

This Blog, Marking into the Paradigm by Majio from Studio Anavami in Santa Cruz is an approach to creative process in visual arts to change perceptions of the world and of our belonging.

This episode, Become-like-other is a technique for expanding our perceptions as we feel into the *imaginal realm*, remembering our ancient relationship to other beings---the life force of the animate, as well as the inanimate.

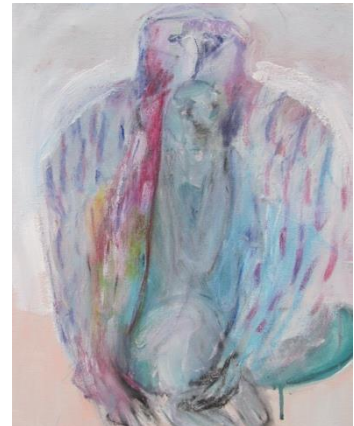


*Blue Wings of Bear*

Animism coined by anthropologists in the 19<sup>th</sup> C describes cultures that were thought to give properties of soul to things outside the human domain. This narrow definition can have the derogative overtone of colonizer. Animism also means that the animate and inanimate alike have a force of beingness. To recognize it does not necessarily mean to understand it in our terms. Most cultures of the world, including modern day Japan have an underlying sense that nothing is pure matter but has its own spirit. In fact, our culture is an anomaly in history when we conclude that only humans have being. Memes, which is how we learn and socialize by copying, is a strong element of a culture or system to pass behavior from one individual to another by imitation. Children before they are taught differently in our culture not only relate to the *life* of things but spontaneously become-like other things. No one teaches a small child how to become-like a dinosaur.

Central to our art-practice, Marking into the Paradigm, is to explore shifting our perspective of reality to a larger sphere that entertains more possibilities. We are not saying this is how things are but trying it on to see how it adds a new way of perceiving and understanding things.

Collectively our relationship to nature has taken a big hit in our lifetime. Our experiment with capitalism has created the strategy to control nature for profit. We have become alienated from nature as we continue to create *climate change*. In the exercise to become somatically like other things we remember our kinship



*Wolf Inside*

The exercise *becoming-like-other* requires going into an alternate state of consciousness, which we do all the time, but are usually unaware it. It calls forth the Imaginal Realm, that is not the mental imagination of fantasy. It is a somatic experience where we focus on something and slowly transfer our physical sensations of what it would it like to be, say, a sleeping cat or potted palm. It is a dual



*Becoming Bird*

consciousness. Part of us is still aware of standing in room looking at a palm and part of us is somatically identifying with the palm as we feel into it. With practice we become more adept to feeling the roots, the rough central part of the tree and the spreading fronds. There is information of the intelligence of the body can imaginably become as body.

Animism is an attitude in Japan that permeates every aspect of life. Children are instilled with the idea that *things* like to be cared for, appreciated. All aspects of nature are perceived to have their own special kind of spirit. I watched gardeners with straw ropes transfer the spirit of diseased pine tree to a nearby tree before they cut it down. I am not saying the Japanese have perfect balance with nature but they are animistic through and through. How we perceive the world around us defines how we see ourselves in relation to the greater world.

In the marking art-practice we experiment. We cultivate curiosity making pathways outside of what we think we know. It is often uncomfortable to have no prototype, design or a clue as to where it may go. It requires developing a connection to the relational-field. Relational fields are the invisible, yet palpable fields of energy that connect us when we are present to someone or something. The more resourceful and congruent we become, the more our energy and presence begins to shape the relational field in which we are interacting.

There is a texture that begins to accompany awareness of *the field and being within the field*---the field of life. Art materials can access the container of the space the holds the field.

*Yielding to the field* illuminates the conversation that makes room for dichotomies such as effortful/effortlessness and doing/non-doing. We begin with intention to cultivate a responsiveness to what happens in the moment rather what we want to happen.

This shifting, sometimes called reality shifting is a way of training your mind to go into an imaginal realm that you can walk around in and participate in like a nighttime dream. The one thing that we all agree on is there is a delight in curiosity, surprise and even enthrallment with the process. That is unless you are wanting to prove something or trying to make it *good*. It is an experimental adventure that a goal of success can cut short. If you don't produce something surprising or perplexing, you are probably staying in the safe zone---the known. In this endeavor there is no need to evaluate laws of design or aesthetics. It can be especially challenging for anyone with art training to let go of the old



*Light Coat*

standards of judgment. The place of analysis is not wrong but tends to pull us into conditioned and safe modes of reacting.

Josh Schrei, in the Emerald Podcast, Episode: Neck Hairs of the Shapeshifter, says “we shift knowing to learn to communicate, to awaken dormant faculties, to return to conjunctive knowing with nature.”

Thank you for listening to Marking into the Paradigm, an approach to creative process that experiments with altering our perceptions of *reality* to realize our innate belonging.

There will be more about this in reality-shifting in a future podcast...

Resources for Imaginal Realm:

Islamic Scholar Henri Corbin

Robert Bosnak, Embodiment, Creative Imagination in Medicine, Art and Travel.

Josh Schrei, The Emerald Podcast



*Becoming Flight*