

This is an introduction to an unusual approach to creative process in visual arts to change perceptions of the world and of our belonging.

Marking into the Paradigm reveals how we mark the world and are marked by the world---both figuratively and literally. As a somatic art-practice it begins to change our relationship to perceptions of the reality that we have inherited. The practice guides us through creative process marking approaches to revise our relationship to ourselves and the world.



On the north edge of Monterey Bay on the California coast, Studio Anavami sits in an old industrial building from the 1920s. It is a center for classes, workshops and retreats utilizing visual arts format to explore reality..... As director of the center, I use practice-in-being as inspiration for an unique approach to mixed media through awareness of our paradigm of reality.

Inside the studio the tin corrugated roof is thirty-foot high. It rattles in the wind like it will peel off. And although we are only a mile from the ocean, there is a constant buzz of industrial sounds. Our canvas or substrate that we often work on is from a roll of black industrial paper tacked to the wall. Because we are experimenting with noticing and shifting paradigms, rather than a flat surface we refer to this substrate as a window or portal. It has space we could step into it. We will mark with acrylic paint and water-soluble implements adding other layers of markings from various thin papers.

Marking is fundamental to the visual arts but also a metaphor for engaging with the world ---the animate and inanimate. The inanimate is objects, ideas, emotions and mysteries...all with their own life force. Marking is giving, as well as receiving. Gestures that leave their residue are marks. The fulcrum that we cultivate to direct the marks is an embodied awareness.



Rupert Spira, an Oxford based spiritual teacher and writer uses this metaphor when talking about transcendence. He says that it is like the **set-up a joke**. We have no idea where the story is going until the punchline---when it all connects. We let the story evolve through mutual agreement. The punchline is new terrain, which like a joke to explain it loses the impact.

The discipline is to move from a visually dominate perspective centered in the mental into the senses. In embodiment we meet the world acknowledging its fundamental intelligence offering more creative choices with leaps of insights. In my currently process I am using the sheets of tissue paper previously marked textures, monoprints and other markings with cold wax to set up the joke. As I work on it, I am not sure where it is going. The joke seems to be setting itself up. It is an apt metaphor for there is no goal in marking, but there is intention. We have no strategy for control, but open for collaboration with the materials as part of the relational-field.



In over fifty years in the visual arts this particular art-practice recently has changed my work radically. It is not just another phase of abstract or figurative work or a change of materials. This approach that I am introducing to you is so different from anything I have done that it is sometimes hard to make heads or tails of the outcome. Which is part of the practice. By accessing embodied-imagination I have come to a new understanding of the art-practice.... leading me to an **unconsidered experience in the ground of being**. With time this art-practice has begun to rewire habitual circuitry opening to a familiar, yet at the same time uncomfortable place. I say uncomfortable because it fundamentally challenges and then alters identity.

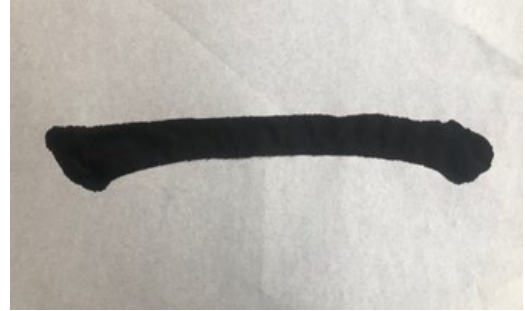


What if, however, this unfolding order is masked by what we have been programed to perceive? What if our consensus reality has created a separation, a fragmentation of our relationship to perceive this reality? How do we come to more fully appreciate and engage in the exploration of this revealing order? For the last five years at the studio a small group has explored these concepts.

The quantum physicist, David Bohm, hypothesizes that there is an underlying order to life that cannot be known directly. He calls this The Implicate Order or the ground of being. We are intimate with this ground of being yet, as he says, it is not discernable until it unfolds.

You would think that the arts, as an aesthetic-creative mode of knowing the world, would help to reveal and discard these mask but it has become part of the commodity system itself, taken hostage by the economic machinery.

This reminds me doing brush calligraphy in the public schools with a kindergarten class. No one would expect this population to grasp the ancient power of being that is reflected in this discipline. We did horizontal brush strokes for the Chinese character for the numeral one first on newspaper and then good paper. Because I wanted to avoid judgments of good and bad I ask everyone picked one of theirs that SANG to put at the front of the



classroom. Then we looked at all of them together. There was one that everyone recognized as having a particular power. When I returned it to the owner his comment was, "If this is good, how much money can I get for it?" Here we have a five year-old who already finds value measured by the market place.

There are, however, still cultures on the planet that reflect an understanding of how the arts can nurture the ground of being. During my immersion in several apprenticeships in Japan, the various traditional arts demonstrated how art-practice *in being* can reveal an underlying order. It may not be articulatable in words.... But it presents a reality of wholeness.

Here at Anavami Studio we have entered into our own discovery process; marking into the Paradigm as an art-practice to cultivate a new relationship with materials, image-making, the world_and self. This practice renders the perception of a new reality.....a shift in consciousness and **ultimately**a new identity. Incrementally, we are learning to tolerate more confusion and frustration while building skills to hold dichotomy and not knowing with grace.

What initially feels like accident through meaningful synchronicity gives view to a larger container. In this art-practice you begin to feel that you are moving from sole-agent to collaborative participant in the studio and in life. To change our relationship to materials and creative process changes the egocentricity of us as **center** to being immersed in a greater whole. In this process we allow "real" to begin to change.

Marking into the Paradigm entertains various realities through embodiment of the imaginal realm causing reflection on and deconstruction of entrenched assumptions. Historically social paradigms shift slowly in the evolution of consciousness as new information gains momentum. We can only aid the collective shift by beginning with ourselves.