

## Blog: #6 Dichotomy

This Blog, Through Dichotomies uses composite of Complexity Theory to gain insights outside our mental-constructs of duality.

In the Marking into the Paradigm circle we use various exercises to give a sense the wholeness and belonging beyond the subject/object structure of 'othering'. Working the composite exercise holds contrary energies within the body while increasing the focus of presence to get out of *habitual mind* to open new possibilities.

*The poet John O'Donohue says it like this: The imagination is both fascinated and stimulated by the presences that cluster within a contradiction.*

To illustrate this process with stages of the painting, Moon Drummer from the images. ....To begin, I looked for a canvas to re-purpose for this marking exploration of Dichotomy..... I found Moon Drummer, depicting Mother Goddess standing in the elements using the full moon as her drum. Spending time with this painting I felt the many dichotomies of distance/intimacy, finite/infinite, belonging/separate and loud/silent. This could be the base to investigate non-dualism.



We all are constantly dealing with dichotomies. Two things that seem to exclude each other even when either/or is not an option. In Embodied Imagination Robert Bosnak uses the composite process with dreamwork to hold two different energies, sometimes wildly contrasting. The constellation of these energies is not an image from the mental, but more like a dream experience..... in a place. We will talk more about the imaginal, distinct from imagination in another podcast. Part of the creative process is to hold each aspect of the dichotomy somatically ---in the body..... At first, they may feel to exclude each other, but as the container enlarges, they can be held at the same time..... From this somatic platform we create an engagement art materials....we are NOT trying to resolve the issue but be open to a greater perspective.

The process of composite arises from Chaos/Complex Theory, a transdisciplinary systems theory that deals fundamentally with change. It is used in the physical sciences and mathematics but also

## Blog: #6 Dichotomy

now used in the social sciences and humanities because it includes innate responses---instinctual and reflexive---as well as learned behaviors..... Nora Bateson expands the notion of systems from mechanical to organic which she calls sammathesy---a system of mutual learning and transformation. The composite work in terms of our fundamental art-practice invites chaos to find some kind of relationship or, possibly, a new order.

Several times I dismissed this unfinished canvas looking for another substrate to explore non-duality through Marking, but the Moon Drummer insisted. And as it turned out, for good reason. I worked with the composite: parochial/universal, mundane/mystical, concrete/ephemeral...through the somatic realm until I could hold them both in my body at the same time.



Composite meditation helped me to feel and explore each of these energies in my body, first separately then going back and forth. This is an aspect of working in the Imaginal Realm. Somatically the drum was loud like striking my forehead against a wall, while the moon was silent, spacious and peaceful. It was when I held these layered upon each other that they began to inform each other.

From the scrap pile of the forge site across from my studio a piece of deteriorating rust-strained cardboard literally blew into my studio. The weathered metal marks on the fragments of paper were interesting. I went to search for the rest of the box that had set out in the elements through the winter.

Without much consideration, I flattened and adhered the small pieces to the painting. It looked vaguely like an explosion or dis-integration. A taking apart was called for in the marking process.

As in trance drumming, the self dissolves to usher in alternate state of consciousness.



I then surprised myself by painting into the image, which I thought would be entirely covered with papers. I added to the surf and a garment of sand. In the mean time a Taoist magic sign from the 12<sup>th</sup> C caught my attention. It was a spell to increase vision. I made a calligraphic representation of the spell with a gluegun which I ended up using not as a printing mask but like a stamp printing on thin paper.

## Blog: #6 Dichotomy

The images on the painting looked vaguely like the computer code from The Matrix between realities.

With cold wax I then put sheets of tissue monoprints over the painting. As the wax set up over the rough cardboard the images became less transparent and more opaque so I started to pull off strips. Some of these were relocated in other areas. I felt like I was working on an ancient wall, peeling off history to reveal the unacknowledged, while at the same time concealing other parts that weren't part of the current conversation. The engagement was like a drum beat--- forming and re-forming---using the Taoist spell to conjugate the dichotomy of the mundane/celestial, near/far, mysterious/obvious, crucial/ inconsequential until it was a chaotic mess.

At last it came to a resting place or so thought I was done. The Moon Drummer was no longer a distant goddess but was me and everyone else I met as I walked on a windy day on West Cliff in Santa Cruz. The daytime moon felt intimate through the tides and my body fluids. The drummer's presence was with me all day. I asked before sleep to make deeper contact in my dreams. I had wild vivid dream where I awoke breathing hard but then returning to the dream---- sweating and hiding to no avail.

I dreamed I was pursued by a huge, rust colored animal, moving like a cat---yet a dog. I realized on waking that this was the masculine/feminine, guardians of sacred sites in Japan, the *kamainu*. It needed to be in the painting, which I added in the frothing tide on each side of the Moon Drummer images. The Lion/Dogs now snarl subtly in the surf.



These guardians, I now realize, also appeared at the foot of the JoyFool painting as the Urban/Wild guardians. The psyche does not flow in the currents of regular time as we know. It allows us to jump between and through these different spaces to explore the overcoming of a stunted duality mindset.

You are invited to follow this podcast...