

FREE COLUMBIA

NEWSLETTER #7 FALL 2022



Image by Laura Summer

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Introduction

Dear Friends, Collaborators, Family and Supporters of Free Columbia,

Sending this issue off to the printer, I feel excitement and gratitude. Excitement for the emerging new leadership within Free Columbia as Stefan Ambrose is stepping in as director of the M.C. Richards Program and the growing reach of Laura Summer's activities. Gratitude arises as I prepare to leave for Switzerland to take up a new task as the director of the Youth Section at the Goetheanum.

Reading further you will find ample reason for my excitement. I got to know Stefan Ambrose when he traveled to the area to join the research project on complementary currencies hosted by Free Columbia in 2018. Two years later he joined the first cohort of the M.C. Richards Program as a student. The following year he joined Free Columbia's staff and worked with Erin Corrigan to expand our classes and activities while completing the foundations course at The Nature Institute. As we discussed how we would navigate my departure at Free Columbia, Stefan came forward with a proposal to continue the M.C. Richards Program while shifting its emphasis more toward the practical arts and opening up the courses for more community involvement. The rest of the staff rallied around him, asking him to take on the directorship of the M.C. Richards Program immediately, with me as his assistant until my departure. As director he replanned the year, asking me to teach only up until the end of November. After we realized this, we saw it best, also for the finances of Free Columbia, if I would leave as soon as I was done teaching. Now my departure is planned for the end of the year.

A core component of his vision is a collaboration with Mark Rowntree, who has taught in previous years of the program. Together they shifted practical work in ceramics into the central morning activity, four mornings per week, orbiting three firings in a wood fired kiln that was built by the students last year. Stefan asked myself, Laura Summer, John McManus and Erin Corrigan to teach shorter courses throughout the year, all of which are open for community participation.

In the following pages you will find a transcript of a conversation between Stefan and Mark and a short but rich reflection from John McManus on confidence building through the art of acting and speech. You will also find a conversation between Stefan Ambrose and Matt Briggs from Ruskin Mill Trust in England, who Stefan worked with at The Nature Institute. These pieces highlight some of the inspirations and creative efforts currently re-working the emphasis (focus) of the M.C. Richards Program. Mark, Stefan and I plan to meet up with Matt and others at Ruskin Mill this Spring to deepen the conversation.

You will also find a transcript of a presentation and conversation from this summer's intense collaboration with Zvi Szir. I have known Zvi for over twenty years and was grateful to have the opportunity to collaborate with him this past summer. He joined us in New York for three weeks of intense practical classes in painting, and a number of public presentations and conversations. One of these conversations, on *Art and Technology*, was lightly edited and is included in this newsletter. If you would like to learn more about the work with Zvi you can find many videos on our website (thank you Sergio Rico).

Lastly there is a rich reflection on time and the value of art penned by Laura Summer and a short piece concerning the dynamics between the inner path and psychedelics.

Now I have touched on what there is to be excited about. My feelings of gratitude take me back fourteen years, when Andrea Bergsma led the way to this area through her job on a farm. Andrea was central in bringing me to Columbia County, and at different times she was an enormous part of the endeavors of Free Columbia. Free Columbia itself somehow emerged after I met Laura Summer and the young folks gathering around Think OutWord. This was soon after my arrival. Over the years Laura Summer and I have worked, created, suffered and studied so much together that I would need to write pages about it, or only an indication. I am choosing the latter option for this newsletter. Eventually I was able to get to know Craig and Henrike Holdrege, from whom I learned, and with whom I was able to collaborate, on many occasions. Over the years a strange and wonderful series of puppetry projects have been created. Looking back there is a pattern in the madness as I recognize Aldo Lavaggi, Madison Shulkin, Emma Wade, Don Jamison, Michael Balin, John McManus and Lisa Damian supporting many of them, though there were so many more involved. Then there was a stint in the academy. In an exploratory excursion I met a few professors who shared my interests at the University at Albany leading to my completing a PhD and working now and then as an adjunct professor. More recently I was integrated into life as a father to Simon and Oneida Dancey, starting a family with Abigail Dancey; a joyous blessing.

In looking back on the years, which I have only skipped over here, I am mostly aware of the humility of our efforts and achievements. But I remain convinced that our intentions are radically important: Deepening communities of knowledge in order to accommodate the spirit in the human being and the world as social initiatives that unite freedom and accessibility.

Nathaniel Williams
November, 2022
Philmont, NY



Art and Technology

By Zvi Szir and Nathaniel Williams

This Summer Zvi Szir offered a series of public presentations and events alongside the painting intensives he was teaching at Free Columbia. The following event took place on July 16th. It began with a short presentation, followed by a conversation facilitated by Nathaniel Williams. Though some larger sections from the question and answer period were removed in the interest of length, what follows is otherwise a very lightly edited transcript.

Zvi Szir: Good afternoon. I'm happy that we are all here. I don't take it for granted. I will jump right to the question about technology. It is almost the most intense question circling around art students all over the world today. It's coming up again and again. In every class somebody has to say something about it. It doesn't matter if it's in China, in Israel, in Switzerland, even in Finland. Everywhere. I want to start with a very personal experience.

I have a lot of students that come from the animation industry, graphic design, comics, and they are really masters of graphic programs. They practically paint and draw all day for hours on all kinds of professional graphic programs, then they come to the workshop. This has been happening for the last three years, in every workshop. They came and I said, "Look, you can work on your tablet if you want, but I think it'll be much better for you to work on paper." Then they start. Because they're very good draft people, they can draw. Mostly they come because they don't understand color. They want to learn. They come and they start working.



Usually they have a week for the first exercise. After the first week, they always come with the same complaint, that there is no "undo". They cannot go back. If you work digitally and you make a mistake, you just move to the last place where it was good, and you make it right. They have a button, usually on the left corner, and that takes you back. But with brush and paper you cannot undo what you did. It really takes time for them to overcome this pattern, and this is maybe the key problem, with materials, with substance.

When you work digitally, you don't have this problem. I don't have to tell you how relieving it is for a painter not to have to deal with material problems. I always fall into it. Every two years or so I pick up the tablet and I start playing with it. You can do everything. You put oil and watercolor together, and it's perfect. The reality of the materiality never disturbs you. It is really great. But in the end, you look at your work, and it's not really satisfying. It's a little like falling in love with a character in a movie only to realize that it's only a movie. There are no men or women like this. If you have this experience, it becomes clear that to understand the relationship between art and technology, you'll have to understand the relationship between art and materiality right from the start. If you don't understand the relationship of the artwork to its materials, technology is not a problem, or not even a question. It is just one more medium in the so-called post-medium world, where everything is an art medium, or nothing is an art medium. If we go back for a moment, and I have to start there, no way around it, then maybe we can touch on the problem.

It is important to realize that I am in no way saying that technology is not good, or is not good for art or something like that. As proof, just notice we are recording this lecture. I just want to open up the question, and this question opens when we turn toward material reality.

Let's start with painting first. It's the archetypical art in a way. One of the interesting things in painting is that you can really never have two of the same pictures. If you have a painting, there is one of them. You can make a copy of it. It'll be a second painting, but they won't be the same. This is always a lesson in art. When you go to the shop and there are 20 copies of the same yogurt, it doesn't really matter which of them you pick.

Painting is not the same. The fact that you have one of each painting, though it might be complicated, and you might explore conceptual work with it, you might make an exhibition, all of the same painting but painted one hundred times, it'll still be all around this problem, that the painting is essentially bound up with the material. You cannot change the material of the painting.

I will say something that might sound radical. You should see if you can disprove it. When we look at all objects, and include works of art; painting, sculpture (sculpture is more complicated), there are no other objects in the world where the materiality and the essentiality of the thing are the same. There is no difference between the materiality of the object, and I will say, the spirituality of the object. There is no ideal except the material. They are one.

Everywhere else, things are different. Even in the human body, we are exchanging materials all the time. We are not bound with our specific materiality. We are bound to our form. The material passes through. Every living being differs from its material. For a living being, the material is not essential. I can eat this piece of bread, or this piece of bread. If I have two in front of me, this one I can eat tomorrow. The color I put in a painting is not exchangeable. If I go now to Vermeer and I say, "Look I have better colors, they adhere better. Let me exchange this blue here with some acrylic. It will be more light-resistant." It won't be it.

I don't want to elaborate, but in art, we always have a unity. The work is its material. What is essential in a painting by Cézanne is the color that he puts down, and you cannot change it. The moment you change it, it's not the same anymore, it doesn't feel right.

In this sense Steiner comes to the concept that the



artwork is sensual/supersensual. In the artwork, there is no difference between the materiality and the idea, between the concept and the percept. What you see is what it is. You cannot change one part of the painting without changing the painting. Of course, you can change the painting, but it becomes a different painting.

It is the same in every form of art, if we exclude, for the moment, photography and cinema. Music is one with its sound. This is quite amazing. You can take bass and cello solos. Somebody will play it, and it'll be beautiful. The sound that is playing now, the way the air waves move and take and carry the sound to you, is essentially the work. Then tomorrow, somebody else will play it, and they cannot really play. They play the same notes from beginning to end, and it'll be horrible. The sound, the way the air moves, the way the sound is woven into material reality is the work. There is a perfect unity of the sensual and the supersensual of art in the classical sense.

Of course, this is what presented such a challenge when technology came into being. If we look at classical painting or poetry we see this. Poetry exists in an interesting middle dimension. Poetry unfolds not from content but from the sound. You have to speak it somehow, even to yourself. Even if you do it very, very quietly, and you don't even move your lips, if you don't hear it, it's not there. If you read it like you are looking at something in an old telephone book, just reading adverts or lists, the poem is not there. It has to be specifically bound to its physicality. Actually, poetry and music are even more physical because you have to give them body every time you encounter them. Painting is bound with its body in a different way.

Now, this becomes interesting when we compare it to technological images. I think we are lucky because technological images are reaching a

kind of archetypal stage at the moment. There is something archetypal in the screen. You look at the picture on the screen, it doesn't matter if it's digital art or if it's a production of something else, if it was made for the screen or not. The picture on the screen doesn't have any commitment. It's not committed to a body. As a painter and as a researcher, I really like to go into TV shops where they sell TVs because they have the same program running in all TVs. You see that it works. It can be a little greener or a little redder, it can be bigger or it can be smaller. Then you have the cheap TVs where the figures are misty and everything becomes a little blurred. It doesn't matter because the image is not bound to a body.

How do we know it's not bound to a body? First of all, digital images don't have a size. You can see them bigger or you can see them smaller. Some of them, if you make them too big, lose their focus, but this is just because somebody was cheap, but it's not essential. They don't have a place. They are nowhere. You can put them anywhere. This is fantastic. This is already very spiritual. They can be at many places at the same time. They can be everywhere. We are dealing with a world which doesn't have, in this sense, a central relationship to physicality. We must say artworks, in the classical sense, do have an essential relationship to their material. Digital images, technological images, even photography, which started with glass plates but quickly left this behind, are different. At the moment this type of image is peaking. Today I saw such a section of a picture on my phone, an image from a picture I have never seen before. I'm not sure if it's really part of the piece, nor am I sure that I saw the whole picture. I'm not sure how big it is because nobody noted this down, but I can make it big and small on my phone, and to a certain point, look into the details. You don't have to get close, just make the image bigger.



This is essential, that technological images are really not committed to their materiality. This is where the problem of art begins. Now, I have to be very careful. I will say it like this, there is a possibility, a very good possibility, we need to change the concept of art. We may need to say the artistic experience that we use to have is not what we call an artistic experience today. We have to say that, categorically, artistic experience is an experience that is unique. It is singular in relationship to all the gradations of experience that we have in the world because it is the only experience where the material and the essential, where appearance and truth, where illusion and reality, appear at the same time.

A painting is exactly what you see. Nothing is hidden, it doesn't have any layers, doesn't have anything behind it. A human being is never what you see. Nor is a tree or a horse. There is always

a hidden secret. Paintings don't have this. Their spiritual part, what they really are, and their material part, what you see, are the same. This is why we call them sensual/supersensual.

If we need this unity of the material and the spiritual, of the essential and the appearance, of matter and idea, if we need this unity, then categorically, there cannot be an artistic experience based on digital images. It will be something else. Not because technology is bad or good, or whatever. This is not a moral judgment. It is simply impossible. It would be like saying that you have blueberry muffins that taste like chocolate or maple syrup which tastes like olive oil. Categorically maple syrup is not olive oil. If we think about it this way, there is no possibility to have an artistic experience through digital imagery.

Now two problems are connected with this. One is that, even if we can think it, we don't believe it. We'd like it to be otherwise. I would say we live in a time when culture is based on opinion. Thinking is based on truth. Two different things. We have it in ourselves. It's not that we are talking about other people here. We absurdly like to say that cinema is art. Nobody that make movies thinks that it is art. It's something else. It's a different experience. We have to understand what kind of experience it is, but it is certainly not art.

I read an interview with Frank Miller, one of the great, or maybe most horrible, comics painters. He was being interviewed by a European who asked, "Would you say that comics is art?" Frank Miller replied, "For God's sake, no. It's not one of these boring things you put in the museum. It's



something totally different. It is not art." If we follow our thinking, we'll have to say that categorically it is impossible to have an artistic experience through technological images, simply because of the fact that no technological image includes an essential relationship to its material.

Now, I am not saying we don't have this experience, I am saying categorically this is the conclusion. The interesting point is that when you look back into the history of the last 60 years of art, you see it everywhere. I would say that since the 1960s, artists are trying to take digital or technological images and photos and somehow connect them with a body. They tried putting them on an object, taking the screen of the television out of the box, so it becomes sculpture or gluing photos on canvas. Everybody is trying to bind what is essentially without a body to the material. Technological images, in this sense, might be the wrong path into the spiritual, but they are very spiritual. Their problem is they're not art. Not that they're not spiritual, but that they are not material enough. They are sub-material in a way. You see this in contemporary art, including object installations and the best video artists. Everybody's trying to find a way to give what doesn't have a body a body. It's like trying to build a body for a ghost. It's not a human being. They don't need a body, but we want to pull them down, we have to give them a body somehow. This is one fact.

The other fact is that, again and again, somehow, through the cracks of the categorical, you have an artistic experience from something that doesn't have a body, and you are not sure why. Is it based on memory? Is it based on your ability to project something into the event? It's really a mystery. Sometimes I lie on the sofa at home and I listen to music. Recently I have been listening to Stravinsky. I'm listening to a whole CD from

the beginning to the end, which is about seventy minutes long. I'm extremely touched. I am intelligent enough to know I can hear exactly the same thing, with the same mistakes again. It is a recording of Stravinsky directing; so Stravinsky will direct it again in the same way. Now I'm a little tired, and I listen to it again, but I am not as focused. I take the volume down. This piece is not even attached to its volume! I had the feeling the bass was too strong, so I changed it. There is something nauseating in this relationship, there is something strange. The music is not attached to its volume, it is not even attached to its sound. I can alter it. It's not essential exactly how it sounds. Then somebody might come over and say, "Don't you think it's too much bass or too much treble? Make it a little lower." Then I change it and they say, "Oh, it sounds better."

It is an experience without a body. It creates a paradox that somehow contains all our relationships, our contemporary relationships, to art. On the one side, we know it's not possible. We know it's not even possible to see a painting in a book or to see a painting on your screen. You know it's not the original. It's just not the same, but sometimes you have to enjoy it. It's a gift. You say, "Whoa, I'm so lucky. I couldn't fit the whole orchestra in my living room, even if I could somehow pay them."

This kind of conflicted relationship we find everywhere in our relationship to the digital. It makes life as an artist very complicated. I have a friend in Israel who is also a painter. I ask what she is doing. She says she is just finishing a work. I ask if she can send a picture. She knows it's not the painting. I know it's not a painting. She took a picture of it herself. She knows that what she's seeing is not the work, but somehow it is there. It is not so easy.

I want to round this off before our conversation, relating it to something I wrote a few years ago,

about the relationship between art and internet or digital technology and the arts. In the text I try to describe the internet as a prosthetic, as something that stands in for something else, as a tool or a new hand. With all of its problems, it is a prosthetic, without being for a specific bodily organ. It is an attempt to create something instead of everything. Sometimes you have an experience that might be artistic through this means. How can this be? I remember I had a friend who lost his hand. He had a prosthetic handmade, a very sophisticated one. I was thinking of a father, for example, that lost both his hands, and then a prosthetic is made with a three dimensional printer. Then he's playing with his son. These are good. He's taking his son in his hand. He's a little kid and he swinging him around, and the son is laughing, and they have a great time, and then he puts him down. Now, this is love, even if the hands are plastic.

I think when we try to understand digitality, computer art, technological imagery as a whole, we have to say categorically, it is impossible that it'll be art. Actually, it's not very clear why we need it. It is a kind of laziness. Yet again and again, it happens, something breaks through. We'll have to be willing to describe all kinds of new experiences that might look, in the first very instance, as if they are art, but there is something different. Or we need to change the definition of art so much that it does not have any meaning. If somebody says everything is art, it is the same as saying nothing is art. There is no difference in these two statements.

Nathaniel Williams: Thank you Zvi for making context for us to start our conversation. From the writings that I've read from you, the piece about prosthetics, but also the piece you wrote this January, there is this ideal from a classical

perspective that materiality is inseparable from what art is. Some form of perceptible materiality is inseparable from the arts. This is a core part of the experience of art, until, let's just say the digital revolution, for simplicity's sake. Your characterizations of digital images focus on them having no fixed size, no fixed place, that they exist in spaces that have no history, and possibly no future. They come and go. These images, what are they made of? The characterization is interesting. They don't have the typical limits of materiality, but actually all of these images are facilitated by natural materials, should we say, or forces of electricity and magnetism. The phenomenon of both electricity and magnetism are really interesting, because they are hard to perceive. It's interesting, almost like the way that you're approaching this, you're saying, we have these natural materials that are actually pseudo-material. They're not really material. Electricity and magnetism are not really material. It's interesting to hear, because you don't really ever speak to that.

ZS: I think we have to understand the concept of information to understand digitality, and then we'll understand the relationship to electricity and magnetism. If you look at the tree outside, there is everything that the tree is in the tree. All the laws of nature that make the tree grow are not in your head, they are not in some transcendent plane, they're working in the tree. Now, if you look at the picture of a tree, you don't have them there. You just have the laws of how the image is made and you connect the order of pixels with your memories, and you say, this thing is a tree.

If you look at the painting of a tree, you have something totally different. You don't have the tree here either. It doesn't try to be information about the tree. You have a different relationship. The tree appears through a totally different



material, and something appears there that maybe doesn't appear in the tree. The difference between artistic experience and information, is the core difference here between an artistic image, and an informative image. For information, you need a material that is so unessential that it can be exchanged. It's just a carrier, the relationship between the image and the tree, and the electromagnetic forces that create it, are not essential. It is just carrying the information. The image is not made out of electricity or magnetism. The image is just using them in a way, because it is not bound with them. Maybe you can say that this is the difference between a slave and a friend. If you just have somebody working for you, you can replace them with somebody else. If you have a meaningful relationship, friends are not exchangeable, you cannot replace them. The relationship to the forces of nature that you find in the information industry which use electricity, magnetism, and other forces is not essential. The relationship of the paint to the painting is essential. This is why painters are so obsessed with their brushes, with their colors, and with their palette, and with the paper they work on. A digital designer, the moment he sees a better tablet on the market, he just switches tools. This happens more or less every two years, just changing out the tablet, or getting a new iPad. I think we have to see that the relationship between digital images and electricity is one of utility. It is not the same electricity, It's not bound. In painting or in physical art you have this bond.

In a way the problem begins already with Greek art. The moment you started to cast bronze, suddenly, you could make two sculptures that are the same sculpture, or they're not the same because you have to work them and so on, but at least they are striving to be the same. This is where the problem begins. I go to the museum in

Basel and see the sculptures that stand in Calais in France. It's the same sculpture, A bronze duplicate. It's a very old problem, a very old question that started very early. It has just become overwhelming lately. Somehow we have reached a threshold.

NW: I think that with magnetism and electricity, I think it's interesting to ask, what do you learn about electricity and magnetism through noticing how images constituted by them act? I don't quite hear that in what you just said, but we don't have to go there. It's an interesting area for exploration I think. Both of them actually tend towards invisibility, even though they have moments of visibility. They are somehow material yet immaterial. They do unbelievable amounts of work for us. Especially now, with more and more electric cars. Just think about all of the electro-magnetic machines. All of the images on our phones, projections or computers, it's also expressing something about this variety of materiality, which I find really interesting.

But I'd like to connect with something else you just said that I think in reading your writing is really interesting. I remember last fall I was lying in bed. I was waking up. It was a beautiful autumn morning. Here in the Hudson Valley, in New York, it is so stunning in August and September. It's something I've never seen anywhere else in the world. I was in bed, I was in between waking and sleeping. I heard a cricket. Then I woke up and I wrote poem. It was right there. I know it came out of the light and cricket. It was like I was listening to the cricket, and I saw the light when I opened my eyes a couple of times. Then immediately I wrote a poem. I didn't really have to think about it. It was an outgrowth of that moment, a perception. In the history of art and impressionism we find people that walk around and they see way more than they should see, and they make art

with that. They meet someone, and suddenly they start sensing a turtle, and they don't know why, but they have to paint a turtle person from meeting someone. If you look at the history of impressionism and post-impressionism we can feel this. Actually, the world is a lot more alive. You have that feeling that you're still connecting to something. You write about this. You just spoke about it. You write about the fact that, for instance, when you have a painting of the tree, you still feel that the essence of the tree, the life, but it's an image of it because it's a painting. With a digital image, you have the strange experience that it's an image, but it's almost a pseudo-image. Again, like pseudo-materiality in the sense that you were talking about earlier. It's like an image without an essence, or an image without expression. I remember when I was a young boy, one of my first memories of going to the movies—at a small movie theater in Tennessee. I went in, and it was bright outside. I came out and it was dark, and the street lights were on. I remember watching a movie, coming out, and there were these bushes. I was probably 11 or 12. There was so much space between the bushes, between all the leaves of the bushes. It was empty. It was like being in outer space. I was looking at these bushes, and there was no air between the leaves. It was like the world had dried up a little bit. We were talking yesterday about how you can spend hours looking at all these digital images, maybe surfing, going from one thing to another. When's the last time you saw one of those images and you felt the impulse to create a work of art? When's the last time you did that, and you just felt tired, and maybe a little empty, or full of the wrong energy? Also the pseudo image character you write about “categorically”, which is such a boring word. Characterizing experiences is so much more interesting than categorical explorations. Would you speak more about this?

Participant 1: Also where is the art? We talked about how we need the material, then when you go to an electromagnetic image, you feel dried out. You feel bored. You can't connect. It is also interesting to ask where is the art and where is the artistic experience in these different layers?

Participant 2: I just want to add a question before you respond. To me, art is because something is coming into the artist, and the artist is taking the material and raising it up. If I'm a painter, then I'm happy with what you're saying. I love my paints or whatever. If I'm a video artist, then my medium is life, and movement, and image, and color. If I hear a cricket in morning, instead of writing a poem, I might make a video about the qualities and feelings that I had that morning. From what I'm hearing, we don't like that, but we like this over here that has material. I want to bring that objection.

ZS: This is one of the questions. I don't object to it. I have to say, as an artist, I have followed video art since the 1980s. I don't say that you cannot make video art, I'm just not sure it's art. I think it might be another experience; this is one thing.

Most of the video artists I know they, are looking for ways to give their videos a body, which is interesting. Now it is happening in virtual reality. I don't know if you know the latest work of Bruce Nauman, it's all in a three-dimensional film in relationship to film. We are trying somehow to get into an experience, but I think there is a question there. I will come back to it in relationship to the earlier question, then my problem will become clear. I know it's very radical, but I watched thousands of hours of the best video art in the world. I spent a week just going through the collection of the Pompidou, hundreds of works.

The problem begins with our relationship to materiality. When we stand in front of something



material, we have to say there is something that is essentially creating what we are in front of. The powers that create the body are in your body. What creates the tree is working in the tree. What creates a chair is working in the chair. When I meet it, there is an exchange. It is the same with a painting because the painting is essentially material. It's different in a way, but if you stand in front of the painting, everything that created the painting can be experienced. If you're not a painter you will not do most of it consciously. If you're a painter, you can follow quite well what happened, you are recreating it. You are connecting with it. There is somebody there. Now, if you sit in front of your screen you see the images, and they are totally disconnected from the way they are created. You click here and on the same screen, you have a couple kissing in the sun. You click again, there is somebody killing somebody online, you click again, you have a porn film, you click again, you are in the Louvre. There is no relationship between the image and the object, the screen.

The essence that you are taking in is always the essence of the screen. The rest is not the essence but information. It's a fact that the light is not essential. Put it on another screen and it will look different. You can calibrate the screen as much as you want. Let it run for a week and it will look different. You can calibrate the colors every day, you will never get the same images. If you are interested in light or in color, in a film it's not really a specific light and it's not a specific color. There is indeed an experience, but this experience is on the level of information, and in a certain way, it is a story.

Video art is much closer to a novel or to journalism than to a picture or a painting. It is delivering information or a story. It might be information

about color. It might be information about dark and light, but it's certainly not an essential color or an essential dark and light. This is why you can move them from one screen to the other.

I think the question is what is it exactly that you are doing, or what kind of experience is being evoked through digital medium. I think it is a different experience that needs to be understood. For me, the problem with film is very interesting when you consider that the biggest reality in cinema is Hollywood, not video art. A video artist might put one million dollars into production and everybody will say it was very expensive. In Hollywood you need this for the catering. The dimensions are very different, but something from the quality I am touching on endures.

The relationship to Hollywood films is a question. For example, you sit in front of a very bad film and you cry. You are deeply moved. Now, to tell you the truth, I never saw anyone cry in the museum, and very rarely do I see someone cry in a concert. If being touched is a quality, then I would say cinema has the power to touch you that art lacks. It is truly the opposite in a way. If you stand under a creation of Michelangelo it might touch you deeply, but you never cry. You stand in front of the murder of the children by Tintoretto and it is horrible. You have children on sticks, babies on sticks, being cut and stabbed. You look at the painting and you say, what a strong work. If you put it in a cinema, it would not be allowed on the screen. I think this experience is something that video art is trying to touch on somehow, some general experience, but I don't think it is the same. I think it's another experience.

Filmmakers are creative, no question about it. The question is what they're creating. What kind of experience is it? What does it do with us? I think if we dare to look closely, we'll see that we are

dealing with different experiences. What we did in order to combine these different experiences is that we diffused the concept of art. We have something very general, very tolerant, instead of insisting on the differences, it's very peculiar to democracy. We said, "Okay, it's all the same." We make hodge-podge concepts. We mix all the concepts together. It will require more courage to differentiate. When Frank Miller begged for it not to be called art, he felt it is totally different. Perhaps we can call it entertainment.

Participant 3: This discussion reminds me of the work of Nam June Paik. He's deceased now but over the course of many decades he was very much concerned with the relationship of the video experience and imagery and materiality. Right now, there is a major retrospective in South Korea, the Video Towers, which are now being reconnected and resurrected. It goes back all the way to his relationship to live performance with Charlotte Merman and all the ways in which you would be encountering yourself, like with the image on the screen. It's almost as if he's been anticipating this conversation. All the nuances that are problematic in a way are integral to the rest of his work. I find that really interesting as an artist, almost in a way prefiguring everything that we're talking about right now.

ZS: I agree and this is the reason why it's important. I have followed his work since the eighties, I was always interested in it. I saw a lot of them and some of the performances live. I think this issue was there from the beginning. We have images without body. We see them on the television. The question was, can I give them something of a body? Then the television became a sculpture, and the sculpture is trying to embody it. I think many of the best video artists are working with knowledge that they're bound to fail. The work

is about its own impossibility. There is a beautiful little book by Vilém Flusser called *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*. In it he tries to describe how the camera is a program that is bound to do one thing only. It will create images without body, it will teach you a certain way to see the world. He said the best photographers are good because they work against the camera. They try to undermine it. Of course, in the end, the camera wins. It's like a Terminator film. In the end, the machine wins. But the artist, or the resistance, that is the value of Nam June Paik, is constantly trying to trick the film. Connecting it with the physical sculpture of buddha, connecting it with a body. Putting it in a loop so it is destroying itself until it catches fire, burning a hole in its own screen. All the time trying to bring the camera to do something that it doesn't. This is something that is connected also to good video art.

We have it in poetry as well. If you look at poetry there is always somebody trying to teach language to say something it cannot otherwise say. It doesn't have a word for this, it doesn't have grammar for it. In a way every single poem is saying something that otherwise language, couldn't say. This is tricking language, it is what it means to write a poem, to bring something into appearance through language that everyday language doesn't do. Much good video art takes on a poetic form. It is trying to push video to bring something into appearance that wouldn't appear on video, in a thousand ways, but it is also bound to fail. Nam June Paik is one of the first big examples.

NW: Recently you wrote on the effects of all these images and maybe we could touch on this now. When we look back, we don't have to go back to pouring bronzes in Greek times, maybe we go back to woodcuts, lithographs, the introduction of larger-scale reproductions of images, we know



that for people before that, all the images they were exposed to, all cultural objects and images, were art in the classical sense. Often, they were integrated in a whole world view and belief system. It wasn't just a beautiful object, but it was also literally trans-substantiated matter that you felt belonged to the New Jerusalem, for instance, in medieval Europe. I don't want to simply be anachronistic in that way. When technological reproducibility started, of course, one of the most famous engagements with its social significance was found in Walter Benjamin and how he interpreted the significance of technological reproducibility. He suggested that with these new images communism and social justice became possible. Or you also have Schiller, who you referred to in some of your articles, and he, not focusing on reproducibility, but focusing on art's traditional form. The main issue for him was whether beauty was widely accessible to a population of people, whether they were educated looking at objects where they feel the body of the thing is important, the body, not the meaning, the very body of the thing, that it is unique, not replaceable, and through the body, you get to the essence, or through materiality, you get to essence. Schiller's thesis was that a population that is educated artistically, and exposed to art in this sense throughout their education, will be more able to have a peaceful democracy. They won't force their ideas on one another. They'll respect the bodies of one another and approach each individual as something irreplaceable, as a sentiment, not as a concrete philosophy or anything. Now we talked about the hodgepodge of democracy, but this is also something from the tradition of art theory, the social significance of beauty, in that sense.

You wrote a piece in January where you suggested we look at the situation now, especially after the last three years. What do we have? We have

images that are pseudo material. Are they artistic? Are they not artistic? Do they connect us with reality? Do they leave us somehow with information, empty? So we have the idea of artistic education leading towards peaceful Republican democracy. Now we have digital images everywhere. Everyone younger than me grew up surrounded by them. You wrote about social implications. Maybe you would like to say a couple things about this.

ZS: I really like film, I like videos and I watch a lot of them. This conversation is about understanding how experiences are different, how they give me another relationship to reality. Now the problem that you are pointing at, I think is the problem of critical mass. It was moving slowly, but we knew that it was coming. Sometime over the last ten years the relationship between experience and information shifted. People used to have a great deal of experience and some information. At the moment we know much more about things we have never experienced than we have experienced. The balance shifted radically. We have many things that we perceive digitally, and we have relatively few experiences. The fact that extreme sports are becoming so popular I think is connected to the drive to have experiences. If you are at home, you experience things digitally. You see a lot of worlds but the disproportion is crazy. You have much more information than experience.

The problem with information is that because you are confronting a being, but only of a digital image, you cannot think about it. It's a huge problem. For example, Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom* describes the process of perception and understanding. You look at the flower, the flower essence, it's law, is in its appearance. But you don't see what the flower is at first sight, you experience it through the senses, impressions, color, form or

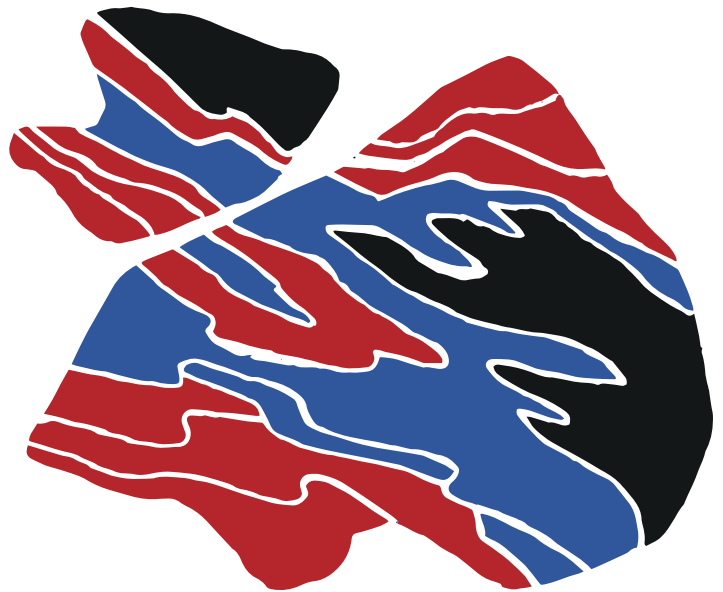
smell. With thinking you enter the flower. What you perceive you divide. The essence is in the flower, but it comes to you from two directions. This is why you can think about the flower. The essence is the thought, the idea of the flower is in the flower. Now, when you look at the digital image, you have information. I saw a shark, but the essence of the shark is not there. What I see is the essence of the camera or of the screen. I don't see, I don't smell the shark, it's not there. There is no shark. There is no thought about it. The social impact is that we cannot think about things that we only have information about. The majority of our lives is now information. We have a huge amount of activity in us that doesn't take place. We simply don't think— There is no way to think about information because you're not experiencing it. With information you might think, If it is like this, then it is like that. This is the whole mess that unfolded around the COVID situation. We had a lot of information, but no perception. Everybody was imagining something. Perhaps they were against one matter or for it, or in between. It is not because people are stupid. They just didn't notice that there is no way to think about it. Categorically—

Participant 5: What about the different soul levels that Rudolf Steiner refers to. For instance sentient soul, intellectual or mind soul, consciousness soul or spiritual soul. I'm just wondering, if in evaluating these different experiences, one can explore how it affects each one of these soul levels. It would be in a study of the soul levels and their variations. Then also in relation to thinking, feeling, and willing.

ZS: I think it is a very important observation. Maybe a direction to consider is that whenever we are dealing with opinions we are in the intellectual soul. Intellectual soul deals with opinions,

not with truth. The whole world of information, it cannot be thought, so we have an opinion about it. This is why you don't have a button for truth or not truth but a button of like. The sentient soul doesn't have the wish to think about it, it just has a wish to react to it. When I have a reaction with the sentient soul it is how I relate, not what the thing is, but how I relate to it. Last year I had an operation. The experience for the sentient soul was horrible, but the deed was good and right. This is the difference between the sentient soul and the consciousness soul. When you are in the digital world you are in the intellectual soul because the intellectual soul is where you spin and create your identity. Look at the intellect - everybody's inventing themselves on Facebook.

NW: I always appreciate you because you're thoughtful, provocative and deep. I agree with so much and disagree with so much. We have great conversations about it. Thank you for being here.



Some Reflections on Time

Laura Summer

I am sitting on the rocky coast of Maine watching the tide go out, waves that are still almost reaching my feet. I know that these tides will continue even when I am gone, even when there's no one there to watch them. The waves going further and further out, having washed what was there before.

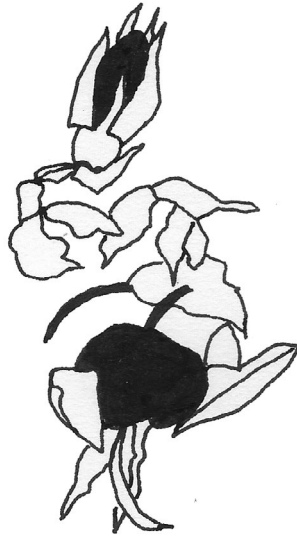
And when I walk by the stream at my house, I know that the water will still be running even when I am not there to watch it. Under the snow in winter it will be there even though I cannot see it. But this year has been a drought and the water was no longer in the stream. Rain came and then there was water rushing along again, for days and days, much more water than had fallen from this sky. Where did it come from?

I had always wanted zinnias to grow in front of my house in the summer but I had never managed to get them planted in enough time for them to really multiply. This spring, on an impulse, I stopped at the nursery and bought many starts of zinnias. And now they are growing amidst the jewelweed and the milkweed and the other weeds. One day they taught me a lesson. I looked at them and suddenly I could see the overwhelming activity of a plant. The way the flower looked still to my regular eyes but at this moment I could see that nothing is still.

We had a conference this summer in Detroit, and the schedule went from eight in the morning until 10 at night, with only a very short break for lunch. During the conference I was irritated with the organizers, one of which was me, for making such a brutal schedule. But when it was all over, it was so obvious that it had been a life-changing experience for many people. One young man listened to a profound lecture by a profound person and wrote out the meaning of it in a poem within 15 minutes of the lecture. What does it take to change lives? What kind of time is conducive to this question? What grows through adversity and what grows through rejuvenation? And is there some balance that we are all needing but rarely seeing?

I have been trying to perceive the concept of milkweed, an activity of being that encompasses perfect order and perfect dispersement.

This summer I did a show of paintings called "Winging It – angels and other states of being". They are part of a three-year collaboration with video artist Sampsa Pirtola who lives in Finland. Over the past three years we have sent images and videos and ideas over the internet, back-and-forth, creating the inspiration that creates the work. I built a video



booth at Lightforms, trying to create a space of darkness which could hold light. It is not so easy to eliminate light, even for a good cause. I was not totally successful, but I think close enough, and now the moving colors and lights can be seen in the darkness. When people ask me how the video was made I say 'I don't know, I guess he filmed the angels'. Taking the subject of angels for an art show is not really to be recommended if you want people to be excited about it and interact with you, and explore painting and drawing in relation to this subject. I have learned that it's hard to know what to say about beauty. It's much easier to comment on political unrest.

I read a book recently, a story of people in France in the 1940s, and another about people in Virginia in the mid-1800s. And I am taking a class on using non-binary pronouns, about seeing someone as human. These times we are in are requiring a huge upheaval in me, a questioning of how I am, what I am, and how to carry on. A close collaborator of mine questions whether he should do something else for the world, something other than art, or something that raises something else to art. And I remember this quote:

Art forms a bridge across the abyss. That is why art must realize that its task is to carry the spiritual-divine life into the earthly; to fashion the latter in such a way that its forms, colors, words, tones, act as a revelation of the world beyond. Whether art takes on an idealistic or realistic coloring is of no importance. What it needs is a relationship to the truly, not merely thought-out, spiritual. No artist could create in their medium if there were not alive in them impulses springing from the spiritual world.

-Rudolf Steiner, The Arts and Their Mission - lecture 4

I am on this Maine coast because this place brings me restoration. Overall the summer has been overwhelmingly busy. Most of the time I felt that I was at least triple booked, wondering which obligation was going to win out at any one time. But I can watch the tide here and the forces for the future can flow in, what questions will they ask?

Stefan Ambrose and Matt Briggs in Conversation

Stefan Ambrose - Hi Matt, we first met studying at the Nature Institute in the Hudson River Valley several years ago and for some time you've been responsible for instructor training at Ruskin Mill Trust in Sheffield, England amongst other initiatives involved with education, research and craft work within the Trust. Free Columbia's M.C. Richards program has given a central role to craft work, wood-fired ceramics in particular, this year, and I personally have a strong interest in the place based craft model active in your work. Could you tell us how you came to this path in your own life, and how your work is meeting the challenges and needs of young people, and our world, today?

Matt Briggs - It was really environmental education that I got into. I was the kind of typical eco warrior, didn't want to be around people at all when I was a teenager. So I decided to do environmental conservation at the university, which had aspects of environmental sciences, environmental education, things like that. I went to all the climate marches in London, and then realized through that the only way to affect the environment is through people's hearts and minds. So I got really interested in outdoor education and alternative education and the lady who started Forest Schools in the UK came to the university and did a lecture on her work.

I immediately grabbed her and said "I'm gonna work for you. I'm gonna work for free, but I want you to tell me everything you know about this field of education, in return." So she was really nice and she gave me a job straight away. I learned about outdoor education in a very different way, a very

different approach. I started working with young people, school children, and even started training the trainers for the course. I started off doing all the levels really, from nursery groups to school groups, going into schools, taking schools out to Woodlands, but then ended up teaching the forest school level four and level five for the trainers as well. That got me really interested in the pedagogical approach of taking people to the woodlands, and what do you do when you're there.

So one of the big things I found was the barriers were actually the localities and the parents either experiences or knowledge, or affinity with the environment, if you like. I was working a lot with inner city families of Sheffield who were kind of poorer and didn't have great access to public transport, or even if they did, it was an effort to get to the woodland, especially with the kids. That was a big barrier. And then the second barrier is what do we do with the kids when we're there? You know, they've maybe not had much experience being in a woodland or in the peak district, so what would they even do when they're there?

We found out that a lot of the work was around creating opportunities for the parents to come with the children and show them how to get there and how you can make it fun to get there, and what do you do when you're there. We did simple things like boundary setting games, you know, hide and seek, but stay within this particular barrier or that woodland edge, or that particular bushland. We made fairy houses and stick throwing games and, you know, things like that. That was a great

opportunity for me to see that often the biggest barriers are internal barriers, because most of the time we have amazing natural resources available to us. Even if it's a walk, bus or bike ride away.

The biggest thing was giving the parents the confidence to take the children there and actually just let them play. Just let them be, you don't need to do anything. You could actually go to the woods, or an environment or a riverside, and they'll lead themselves. All you need to know is the basics of how you're going to be safe and those kind of things. That made me realize, it's not really anybody's fault, it's about empowering people.

SA - Sounds like they just needed permission to go to those places and enjoy them.

MB - That's it. Yes. Permission. That's really what it comes down to. That's all they needed to be given. And then from there I found out about Freeman College, that was just starting in Sheffield at the time. I found out they had some different ideas, different philosophies about education, and that's where I encountered Rudolf Steiner education. I read up about it and thought, wow, this is interesting. Very, very different ideas compared to the kind of mainstream education I experienced. So, I got a job there and worked up high in the Peak district, that's about 1002 feet above sea level. It was windy, windswept, snowy, and really sunny in the summer. Very exposed. I was cooking in a pizza oven that we made from clay, barbecuing and eating the sheep we were raising, and the chickens. So doing the whole seed to table thing because I experienced that what's really important for children today, and people today in general, is giving them these opportunities to make the connections in an ecology. A very direct way to do that for the students we work with was working with food because everybody eats two or three times a day. So, a very simple way of getting people to make these

connections between themselves and their world is just by saying, "Okay, so what can we eat from this environment?" Or, "Okay, so we're keeping these sheep, what do we use them for?". We'd shear the sheep with the students every year. We'd get them to collect the eggs and they would make omelets and make food with the chicken. When there were too many males we'd have to get rid of them so they understood why certain chickens had to go, and then why it was maybe a good idea to eat them and not waste them. So it's putting everything into connection.

SA - Amazing, and what ages were these students?

MB - Yeah, so these were what in the UK is classified as special education, between 16 and 25. A lot of these students hadn't really had much experience of being outdoors, and we used to take them on trips. So we'd take them to Snowdonia in Wales, one of the biggest mountains in the UK, we'd take them out in the peak district. I do forest skills with them. I do wilderness activities where we'd take them mountaineering or climbing. I'd do cooking, like I said already. From there I just had a thirst to know more so I learned a few of the other crafts. I learned this craft that in the UK we call whittle, which is basically cutlery, knife, spoon and fork making and working with metals like copper, brass and steel. I had a big workshop in the center of Sheffield, which is really famous for cutlery making. So, that's what we call part of the genius loci, part of the spirit of the place. It's one of the biggest principles we work with. Finding something that resonates with the traditions, with the local cultures of the particular place, and getting the students to operate within that historical cultural background, because that's the resonance that they can develop with the local people, with themselves, and find a way into their history and culture. Give them a kind of rooting and a sense

of belonging that we find a lot of the young people need. That's going back to your question, what do we see as some of the big challenges for young people today? And one of the problems we nearly always encounter with the students we work with is this lack of a sense of a connection and a rooting and a belonging to where they come from. What comes out of that is this question, "Well, who am I?" and "what am I doing here?" We have this strapline in *Ruskin Mill Trust, we call our vision, that each individual has the potential to shape their own future through experiencing meaningful relationships with universe, earth and people*. So, you know, I think this is true of most of the issues that we see and read about on the news nowadays. Most of the phenomena around social media point towards this lack of meaningful relationships and meaningful experiences with either people, earth, as in an ecology, or the universe. And the universe could mean an array of different things. It could mean a cosmological understanding. It could mean, well, how are the different things connected in terms of the seasonality, in terms of the moon, in terms of the sun, and how do we create? So, if this is our vision, how do we bring it about through education, and how do we scaffold unique situations where these humans that we work with can have this conversation, begin to build this dialogue between themselves and the world around them? That might be through a material in craft, it might be through, you know, clay for some people like yourself. It could be wood for another person. It could be sheep and fleece or animals for another person. Then how do you foster those in a way that gives them a sense of purpose, a sense of responsibility as well. From the sense of purpose comes a sense of responsibility, because as you know, when you start taking materials from the earth, you start to notice, ah, well there's effects. Something is changed forever, isn't it? So when we take material

and we change it, particularly in clay and pottery, that material is transformed forever. It's changed from clay into the pot. This is a kind of microcosm for me of what humans have been doing for a very long time, which is to use the materials around us to transform them into tools and then transform the world. We work within Ruskin Mill Trust with the idea that as we transform the earth and make crafted objects we're also transforming the self. This is a big area of research within Ruskin Mill Trust, and I became really interested in it as I was working with these students, and particularly working with students who had what we would call impulse control related disorders. These are maybe the kind of kids who have come from gangs from inner city parts of Sheffield, maybe from "poorer families", and maybe even looked at as the kind of naughty kids in school. What was interesting is when you work with crafts, the workshop creates a set of conditions which, if they want to enter and make things, they have to abide by those rules.

SA - So back to responsibility.

MB - Exactly. But as a teacher you're not saying, you have to do this and you have to do that. The actual workshop and the tools create the conditions in a lawful way. So, suddenly you are not the person telling them off anymore. You lay out the health and safety boundaries, but actually it's the tools in the workshop, which speak back to them. You know, if you're on a big machine, which spins at 5,000 rpms, and you approach it in an unlawful way or in the wrong way, you will know straight away because that piece of material will fire up and explode.

SA - Immediate feedback.

MB - And it's feedback that they can understand and take, you know, it's not a cognitive feedback. It's not being told off for something they did yes-

terday, or for something they believe was the right thing to do. It's an immediate feedback, as you say, that is completely lawful. And it's the same if you imagine that with the animals. When you go to milk a goat, if you don't approach them in a warm and gentle way, they will kick you. So the way they may be approaching other humans, which may be a bit in their personal space, a bit too close, if they try doing that with an animal, if you're trying to herd the sheep, for example, they'll run away, you know? So, again, it's a kind of feedback which maybe you don't get directly in a social way.

SA - Yeah, or the feedback may be very difficult to integrate into your life. Maybe when we're human to human and there's so many social factors at play it's challenging. But when we're directly in relationship to this craft or to the earth, it's like, wow, that's me and this thing, and only my relationship to it and it's qualities are factoring in.

MB - That's it. And then suddenly they have this moment of wakefulness where they're needed. For example, in milking the goat or approaching the sheep, or making the pot, you know, even the cup in your hand. The experience I had really strongly with making spoons with these children, well, young men actually, kind of teenagers, was that they had only ever experienced taking a piece of paper back home that had a detention or an expulsion or an F, you know? And that had no meaning to them. It didn't tell them anything about themselves other than they got shouted at when they got home or by their teachers. But when you take a handmade spoon back or a cup, that's an undeniable, purposeful, useful object that is at the table. You are drinking from that cup now. It has use, it has a purpose, it has value in the world that no one can take away. And this is the beauty of the crafted object. It's an externalization of the self that says back to the individual, okay, so you've made this,

therefore maybe you're purposeful, maybe you are beautiful, maybe you are useful. You know, these are quotes from William Morris and John Ruskin.

SA - It's a gift to the culture. So, how can we create spaces that are both training grounds for life, where we receive real feedback that we can integrate, and in the end, we can feel that we've made a real contribution that connects us to, you use this interesting term, *genius loci*, which connects us to the place? Where we feel we belong suddenly to a real place, and then maybe in addition to that, to a community?

MB - We all know, in order to feel a sense of purpose and belonging, you need a community. As much as these kids say, "I don't want to be part of the community, I don't wanna be part of the group." Really, most of the time it's what they need and it's what they long for. So when they take the cup or the spoon, or the bowl, home and it's at the family table, or, you know, even if they're not with the family, it's at the table with other people, they can see, as you said, this is a community object. It can be used to pass the vegetables around, you can drink from it. They can see it's being used and appreciated by other people, but, also, the other people are appreciating the fact that the craftsperson has made it. And you can take that further. So, I'm set up in the gallery at the moment. We have a gallery space at Freeman College in Sheffield and in most of the colleges. And we have opportunities to put in some of the objects made in the local gallery in Sheffield. So then again, the local community can come and they can appraise it. And then they have this experience of seeing their work alongside community makers that are locally or nationally, or even internationally famous. So again, it integrates them into that culture, that history, and this wider community. We're going from these small circles of "I have a place, I have purpose" to, "I can connect to

those things then with other people” which could be giving that gift to a friend or a relative and acknowledging the other. So, you have to think, well, what would Stefan like? Does he like this color? What kind of drink does he drink? Does he drink tea more or coffee more? Or does he like beer or does he like wine? And again, you're making these connections, which has a powerful impact, particularly working with people with special education needs. Baron-Cohen would call it *theory of mind* when you're having to enter into the other person's shoes and think about their motives, think about their wishes, their desires. So you're going outside of yourself into the other, and then when you make, you're making in response to the other.

SA - So, this is another principle that comes in, empathy. Really, really interesting because it seems like empathy as a principle and capacity is being disrupted currently in our culture through, I don't know if you want to talk about anything like this, technology, abstract intellectual ideals in school, or, as you said, even just that most of the feedback young people are receiving in their education is in the form of a letter grade, and has very little meaning for them. Many of our students at M.C. Richards complain about their own experience in primary education and college. They don't know how the things they're learning in school are going to impact their life. It feels very abstract and hard to get a handle on. So, gradually, by degrees throughout their educational career, they also wind up feeling abstracted and disconnected from their peers and from their culture, and from, as you said, larger circles of belonging and identity that brings so much meaning and value to our lives.

MB - And this is it. If you don't have a sense of meaning and responsibility, then you approach life very differently, don't you? You know, as when I see a lot of young people today who, when they

first come to us, they say, "Well, why can't I just sit at home and play computer games all day?" Or, you know, just sit on Instagram or Facebook or whatever they wanna do in front of a screen all day and just have food delivered to them. That's a possibility in the world today. But again, you know, you can't really blame them for this because they've had no connection to the ecology of how those things are brought about. So, we always have these interesting conversations with students. If we look at the idea, "How would the world operate if we all lived like that?", "Who's gonna make the electricity to power it?", "Who's going to make the pizza that's gonna be delivered?", "Who's gonna be delivering it?", I think the problem, the root cause, of this is that through education, through a lot of mainstream education, we don't emphasize these connections between how we consume resources and how the resources are made and where they come from. And this whole issue is not only about sustainability, because if we carry on down the road of just sustainability, what we end up in is materialism 2.0, really. I was recently speaking with a Sámi Priest in Norway, and he was saying, you know, this sustainability is a bit of a whitewash from his point of view, because it allows capitalism and materialism to continue. Whereas what we should be looking at is regeneration. So, how do we create a regenerative economy? So that when we're walking forward in life, we're not just considering principles like leave only footprints behind, but how do we actively promote the regeneration of nature? I think this is an aspect that we need to start to bring into education. There's a lot of good work that we've been involved in. There's UNESCO sustainability goals and whole school approaches to sustainability. These are fantastic as a beginning of how schools can transform their curriculum, make these connections of how to grow your own food, how to resource your own materials more

sustainably, and how to foster relationships within the local community to encourage these kinds of principles. But in order to really address the climate crisis, we need to look at ways to regenerate and actively undo some of the harm that we are doing. So, for me, that was a big shift coming from this recent trip. In a couple of weeks we will be in Norway to collaborate on a project in partnership between a few universities in Iceland, Norway, and Ruskin Mill Trust. We're looking at the word ecopreneurship. So the idea is to turn around the idea of entrepreneurship, which has been overtaken by capitalism and neoliberalism, the idea that resources are there for us to make money from, to make more pie so everybody can take more slices and become more enriched. The idea is that we shift that around and we can say, "well, we can use these principles, but in an ecologically sound way" so that this term ecopreneur came around.



Developing Confidence Through Speech and Drama

John McManus

When teaching Speech and Drama I often ask the students, “what is the key to inspired acting?”. Most would answer “confidence”. But the gesture behind the answer was more revealing than the answer itself. It was either a deflated gesture or a zealous one. Deflated because the student would recognize that it is, precisely, “confidence” that is lacking. Zealous because the student holds, enthusiastically, to the idea of “confidence” as if willing it to become true. In both cases, we can witness a familiar polarity. The introvert shrinks and withdraws from the world and the extrovert asserts and impinges upon the world. Although In life, we swing between these polarities, usually one of them dominates and eventually becomes our habitual way of interacting with the world.

Then I ask, “what sort of confidence are you seeking?”. There is the arrogant, domineering, condescending confidence that is often the trademark of an extroverted personality and there is the reserved, self-centered, smug confidence of the introvert. But between these extremes, there is a middle sphere often referred to as ‘being in the zone’. In the middle sphere, we neither deny nor bluff but we simply connect. On the stage when an actor is in denial we see that the body is slumped and the voice lacks energy. When an actor is bluffing the body is tense and the voice lacks subtly. But when an actor steps on stage with the awareness and the activity of the middle we are invited into the creative moment itself.

In working with speech and drama we aim for coherency between mind, body, breath, and voice as a way of awakening, generating, and expressing creative action. We do this by embracing polarities and finding the middle. For example, if I want to move forward, I concentrate on the backspace; I enter into the counter- movement. In other words, *I go back to go forwards*. That is how I find my center and, as a result, I discover the ease and joy of moving. In speech, the same principle applies. I reach for the words before I send them. And if I want to speak sincerely, I must reach into my heart before and while I deliver my words. And so, *I go in to go out*. The same is true for gestures. The inner life of the gesture is made visible through the physical form of the body. In the gesture of ‘standing my ground’ or of ‘uprightness’, *I go down to go up*. The primary movement in uprightness is downrightness. I place my attention on descending and rising is the result.

What is important in this approach is that an external process of motion is accompanied by an inner process of sensation. Sensation is the glue that holds the inner and outer together and helps to sustain the focused activity. Such sensations like pressure, warmth,

and movement are basically essential for the feeling of being grounded, centered, and expanded. Without these sensations and feelings, creative work becomes abstract or simply technique. But the reality is that we bring the invisible self into the visible body and hold it there for a moment. And in doing so, we resolve the tension of opposites into a harmony that emanates, through the attending personality, as a simple yet undeniable confidence.

Mark Rowntree and Stefan Ambrose in Conversation

Below is a recent conversation between Stefan Ambrose and Mark Rowntree, who, along with Lily Hindes, are leading the ceramics component of the M.C. Richards Program

Stefan Ambrose - Mark, this is your first year teaching in a more engaged way with the M.C. Richards Program. You've done two previous blocks of ceramics with our students, the first and second year, but this year you're one of our core teachers. Would you talk about your experience so far and what's exciting to you right now?

Mark Rowntree - Well, number one, M.C. Richards was a potter, and I always wondered why the ceramics block was not at the core of the M.C. Richards program; that was always a little bit strange to me, so I'm very enthusiastic about it becoming a core element of the program. I think that that's where it should be. <laughs> The Village of Philmont has given me so much, it's given me the opportunity to build my own home, to really engage with the local community in terms of becoming a fireman, of building community programs right on Main Street, and teaching here is giving me the opportunity to continue to develop that engagement, but through a more formal teaching experience that is deploying my passion and knowledge base, which is wood-fired ceramics, right in the heart of the village. That is super exciting for me. To be welcomed into this program where all of the necessary elements are in place to get me to the point where I can successfully teach ceramics – workshop space, a kiln site, institutional support – I just feel like I am a part of this team moving forward, part of this institution, and being able to work with you, Stefan, in partnership, being able to steady the program as we reinvent it ourselves this year, it's just super exciting. I know I keep saying this, but it is.

SA - Great. Could you speak a little more to wood fired ceramics and this passion of yours for not just clay, of working with this incredible substance of the earth, but also with fire and with kilns, not just in firing them, but building them as well?

MR - Well, what keeps me coming back to wood firing is the community aspect of it. It's a very special relationship that we build with one another within the cohorts that coalesce

around wood kilns. It's very real and it's something that I've always wanted to test against the backdrop of the village. Can we create that cohort around wood firing in the heart of the village and how do we then, from the heart of the village, reach out to engage new audiences within the village and beyond? The communal gathering and the communing that happens around wood firing and around the kiln itself, all work together to create what I see as a fire elemental. There's a reason why these kilns are called dragon kilns in Japan, China and Korea. There the dragon is seen as a being of transformative power, and I think that that's what we are doing we're creating a transformative being made of fire, and the relationships that are born and sprout from that are themselves transformative and very potent. I want to build solidarity and connection between human beings, and for the last 20 years I have used wood-fired kilns as an effective tool to do that. Wood-firing in the M.C. Richards program is probably the fullest form of this exploration. In any of my other wood-firing experiences, there's always something that I would've liked to have changed, maybe it's better if the kiln is not on the top of a mountain, for instance, which is where most wood kilns are, they are separate, they are away from community. But what we've done is pretty ballsy, to bring a kiln into the heart of the village. We had to make certain changes to our kiln, so that it wouldn't be a bad neighbor and in that sense we're doing it right, we're doing it with reverence to the village community, we're looking to maintain and build on those relationships.

SA - Amazing. So the kiln is not just a place to transform clay bodies, it's a place to transform human beings and also communal structures and a place to come together and to become good neighbors. The kiln is becoming this new heartbeat of Free Columbia and you're saying that it's not just about Free Columbia. We are supporting our students to transform and we are transforming our campus and coming together here around the kiln, but this is something breathing out into the entire community and beyond, creating more relationships and partnerships. That's inspiring. Speaking of transformation, how does this work with clay and wood firing act as a medicine for the challenges young people are facing today?

MR - Through the workshop, through the clay, everyone is working toward the understanding that they're going to have to surrender their work to the kiln, to this fire entity that we are going to collectively bring into being, and that this entity is literally going to transform their work. But the kiln doesn't always give you all your work back and you might get some dodgy pots in return for the hours and hours of your labor, and I think, through this lens, you can learn to prioritize the communal experience, celebrating all the work that survives the kiln, over the need to have your own great pots. When you do receive that transformed pot, it becomes a constant reminder, a kind of token of that transformation that occurs within all of the cohort, and that building of the fire together. Clay is also a way in which we can talk about ideas and what's key is being able to engage with the students and bounce ideas off one another, grow ideas, develop ideas, steal ideas.

That moment where you are working through an idea, which for me, an idea is something that you pluck, it's on an infinite trajectory, and you bend it to your will just for a moment. If you grab it too tight, then it'll snuff it out. It's that moment where you can grab an idea and then maybe change its trajectory, and, then someone else grabs it in the future. When you are in that cohort with students, that to me is where it's all possible. The clay becomes a vehicle, the clay becomes a common language that we can build that discussion around, that idea space, that imagination space. That for me is what the clay allows.

SA - Clay becomes a social fabric, or a social clay. This sticky being that is bringing us together and as we're shaping it, it's shaping us. We're shaping it, but, also, we're shaping through it our ideas and the trajectories of our futures and how those ideas will shape the world.

MR - There you go. That's what I was trying to say.



Psychedelics/Entheogens and Inner Work

By Nathaniel Williams

I have recently had reason to reflect on the intersection of the use of psychedelics, or entheogens, and the spiritual path.¹ This is hardly a novel area of exploration. When LSD was catapulted into popular culture little over half a century ago its most prominent advocates and defenders published a “how to” manual based on the ancient esoteric text, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.² Many individuals credited experiences connected with these powerful substances as the impetus that pushed them toward a spiritual path and many stopped using the substances as they set out on these paths. I am one of many in this regard. In early adolescence I was exposed to the special cocktail of psychedelics and interest in spirituality many in the USA are familiar with. A sub-cultural bubble, traceable to San Francisco in the sixties, was situated near where I grew up in Tennessee. Like Richard Alpert (later Ram Das), and so many others, the end result was that I set out to find individuals familiar with what I had encountered, convinced it touched on deeper facets of reality.

Giving up drugs, I set out to orient myself to the new terrains that I had to live with in the aftermath of these experiences. My leverage moved from drugs to inner practice and three decades later I have come to some basic understandings of the terrain. Eventually I found my way to the unique perspectives and practices of

Anthroposophy. While Buddhist practices were exceptionally helpful for me in the early years, I came to rely entirely on my attempts to work with the Anthroposophical contemplative path at twenty. In the USA anthroposophy is more widely known for its practical initiatives, aimed at renewing the vocations of education (Waldorf schools), agriculture (bio-dynamics) and social therapy, to name a few, than the inner path that these initiatives arise from. It is only recently that the inner path that is the font and foundation of these initiatives has begun to enter general public discourse for English speakers, with work from authors like Arthur Zajonc.

In the context of this newsletter nothing but a few indications can be shared regarding this path. A basic point of orientation to the approach encouraged to students in this school is that they make lively, concentrated thinking and meditation their point of departure, and work from there into more involved contemplative practices related to feeling and willing. This sequence is connected to a valuation of the stability of the individual personality and the consciousness they have of freedom at all levels of spiritual development. For those familiar with many of the practices and teachings that have become more widely known in recent decades this can provide an illuminating comparison. It is likewise illuminating when we

1 For simplicity I use the more widely known term psychedelic in this text.

2 *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*, by Timothy Leary, Richard Alpert and Ralph Metzner

consider that many people associate inner work and meditation with trance, stream of consciousness or free association, and dreams.

Much of today's scientific conventions refrain from orienting toward the spirit, or consciousness, as real or as an enduring constituent of existence. Anyone who focuses on how experiences induced by hallucinogens lead individuals toward spiritual philosophies and practices faces an obvious dilemma. We are predisposed to count things that present themselves as perceptions, but that are not perceived by others, as hallucinations.³ When we really think about this, however, it means that most of the content of our consciousness should be considered a hallucination. Further, it is clear that the overall orientation of our culture is to discount inner experience altogether as hallucination. Anyone trying to understand experiences induced by hallucinogens, by meditation, near death experiences or by crisis, has to come to terms with this. The most prominent strategy is to ignore it as a problem. This includes ignoring the fact that inner activities, such as meditation, can change the chemical and physiological processes in the body, just as bodily processes affect experiences in normal consciousness.⁴ Because we find it difficult to grasp inner processes with any confidence, we focus on the unidirectional flow, tending to discount the possibility of any relative independence for perceptions that emerge as part of the inner horizons of our awareness. *The anthroposophical movement is characterized by the aim to shift the conventional register of culture so that meaningful questions can be formulated about the human being and the world as constituted by interactions of inner and outer dynamics.* The following are indications on the

theme of hallucinogens and spiritual practice, of a very general nature, from this shift in register and practice.

As I have mentioned, early in my adolescence a mixture of spiritual practice, ceremony and psychedelics shook the ground under me, as it has for many people over the past seventy years. Even after having left drugs behind there were diverse and varied unusual new facets of experience I had to come to terms with. The questions I was left with were existential. Part of this consisted in rebuilding my constitution through inner work and being able to exclude spontaneous and involuntary vision from my awareness at will. Another part had to do with balancing out and tending to my character, which I experienced as being more vulnerable to subtle negative tendencies than it had been before. Clearly, many people do not have to contend with these challenges as they set out on a contemplative path, and I will simply mention them here. The insights that I have come to along the way have more than a situational character, and will be recognizable in their import by those who have never used psychedelics but who have set out on a comparable meditative path. This context requires brevity, and perhaps an elusive presentation. My hope is that it may still be of interest, and maybe even benefit, for some. I am writing them now, despite the conditions not being available for a fuller presentation, because a number of young adults I have worked with recently are encountering some of the challenges I have become familiar with, and I am sure there will be more and more.

Normal consciousness is buffered from the spiritual forces of the greater world in such a way that it allows for the possibility of the small flame

3 This is one of the basic characterizations Oliver Sacks gave in his remarkable book *Hallucinations*.

4 See Evan Thompson's - *Waking, Dreaming, Being*, published by Columbia in 2014.

of love and freedom. At a certain point on the contemplative path the spiritual activities that affect this buffering in our normal constitution emerge in awareness. They present themselves largely as hardening forces, affecting both perception and thought. These forces are particularly strong in the trans-Atlantic cultures that have been globally dominant over the last seventy years. Spiritually speaking, in this culture our feet are formed by significant submission to these activities. Submitting to them is at the same time experienced as standing up spiritually. They do not rob the individual of agency, but provide the ground for action. It is through standing up, in this way, that the self can be found, and potentially, the font of both freedom and love.

This insight, while perceptible in oneself, offers unique views into today's culture. One comes to sense that the most widespread thoughts and opinions are often not expressions of any comprehensive understanding, but of this, our own constitution. We find it very sensible to speak of existence as a field of interactive enduring material particles and energies while at the same time knowing our awareness is not one of these. Further, we can easily observe that the interactive patterns and laws that we take as intrinsic governing principles of reality only appear in thought, theory, idea, etc... The style in which we picture this not as an open and flexible whole, but as a closed, calculable matrix. In exploring inner experiences we generally feel satisfied when we discover parallel material processes in the body nor is it shocking to suggest that the self is a hallucination.

These are not philosophical issues. It is not a matter of materialism versus vitalism, or idealism. All forms of contemporary philosophy have a difficult time escaping this register. It is not a question

of philosophy, but much more profound. It is possible to intensify one's engagement in thinking and imagining to the point when some portion of this activity escapes the dynamics of hardening and fragmentation at work in our make-up. Then these tendencies themselves appear, as spiritual activities, as well as the most shocking abyss. This initial experience is profoundly disconcerting. One understands that normal awareness is shaped not only by hardening forces but also by fires of desire and attachment. This cannot be understood as a reason for any moralizing, but simply of raising to awareness the foundations of normal consciousness. On the path, on the edge of normal awareness, one meets forces of both life and death. Experiencing these activities consciously allows one to learn how they play into life and knowledge. It is a mistake to think this leads to a negative view of the human being. The forces that buffer human consciousness are experienced in their non-human character, but they are at the same time barriers that make possible the chalice of the human soul and spirit, before which reverence and joy are a natural, spontaneous response. Reassessing normal consciousness, a deep feeling of awe for the human constitution, and normal consciousness it makes possible, emerges. At the same time one loses naivety regarding any simple, thorough goodness in oneself or in others. While it sounds contradictory, one learns the greatest reverence for the human being while experiencing the most terrible facets that participate in the human constitution.

The use of psychedelics leads to varieties of spiritual experience. The substances break the connection to the buffering constitution for a short time. This can lead to very slight hallucinations of a visual nature, and they can also lead to dramatic and powerful encounters with beings. Though different in important ways, the most intense

of these experiences are related to horizons that are otherwise opened through crisis, inner work, near death experiences and, more profoundly, death.⁵ In this case the experiences are facilitated through the ingestion of a material substance. What characterizes this process is that the two tendencies at work in one's constitution remain largely unconscious during these episodes. In other words, the level of individual participation is not significantly different from normal awareness. The tenor of the experience is not unlike that of surrendering to one's body as a means of waking up, or "standing up".

The unconscious gesture of standing up is carried over half-consciously into one's orientation toward the spiritual horizons of experience. This can place subtle, yet radical, obstacles in one's path. The tenor of outer revelation is erroneously felt to be appropriate to spiritual experience. True surrender to revelation in the spirit is a hard won capacity achieved along a path that uncovers the distorting influences at play in our normal awareness, that shape most of our life and understanding. When one attempts to access spiritual experience while these influences remain unconscious two major obstacles emerge.

The first relates to the tenor of surrender in the spirit that is felt as identical to surrender through the body. In the spirit the revelation of perception requires a heightened inner participation, as, for instance, when one is involved in intense concentration. Neglecting this leads to a subtle bi-furcation in one's sense of the real on a material register of awareness. In its most crude forms it sloppily casts the spirit as matter; in more sophisticated forms it still relates to the spirit as a vision

that one feels one merely observes, as with outer revelation.⁶ This distortion does not only happen when one is trying to find words *after* such an event, it happens when, unconsciously, the search for concepts and pictures shapes the experience as it unfolds. It presents itself as a given, when, in fact, it is not given. This carries with it suffering connected with illusion, and in some cases, the gradual dissolution of clear discernment between vision and sober waking consciousness.

The second obstacle relates to the fire of desire, the drive for life and self-fulfillment that co-constitute the chalice of normal awareness. These, carried over unconsciously into spiritual work, result in dangerous forms of spiritual egotism. The spirit becomes a powerful source of bliss, ecstasy and well-being. These are elevated to prime interests and justifications for inner work. They may be described as love, as joy, as divine, or even God, yet below the noble impression of these words, a raging fire is revealed to contemplative vision. The desire of spiritual egotism, which leads us toward both spiritual hedonism and vanity, also carries within it the necessity of great suffering. The power of spiritual bliss can blind one to the most important values of human life, like care for others, the great situations of need on the earth and awareness of suffering. It can lead to an inner path of self-isolation, and is easily recognized in many new age spiritual retreats and spiritual tourism. With time these forces, active below normal awareness, exercise an increased negative influence on one's character and, in their most severe forms, are connected to the tragic manipulations and abuses that unfold within spiritual communities and schools.

5 See Oliver Sacks, *Hallucinations* and Ron Dunselman, *In Place of the Self*.

6 *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* offers countless examples of the crude variety and Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* of the more refined.

It is taboo to suggest a path to the spirit that can maintain both sobriety and knowledge. Part of the background understanding of our time is that spiritual matters are constructed or private matters of faith. Within this conventional background understanding the expanding accessibility to intense inner experiences through hallucinogens emerges as a very complicated and important development. Recently Michael Pollan published a book on today's renaissance in psychedelic research.,⁷ On the one hand it is tempting to feel that these experiences will force a re-evaluation of narrow forms of scientism. On the other hand the form the experiences take may make exactly this more challenging. The inner experiences themselves are not freed from the register they appear to potentially compliment, or counter. Anyone who reads Pollan's book with a sense of the dynamics I have alluded to might ask: "How will a society develop that accepts "spiritual experience" induced by substances but which cannot consciously approach the reality of the spirit with understanding, and is thus forced to interpret and imagine it as materially bound, or, material in form?" And further: "How will these substances be encouraged for use in order to facilitate "happiness" within a background understanding that offers no illumination of the spiritual dimensions of the human and the greater world?"



7 Michael Pollan, *How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us About Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression, and Transcendence*, published by Penguin Books in 2018.

Looking Back

Graduation of second year cohort of M.C. Richards Program

May, 2022

The second year cohort of the M.C. Richards Program celebrated the end of the year with individual presentations and graduation in May.

Color and Plant Life through Cold Wax

with Laura Summer in Philmont, NY

June 20-24

Leather Shoemaking Intensive

with Nathaniel Williams in Philmont, NY

June 27-July 1

Imagining the Real

With Zvi Szir in Hudson, NY

July 11-29

Over three weeks Zvi Szir led intensive workshops on Rudolf Steiner's Occult Science and the art of painting, hosted a number of open studio talks and public presentations, and exhibited twenty recent sketches at Lightforms Art Center. These events were made possible by a generous sponsor. The main instruction from the painting intensive was filmed by Sergio Rico, who edited the footage as well. We have made the short films available through our website.

World Social Initiative Forum Detroit "Becoming the Spirit of Detroit"

July 21-24

Laura Summer worked with an international team to organize the World Social Initiative Forum that took place in Detroit from July 21st-24th.

Lightforms Art Center

Laura continues to manage Lightforms Art Center in Hudson, NY. Lightforms is a center for cultural renewal based in anthroposophy that brings creative artists and their artwork into the public domain in innovative ways that stimulate dialogue around the inner and outer challenges of our time and attempts to serve the spiritual needs of human beings in their daily lives.

The artists of Lightforms strive to create works of art, as well as new cultural and social forms, that allow the spiritual in art to serve the ongoing progressive evolution of the world, human society, and each individual. Lightforms is dedicated to accessibility, diversity and community involvement.

In the past six months Lightforms has hosted an exhibition of Black culture in Columbia County NY, a group show by the artist working group of Lightforms called “We Are Lightforms”, which included work in many media, and a painting and video collaboration between Sampsia Pirtola and Laura Summer on angels, called “Winging It”. There are weekly open mics and improv theater. A very lively cultural life is developing here.

Art Dispersals

Free Columbia has run three art dispersals in the past nine months with paintings being dispersed to people who will steward them for as long as they want to. 41 paintings were dispersed and these dispersals brought in over \$8000 in donations. This provided a very real experience of the free cultural realm.

Online Courses

The 2021/22 online courses in color concluded in May, and sixty-five people participated during the year.

In August 2022 we finished a series of drawing exercises in relationship to the Philosophy of Freedom by Rudolf Steiner (a bilingual course in Mandarin and English), and a course exploring the mantra of the first class of the School for Spiritual Science of the Anthroposophical Society. We will take up the mantra work again beginning with the first lesson in December.

A New Year for the M.C. Richards Program

In August a wonderful new cohort for the M.C. Richards Program set out on the annual year-long journey. This year Stefan Ambrose has stepped in to direct the program, with Nathaniel Williams assisting until the new year. Stefan has shifted the focus of the program toward practical arts and opened up the various courses for part-time participation.

Looking Forward

Online Courses

This year new online courses started in September. Beginning and advanced courses on color, composition and working with text now have about 45 people signed up in four weekly sessions. Courses on Rudolf Steiner's sketches for painters, and his lectures on Genesis, have another 44 people enrolled. Students are in Malaysia, India, England, Canada, Mexico, Germany, Sweden, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Hong Kong, as well as many areas in the United States. A course exploring the mantra of the first class of the School for Spiritual Science of the Anthroposophical Society will begin the first lesson in December.

Second Trimester Ceramics Intensive

With Mark Rowntree, Stefan Ambrose and Lily Hindes in Philmont, NY

January 2 – March 24 - weekly classes Mon-Thurs 10-12

Join the cohort of the M.C. Richards Program for their second wood fired ceramics course. No previous experience required. The course begins with basic building and culminates with a collective wood firing.

Music for the Eye and Ear

Don Jamison and Nathaniel Williams

November 14 – December 3

Composer Don Jamison and Artist Nathaniel Williams are welcoming 4-5 participants to join a workshop and artistic project at Free Columbia. The workshop involves singing original choral music, the art of eurythmy (with Virginia Hermann) and working with an array of newly invented, analogue color-projection instruments alongside this year's cohort of the M.C. Richards Program and a local chorus.

The inspiration for the piece is being sought in the spiritual inspirations discoverable through music, color, movement and the spoken word. Rudolf Steiner once suggested that a variety of "live" motion pictures be developed where colors and forms are "creatively shaped, not by an automated apparatus, but an artform of creative light (Lichtspielkunst), one that involves colors and forms alongside music or speech, but guided by people." This workshop offers an entry point for anyone interested in learning more about creating live motion pictures. Participants will join in both singing and color work. The workshop will take place between November 14th - December 3rd and will culminate with three public performances at Lightforms Art Center in Hudson, NY. Simultaneous with the workshop there will be presentations on this theme and an exhibition of related works of visual art with guests Gary Lamb, Michael Howard and Laura Summer.

Music for the Eye and Ear

Schedule for week of Nov. 14th

Monday – 8:30-12

Tuesday - 8:30-12 and 2:30 – 5

Wednesday- 8:30-12

Thursday 8:30-12 and 2:30 – 5

Saturday – 7 pm: Opening of exhibition with artist talks

Schedule for week of Nov. 21st

Monday – 8:30-12

Tuesday - 8:30-12 and 2:30 – 5

Wednesday- 8:30-12

Saturday – 2-4 pm Research in Art /Artistic Research

- Artists in conversation with Laura Summer, Michael Howard and Nathaniel Williams

Schedule for week of Nov. 28th

Monday – 8:30-12

Tuesday - 8:30-12 and 2:30 – 5

Wednesday- 8:30-12

Thursday 8:30-12 and 2:30 – 5

Performances:

Thursday, December 1st at 7 pm

Friday, December 2nd at 5:30 pm

Saturday, December 3rd at 5:30 pm

Storytelling

With John McManus

January 3 – March 3

Tues. and Thurs. afternoons, 2:30-5

in Philmont, NY

Color Intensive Painting Workshop

With Laura Summer

March 13-17

Tues-Thurs: 9-5

Mon-Wed-Fri: 9-12

Gratitude

Free Columbia is possible only through the generosity and support of a wide circle of supporters. Most of the funds that make Free Columbia possible come from individual donors. Thanks to everyone who contributed to our Spring Crowdfunder, made a one time donation or became one of our circle of pledgers. Our thanks go out to Stewarts Shops, The Rudolf Steiner Charitable Trust, The Waldorf Educational Foundation and the Iona foundation for their support.

Gratitude must also be expressed for the members of our board, especially Kai Naor, Dan Seitz, Alison Fox and Pete Lemire, and for support from Mary Wildfeuer, Ella Lapointe, Matt Sawaya and Sergio Rico.



