

Juha Viitamäki – CI and Outdoor Work

Authentic exploration and contact with nature, and improvisation with these energetics.

My approach to the subject is through connecting with self and nature. One first finds a resonance within oneself to the relevant nature surroundings, then extends into a dialogue with nature and its energetics, and finally searches for a sharing of energies derived from this nature connection with other participants. I will outline a series of exercises aimed at establishing these connections, with an emphasis on sensual (eyes closed) contact with nature and an emotional content through internal sourcing within this contact and exploration. This emotional content might be related to the internal work present in authentic Dance, wherein one listens to those kinaesthetic, social and generally energetic impulses sourced mainly from within oneself or one's self.

1. Centre to centre.

The participants find an open and pleasurable posture in the nature surroundings and close their eyes. An ideal position might be the standing one practised in the small dance. Once set in place the participant searches for a connection with one's own centre or centre of weight, and once that is felt, searches for a more or less imaginary connection with the centre of the Earth itself. One establishes a connection between these two centres and a flow in between.

2. Fountain.

One imagines an underground stream of energy or water coming through the soles of one's feet, and surging up through the body, the legs, the hips, from the tips of the fingers, through the thorax and up through the crown of the head. This stream jets up through the crown of the head and several meters into the air, as droplets of water/energy rain back on the skin and the body. This continues for some time, as one continual flow or bursts of water/energy, as one wishes. At length the surging upwards ceases and the final droplets of water rain down on the skin. The participant returns the connection from deep down back into one's own centre, yet retaining an energetic connection to the earth through one's soles of the feet and body alignment and sensing. Of course a rainy or stormy weather might be chosen to further accentuate this experiencing in general.

3. Small dance and nature listening.

For a moment one still wavers in place feeling the after-reverberations of this energetic experiencing, while starting to focus on the small changes in balancing occurring continually throughout the body. One listens to the faint swaying of the body, maybe in tune with the surrounding environment. The focus slowly starts sliding from the internal into also an external focus, of listening to the slight impulses from the surroundings, e.g. breezes of air, the rustling of leaves and other auditive information. The swaying starts to accentuate in reaction to these impulses, as one searches for a physical connection with the surroundings.

4. Sounding

One might also start to sound with the surrounding nature (quite silently at the beginning), until the listening-to-others sounding crescendoes into a shared auditive and voicing experience. At length this journeying together abates into silence, as the participants once more establish a more internal connection.

5. Exploration

The participants still have their eyes closed (preferably) and for the first time actually start to move from their places. If they have placed themselves in a circle, they might starburst in silence outwards to find connections with the surrounding nature. The participants search their own niches where they can start sensually touching the surrounding nature parts, giving attention to different qualities and textures and scents one is receptive to. This might lead into something like making love with nature, but let us skip this delicate theme. So one explores the surroundings, increasingly with more giving of weight or hanging and so on, always respecting the fragility of nature. One also takes care of oneself in advancing through nature and the relevant spaces, with needed attention for possible low-flying branches and hard surfaces such as rocks. Of course the safety aspect should be taken into account when initially choosing the location for the session, e.g. not beside a steep cliff or in a surrounding with sharp branches.

6. Authentic dance.

This physical and sensual connecting with nature is enriched duly with more emotional and primitive internal sourcing in one's communication with the surroundings, also feeling free to use sounding as one pleases. This emotionally flavoured connecting follows one's need for expressing in relation to one's surrounding space and to the internal material and imagery and memories this resonates within oneself. In this version of Authentic Dance there are no guardian angels for physical safety (except present nature beings and spirits if you will), so required care is taken for not to e.g. drop down from a tree eyes closed. Also unavoidably there is some auditive connecting between the participants, unless a theme of wandering deep into the nature surroundings eyes closed is chosen. This connecting is okay as long as it is attempted to keep as non-personal level as possible, the focus remaining on the connecting between self and nature. No physical contact between participants is intended, although of course this option can be explored.

7. Contact.

After a sufficient period of authentic (at least half an hour or so) the participants start calling for each other non-verbally. These calls attempt to induce pair or trio connecting or contact between the participants. One might indulge in contact improvisation while introducing energetics derived from the nature and related experiencing, or in other possibly more captivating contact exploration. One is still free to use sounding and voice, and it is recommended. One keeps the eyes closed unless opening them becomes a necessary safety precaution. Also consideration for the others is necessary, as one possibly does not identify the dance partner(s) and is not aware of the rough relevant level of contact experience.

8. Heap.

According to their needs and approaching boredom or fatigue, the participants will eventually drift together to form a heap of primitive and consoling mass of bodies (except those who have disappeared elsewhere in more engaging pursuits). There is a final sounding or voicing together in the heap, until slowly the participants open their eyes and begin communicating more conventionally, perhaps sharing their experiences as a group or in trios or pairs.