs our actions in the world? In order to examine what kinds of experience generate what kind of action and knowledge, we need to consider a humans beings relationship with their total environment. Perceptual skill is the foundation of all knowledge. It enables the perceiver to move around the world, to understand language, to recognize others and their environment. This practice of environmental narrative for screen attempts to acknowledge my own gratitude for the scared nature of this earth, a form of embodying my awe, thanks and amazement for the rapture that captivates me in such places, and through the process of sharing such gratitude,

I hope my practice may encourage others to explore terrain with the same fervor. The proposition that our knowledge of the world is grounded in the perceptual experience of our total environment has far more fundamental consequences than this for our understanding of personhood. An important part of this perception is the perception of self, as we perceive our environments we in turn perceive ourselves. This is not to say that we focus attention only on ourselves, though we often do this as well, but we perceive our environment in relation to ourselves and ourselves in relation to our environment. These

are not two separate processes but simultaneous effects of the same process. The information we receive as we move through our environment gives us precise knowledge of ourselves and circumstances and the same time makes us aware of ourselves as physical bodies and agents. As our perceptual skills develop we discover what we are and what we can do. <sup>45</sup>

The space, which the screen creates Rosenberg, describes as 'Liminal space' <sup>46</sup>, which creates a potential experience for the viewer of the landscape and yet also potentially alienates them. He indicates: 'Site in screen dance functions as part of an aggregate layering of elements and phenomena, which collectively create both meaning and context.'<sup>47</sup>

Site and landscape within the context of presentation of notion of place on screen have the potential to become 'fossil,' each layer of history a new stratification, the detritus of the each new season over laid on to layers of history sometimes unknown and unmarked, but still as foundation. The screen presents both body and landscape in the immediacy of its presentation, the layers are obscure, the layers build as the landscape takes on the shapes which cultural, social and political life lay upon it. There is also the private archive of the sensation of the landscape, the shoe boxes at the back of the cupboard filled with images the owner cannot quite revisit yet will not fully dismiss or discard. If this forest could speak, if these stones could speak, the methodological and ephemeral ecology lays simultaneously revealed and concealed by the research process of the collaboration of body and screen,

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<sup>45</sup> Milton. K. ( 2002) *Loving Nature. Towards an Ecology of Emotion*. Routledge. London. P45

<sup>46</sup> Rosenberg, D ( 2012) *Screen dance. Inscripting the Ephemeral Image*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. P 15

<sup>47</sup> Rosenberg, D ( 2012) *Screen dance. Inscripting the Ephemeral Image*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. P 17

articulating the archive of participation through fragments and nuances of left over conversations.

Rosenberg describes: 'Cameras, as an integral component of media space are both telescopic and microscopic in their ability to extend vision and facilitate a kind of seeing that is a manifestation of our desire to draw phenomena closer to us.' <sup>48</sup>

This research takes to its core the symbiosis of the connection of mind and body as the ecology of self and place, forming a cohesive site of collaboration between the two. The body is mirror to all experience, each motion and breath an archive to the experience of the living being. The moving, dancing body comes to symbolise the fundamental essence of embodied presence.

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<sup>48</sup> Rosenberg, D (2012) Screen dance. Inscribing the Ephemeral Image. Oxford University Press. Oxford. P 29

<sup>49</sup> Rosenberg, D (2012) Screendance. Inscribing the Ephemeral Image. Oxford University Press. Oxford. P 29

The screen serves to create a radical liminal intimacy between the viewer and the actions occurring in the environment; an attempt to communicate the process of knowing nature through experience.

This closeness between subject, viewer and landscape seeks to return to the concept of metakinesis both as ability to understand their own body relationship to place and ecology, initiated through the process of observing the other.. ' Whatever we do in the world we are in a constant state of perceptual engagement with our environment'<sup>50</sup> and this collaboration of landscape, body and screen attempts to navigate a mindful embodiment of the potential resource of such engagement.

*' We are the mirror.  
as well as the face in it.  
We are tasting the taste this minute  
of eternity. We are the pain  
and what causes pain, both. We are the sweet cold water  
and the jar that pours. (Rumi)'<sup>51</sup>*

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<sup>50</sup> Milton. K. ( 2002) Loving Nature. Towards an Ecology of Emotion. Routledge. London. P51  
<sup>51</sup> Stoller. P ( 1997) Sensuous Scholarship. University of Pennsylvania Press. Philadelphia Pa



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