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SOMARHYTHMS, REFINING THE MUSICALITY AND FUNCTIONALITY OF MOVEMENT

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The Somarhythms approach investigates the reciprocity between the form and functions of the body through the use of balls, bamboo sticks and other objects that amplify sensations and facilitate moving with coordination, ease, pleasure and trust in one's body. Moving with these objects helps precise and activate elusive or 'difficult to perceive' aspects of our functioning. For example, activities such as laying, rolling, sitting, crawling, walking require that we activate and progressively refine how we use our internal supports in coordination with external supports to feel effective and safe. In general little attention is given to how we coordinate our supports in these everyday movements except when something hurts. Somarhythms also investigates the elusive coordination of sounding and moving and how it can enhance support, clarity and coherence of movement, as well as stimulate one's vocal musicality.

Since its foundation in 1992, the Estudio Los Almendros has offered Somarhythms' workshops in January and July of each year. These allowed us to observe the impact of the tropical environment on the somatic experience, particularly, the necessity to be aware of one's totality with the environment. This made 'deep sensing' a priority. Since January 2013 we have focused on how a sustained, slow and detailed practice in the studio can be taken to open environments.

In January 2017 workshop we proposed a Somatic Training that focused on aspects, which are at the core of our vitality and essential to the quality of our functioning. One main purpose was to investigate how we use our internal and external supports, with eyes closed and while sounding and moving with the balls and bamboo sticks. Moving with eyes closed facilitates deepening our sensing capacities and becoming aware of essential movement mechanisms.



During two weeks we engaged in the activities described below and these were experimented each day always in the same order.

- Hakomi exercises¹
- Sounding while sitting on balls
- Vibratory practice
- Sounding and moving with balls and bamboo sticks
- Moving in nature
- Embodiment of somatic words

‘The Hakomi exercise’ established a safe ground in the state of ‘loving presence’ by recognizing the goodness of everyone and deep sensing by tracking one’s sensations in the presence of others.

The ‘Sounding while sitting on balls’ practice, articulated sounding possibilities of the mouth, the throat, the diaphragms, the thoracic and the abdominal organs.

‘The Vibratory practice’ quieted the mind by mobilizing energy while shaking from a specific body part adding gradually other parts to reach the totality of the body.

‘Moving and sounding with balls and sticks’ were thematic practices focusing on: compressing, using the roundness of the body, spatial projection, body halves and mobility of the back.

‘Moving in nature’ mainly focused on floating in the sea through movements that emphasized developmental progressions.

‘Embodiment of somatic words’ was an experiential study of words chosen by the participants in reference of their progression with the proposed tasks. The words were a working vocabulary that has evolved through the years of Somarhythms’ practice with balls and bamboo sticks. They facilitate the sensing and perceiving the somatic processes going on.

Such as:

Yawning, mouthing (sucking, swallowing), sounding, vibrating, compressing, grounding, pumping, rocking, flowing, floating, springing, experiencing roundness, rolling, spiraling, supporting on visceral organs, pushing / reaching / pulling, connecting head / tail / torso, connecting hands / arms, connecting legs / feet, sequencing, allowing/resisting, yielding/collapsing /holding, grasping, hanging, activating tensegrity

1. The Hakomi, Method founded by Ron Kurtz, is an experiential approach well known for the use of Mindfulness in an assisted *selfdiscovery process*. The Hakomi Method follows a general outline: First, it establish an ever-present, attitude of gentle acceptance and care known as loving presence. This maximizes safety, respect and the cooperation of the unconscious.



Observations after the 2017 Somarhythms' workshop:

- 1.** Water practices brought recuperation, alertness and conscious facilitation of movement in the studio.
- 2.** Shared communal living (cooking, cleaning, shopping) offered support, pleasure and continuity in daily activities.
- 3.** Trust and calmness brought interest in the processes rather than in judging results.
- 4.** A gradual enhancement of the participant's vitality was apparent from the beginning to the end of the workshop, by their expressiveness, appearance, dynamism and joyfulness.
- 5.** The participants increased their daily personal practices in nature from one to two throughout the workshop.
- 6.** All participants manifested increased musicality in their movements throughout the days of their practice with the embodiment of somatic words.

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