

Marking into the Paradigm, with an approach to the creative process in visual arts alters our perceptions of *reality*, changing our belonging. In this episode, *Trusting Your Hands*, we consider new connections to the intelligence behind how we touch and manipulate things. We have talked previously about creating a new relationship with our materials and cultivating creative accidents, this episode extends how we perceive the life force.

I listen with my body, and it is my body that aches in response to the passion and pathos...

*Susan Sontag*



*Various tools used in painting.*

Most of our days are spent using our hands at the bequest of our brain--- opening doors, driving a car, answering our phone. Our heart also comes through our hands when we pet our cat, tickle a child, make music, dinner, a painting...love.

Our hands allow us to use tools. Hard implements often have a utilitarian aspect different from soft--- with different attitudes and body responses. Implements can be used to unite the mind/body. Brush calligraphy is considered a practice to communicate beyond the head to the heart of being. In Japan it is understood that spiritual master's calligraph demonstrates levels of their Spiritual Realization. It goes beyond the duality habits dictated by the brain. The brush is an extension of the self so

what is put on paper is a visible manifestation of being. There is interesting data on how the hand can access aspects of being and intelligence that we usually do not consciously consider.

A wrong answer from a child turns correct after mentally processing the information with her hands. Someone in a moral dilemma is at a loss to grasp an ethical decision. When encouraged to gesture with her hands he suddenly sees the answer for which he is searching. All this has been clinically tested by Susan Goldin-Meadow in *Thinking with Your Hands*. There is scientific evidence that our hands can be a few steps ahead of the mind and that hand gestures can express insights that are not articulatable in speech.



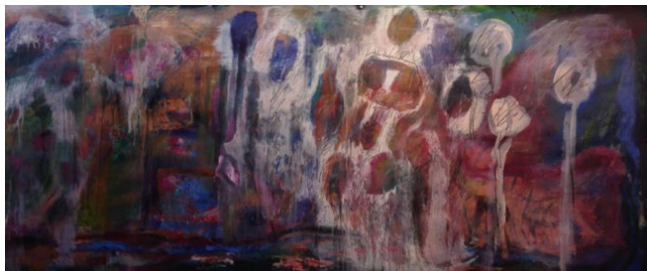
*Marking as Gesture*

Goldin-Meadow in her research has indicated that a mismatch or contradiction between gesture and verbal articulation indicates a willingness to learn or bring forth subliminal understanding. Gestures show the cusp of understanding beyond the ability to articulate verbally. Gestures tied to root action rather than language give insight into ideas that are just forming. Gestures are a form of marking. Our hands not only reflect our minds but can change our minds because they affect how we think. Our gestures can bring one to the cusp and create learning as they can also create contradictions and confusion, which open new perspectives.

It has been proven that when adults or children are encouraged to gesture when discussing hard topics, they develop a wider perspective than those

who do not gesture. Research participants are more likely to make progress on math solutions when they are encouraged to gesture. Gestures bring out unspoken ideas. Marking gestures are an important part of the creative conversations. As a tool that expands perspective and innovative possibilities, gestures, in relation to marking, are an extension of marking and consciousness.

We are used to controlling in a way that short circuits the intelligence of our body---our hands. By



*Part of 18' group painting*

practicing in the studio somatically---not just from the head---we cultivate the skill of embodied imagery. We tap into an imaginal realm that is not mental fantasy or photo-like shots of mental ideas but an actual environment, like in nighttime dreams. Throughout the planet every culture and every era people dream in place. The environment of place accesses the deeper intelligence of the psyche. There are developable skills to

go into alternate states to explore the imaginal realm. Marking is a medium to engage that dimension.

It is done all the time in the recognized arts and in every endeavor that is taken to an art, though artistry.

However, artistry does not necessarily mean art. Artistry is an exceptional skill that is generally not a high priority in our culture. Not only artistry we need creativity.

Through practiced states we can go into somatic imagery to stretch our perceptions of what is possible. We become more intuitional as we create 'accidents' while trusting out hands. This work is often confusing, frustrating and perplexing, which is where we want to be. In fact, if those feelings do not come up then we are playing it safe, flattening the learning curve. Different from mental fantasy the Imaginal Realm as described by Henri Corbin is a world that is ontologically as real as the things we see touch or know intellectually. The skill of the imaginal realm is what we are developing in Marking into the Paradigm.



*Soft Marks with ink on Stretch Linen .*

In Gabor Mate's book, The Myth of Normal, Trauma, Illness & Healing in a Toxic Culture, he talks about how we all have been normalized and don't even know it. We have been normalized to a world where "something previously aberrant becomes normal enough that it passes beneath our radar." It requires an active and tenacious practice to deconstruct old habits and it is not without sacrificing what is comfortable, reliable and within the norm. Innovation naturally follows, even if at first it is difficult to recognize or articulate. But that is where we rely on our natural tools to help guide us-our heart and hands.

*Majic*

Related Books:

Thinking with Your Hands, Susan Goldin-Meadow

The Myth of Normal, Trauma, Illness & Healing in a Toxic Culture, Gabor Maté