

# **Dancing The Biomes: Co-creating with Nature Through Movement Improvisation**

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## **Abstract**

I am a movement improvisational artist. I have been living and camping in the various natural biomes of North America - forest, lake, tundra, swamp, grasslands, river, desert - since the summer of 2019. I immerse myself for at least four weeks in each biome exploring movement improvisation, creative process, and somatic experiences on and with the landscape. Overall, I am focused on a co-emerging somatic approach to art that is embedded as deeply as possible within a landscape.

This written piece focuses on the relationship between imagination and landscape; how the inner creative artist emerges through contact with nature; and how movement improvisation is one way of engaging aesthetically with land. Included are many personal experiences from the various biomes illustrating a co-creative process with nature.

**Keywords:** imagination, landscape, somatic, biomes, dance, improvisation, art, creativity, nature, movement



## Influences

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My approach to improvisation is inspired by the seminal postmodern movement improvisers who were working in America, mainly in New York City, in the 60s and 70s. Artists such as Steve Paxton, Simone Forti, Deborah Hay, Barbara Dilley, Ruth Zaporah, Lisa Nelson, Anna Halprin. These artists were breaking away from American modern dance and discovering their own unique processes of improvisation.

Kent De Spain's book *Landscape of the Now: A Topography of Movement Improvisation* (2014) has been particularly important to my investigations. He organizes his book around the issues and resources of movement improvisation. His table of contents is basically an outline or framework of the elements of movement improvisation.

Some of these issues and resources listed are: “body, movement, the senses, space, time, artistic form, images and imagination, cognitive skills, emotions, memory, structures, attention” (De Spain, 2014: 2). These resources have helped orient my improvisations and deepen my artistic exploration with nature.

David Abram’s book, *Becoming Animal* (2011) also influences how I explore creatively with nature. His ideas have encouraged and empowered me to take what I learned from the postmodern improvisers and bring that outside into nature.

His celebration, almost exaltation, of what he describes as the sentient relationship between the corporeal human body and wild nature is inspiring (Abram, 2011). His descriptions of the porous animal body as an extension of nature brought into the realm of words what I was feeling in my body while dancing.

His constant theme of the deep, active and engaged reciprocity between humans and the natural world directly enlivened my improvisations with nature (Abram, 2011).

Another influential idea of his is the perceptual transformations that can happen when we engage our animal beings in the animate world. Some highlights are his descriptions of how we can enter the mindscape of a mountain by stepping into its shadow; how a tree spatially morphs if we watch it as we walk past it (Abram, 2011).

These opened up many possibilities of how, where and in what ways I could actually creatively engage with nature.



## Imagination and Creativity

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With this background and framework I began my investigations on and with landscape.

The first element that resonates throughout all of my improvisations is this strong presence of imagination. For me, imagination is the creative process inherent in all things. It is embedded in the landscape. When humans partake of imagination we are partaking of nature. We become nature. Imagination is the capacity to transcend what we know and observe. To engage more deeply in the moment with the Other.

All humans have an inner creative being, independent of whether or not we actually make a piece of art. This inner creative being interacts with other creative beings through the realm of imagination.

It is how we come in contact with reality. With the trees. The sunlight. The smell of soil. Creativity brings imagination into the reality of experience. Not as a fantasy or as a dream. But as an opening to possibilities, an opening to creative flow.

Without picking up a paint brush or pencil or musical instrument, the inner creative being still thrives. How? Through the choices we make during the day, the way we interact with the landscape and how we embody our senses and perceptions. For instance, where I choose to wander in the grasslands or how I receive the smell and texture of rock, are all a part of these inner aesthetics, all creative interactions with landscape.

This became very clear to me in the first biome, the deciduous forest. I began to feel that creativity was not dependent on *making* something but on *being*. It wasn't about what was happening on the outside but what was happening in relation to nature from an internal point of view.

## Inner Artist

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I stand in the middle of the dense forest. Immersed in action everywhere. Pulsing. Vital. From the sole of my feet to the top of the canopy. Buzzing, hiding, cutting, burying, blowing, feeding, singing, climbing, growing. Chaotic and messy. Growth and decay everywhere. And yet it feels as if all is exactly where it *needs* to be.

I decide to explore through the woods. There are no foot trails. No animal paths that I can make out. The forest is alive and dense in every direction. Which way to go?

I look around. What draws me forwards? A slash of light, an open space? I wait for my intuition or my inner sensations to initiate my next move. After a moment a green density in the distance reveals itself. I am beckoned forwards for a while and then stop.

I reflect: *How did that path feel? Was it what I expected? What newness appeared?*

I then decide to explore even more. Why only go where I *want* to go? What if I explored where I do *not* want to go. Like towards those prickly branches and that gnarly dense vegetation. I follow this path for a while and then stop.

I immediately noticed that this was just as interesting and engaging as the path that leads to where I *wanted* to go. I continue hiking through the forest.

I explore going to an area that is of little interest to me, a place that I overlook.

I explore going towards a random place.

I explore going towards a sound that draws me.

I explore going only where I feel the forest is calling me.

Each time I stop and reflect: *How was that path? What newness presented itself to me?*

The amazing thing was that all paths were interesting. They were all aesthetic. Each path I chose revealed artistic moments between me and nature: the sound of dappling sun light, a depth of feeling in the nuance of color, patterns of green everywhere, textures combining with smells, the presence of certain trees, a feeling of reaching.

Why did every choice lead to some kind of artistic moment?

I began to feel that something else was going on. It wasn't about me or my choices. It wasn't about the specific areas of the forest. Some kind of dialogue was beginning to develop between nature and myself. An emerging creative state.

This is when I started to sense imagination all around, imagination that is in fact imbedded in the landscape. I started to feel an artist powerfully alive on the inside. And I started to realize that aesthetics is a state of being as well as an act of creation. Movement improvisation is one path I choose to explore this creative state of being with landscape.



## **Movement Improvisation**

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Movement improvisation is the free expression of the body in space and time. It is an aesthetic embodiment with an Other where actions, gestures and movement qualities arise spontaneously.

Improvisation is playful, curious and artistic. And yet, it isn't just doing whatever you want without awareness. Improvisation is an investigation of the moments of reality.

When I decided to change from improvising in the studio to improvising outside with nature a lot transformed. In nature, improvisation becomes immediately meaningful. Movements seem to take on a significance, a kind of non-specific significance.

And every movement manifests in relation to something or someone else. The idea of a solo (i.e solo performance), I realized, doesn't exist in nature.

I also began to feel that I wasn't *creating* anymore. I was *finding*. Finding aesthetic moments of connection with nature through improvisation. These aesthetic moments seem hidden in the landscape. Waiting to be found. They reveal themselves through a co-emerging, co-creative process. And that process is always a mystery.

What has been crucial during this entire process of exploration with landscape has been my inner guide. She is irreplaceable. She gently helps me with finding challenges. She invites me to release any fears and to curiously approach what these challenges offer.

For instance, entities that were challenging for me to improvise with were the extremely simple grasses of the grasslands, the amorphous pure blue sky of the desert, the painful spiky cacti in the desert and the dark fearful swamp.

Opening beyond my tendencies, moving away from my initial desires and towards these challenging creative encounters has been a key part of the process of fully embodying, accepting and co-creating with nature.

## **How do I improvise co-creatively with landscape?**

How do I explore creatively with a lake?

How do I start a dance with a tree?

How do the impulses of the sky translate into my physical movement?

Over the three years, as I listen to nature, feel my body changing, and engage creatively with the natural elements, a kind of methodology or process of co-creating did begin to develop. Here is a brief outline of that method.

First, I begin with waiting and listening. I sit, slowly walk, lay down, observe or just be in the biome. I am open and observant of myself and nature. I receive. I am curious. I allow nature to reveal herself. Each biome highlights different aspects of the creative process and different ways of experiencing the nature of reality. I learned to become open to this initial space of not knowing as I entered each new biome.

Many of the postmodern improvisors begin in this receptive way. Barbara Dille for one explores pedestrian movement with mindfulness. She explores the union of mind and body with a focus on the inner eye. To her the space has an energetic presence

that is open and available to be received (De Spain, 2014).

During this beginning time I also ask open ended questions and allow those questions to remain unanswered. I let them percolate in my body. I wait and allow the landscape to respond or not.

Deborah Hay similarly asks herself questions which she ponders for months. For her, the body is the site of the experiment and provides the non-verbal feedback to these open-ended questions (De Spain, 2014). I tend to allow responses to come from nature as well as from myself.

Next, I begin improvising with whatever insights I have gained so far. I may initiate the movement. I may wait for the landscape to initiate. The improvisation may start internally or externally. Or I may explore an improvisation based on an insight I gained doing a completely other activity such as meditating or photographing in nature.

I allow each improvisation to build until the connection is embodied and the creative process has a life of its own. At that point, I am merely following, as the process unfolds between us, as it co-emerges through us.

Ruth Zaporah, similarly, talks about the context of the improvisation leading the content. She doesn't decide or choose anything. She is following the experience as she is overcome by it (De Spain, 2014).

After the improvisation is over, I write down in a journal my observations, additional questions and personal reflections. I brainstorm future ways to continually challenge or deepen the process. These future ideas may come from the resources of improvisation that Kent De Spain outlines (De Spain, 2014: 2). They may come from my own knowledge of where I felt I was shying away from a moment in the improvisation. I then challenge myself to go more deeply into that uncomfortable place next time.

This is more aligned with how Lisa Nelson sees improvisation. For her improvisation is a creation through choices and action. She is making something (De Spain, 2014). I don't feel I am making something but I am using my past, present and future knowledge to help guide myself more deeply into the next improvisation.

Simone Forti uses structures to help guide and ground her from getting lost in the overwhelming quality of improvisation (De Spain, 2014). I see my self-reflective journal writing as part of the process of bringing my experiences into my conscious awareness and to orienting myself forwards.



Overall, I tend to focus on five improvisational sources which were inspired by each biome. The main sources are (1) inner somatic sensations and nature's qualities, (2) pure physical interactions, (3) emotional states and (4) meditation or mindfulness.

And lastly (5), one of the most potent paths is sourcing the uniqueness of each landscape itself, waiting for it to reveal.

In the end, though, no matter how I source the improvisations with nature, the ultimate experience always feels new. Movements, emotions, expressions co-emerge with nature in a way that somehow releases any need for thinking, guiding or sourcing. Eventually, everything ultimately 'lets go'. The land reveals. Art is found.

## **Somatic sensations**

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Somatic sensations are feelings I experience inside my body, such as openness, pressure, fuzziness, heaviness. Nature's external qualities are the textures and motions I see in the landscape such as dripping, angling, hardness, spaciousness. I mix and play with these internal experiences and with these external qualities of Nature.

Kent De Spain talks about proprioceptive experiences and how our inner awareness is not limited by the five senses. We have many different kinds of sensors on the inside and they can track many feelings and perceptions (De Spain, 2014).

One source of creativity for me are these inner somatic sensations. These sensations initiate movement from inside my body, outwards towards nature's qualities. Or vice versa. One of Nature's qualities enters my body and initiates movement inwards.

These two landscapes, the inner one inside my body and the external one outside in nature, feel intricately woven together. They reflect one another. Receive one another.

Somatic improvisation with rock in the desert biome:



*I want to go deeper. To improvise with rock. To co-create.*

*I pick up a bunch of rocks. I drop them one by one and listen to their sounds. Each tone unique. I scratch my skin with the edge of the rock and follow that denseness inside as I move and dance. Her many facets trace through me. A sharpness forcing out.*

*My body. The rocks. Her randomness moves and expresses.*

*I pick up another rock. I hold it in my hand. I feel its asymmetry. Angularity. It's sharp and hard. It has been made by massive explosions and extreme heat. I squeeze it tight. I gnarl and curl my fingers. My nails clench. My torso torques.*

*I feel alive. Twisted, intense, dirt-filled creativity. I accept.*

*I lift up a larger rock, now... a boulder. It has weight and mass. I feel her dark sensations in my hand and arm as it moves through my muscles and bones. Her density moves slowly through me as I work to raise the boulder higher. The heaviness circles inside, radiates out.*

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## Physicality

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Another source for improvisation with nature is through pure physicality. I throw myself with full force into nature's wet, hard, sharp, soothing, firm or transparent elements. She initiates and responds to me kinetically with reciprocal actions of bubbles, a current, tumbling, pushing, breaking, flying.

This is similar to Steve Paxton's contact improvisation where two people are physically connected and engaged with each other. They create this strong, unique, moving point-of-contact between them that begins to have a life of its own (De Spain, 2014). For me, instead of physically improvising with another person I explore this strong kinetic connection by improvising directly with the elements of nature.

When engaging kinetically with nature, there is a mixing between her element and the human form. The physical uniqueness of a particular natural element and the physical uniqueness of the human form effects how and what is exactly co-created.

It is a one of a kind improvisation specific to my body mixing with her forces.

Physical improvisation with water in lake biome:



*The lake is animated. She responds. I see the water. A splash, then bubbles and designs of white foam as the loon flaps her wings across the surface. At first it seems that the splashing water is merely an effect of the loon moving the liquid at a particular force. After more contemplation the waves and undulations begin to feel like they have a life of their own, an expressive reality, communicating.*

*I enter the water and begin a physical improvisation. Her thick wetness opens as my body enters. I am surrounded. We dance. Forceful diving, turning, grasping. I begin to improvise inside her. Push, pull, toss, clinging to her ripples and drops.*

*She responds in complex spouts, visual designs of ripples. Splashes become a communal language. The white foam elongates through my hands. An aesthetic expression in relation.*

## Emotion

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Emotion is another source for creative embodiment with landscape. A feeling such as emptiness, belonging, longing may manifest between me and the landscape. It hovers and permeates between us.

This improvisation with nature doesn't necessarily start with physical contact or inner somatic sensation. The improvisation begins with the realization of the

emotion manifesting right here, right now, between us. This starts the flow. It builds inside. Gestures emerge. We receive each other and follow this intensity.

West coast improviser and choreographer Anna Halprin worked a lot with emotions. She found them a motivating source for movement. Ruth Zaporah, too, thought it was a necessary element for the truth and integrity of improvisation since our lives are filled with emotion (De Spain, 2014).

Emotional improvisation in the forest biome:

*I enter the forest. I go deep in. There are no paths. I start to hike. It's a full-bodied traverse of the landscape. Every inch from head to toe, from near to far is occupied. Sticks, trees, plants, buds, bugs, soil, moss, bark, spiders, mosquitoes, seeds, leaves, needles. It is dense. A passion for life. A striving for the sun. Mushrooms and ants satiate on the decaying logs.*

*I feel an overwhelming sense of wildness here. Fierceness comes over me. The feral forest. I begin to improvise from this emotion. My movements and interactions become more and more wild. I'm pounding, snapping, rolling, hanging, tossing, falling. With the trees, the branches, the dirt. I'm ignited.*

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## Meditation

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After spending three years exploring somatically and creatively with the landscape I have found time and time again that meditative experiences with landscape lead to expressive improvisations. So much so, that now I have come to realize that a meditative experience is an aesthetic experience. It is an internal artistic experience.

Barbara Dilley's background in Tibetan Buddhism definitely influenced her movement improvisations. She believes that creativity is something one can embody during regular daily life. She also focuses on art making from a meditative point of view (De Spain, 2014).

For me, by meditation I am not referring to Buddhism, Hinduism or any other religious traditions. I am referring to sitting or lying down for a period of time simply being aware with the land. I allow these meditations to focus on a single aspect of landscape such as the quality of silence or slow motion that is present. Or I allow these meditations to become immersed in one element of the landscape such as the pure blue sky above me or a single mountain in front of me.

I sit. I wait. I open. I let go.

For me, what emerges from these meditations are experiences of: a sense of place, time, creativity, boredom, emptiness, nuances of color, the continuity of stillness, the being-ness of blue sky.

And why are these meditations considered aesthetic experiences?

I think it's because these meditative insights are the substance of artistic expression. For instance, one's sense of space will determine how the arm gestures upwards. One's sense of stillness will determine how to pause expressively with a rock.

Through meditation with landscape, this sense of space and this sense of stillness becomes not just my sense or nature's sense. It becomes some kind of mindful shared reality which then slowly emerges from the inside out. Towards the physical expression of improvisation.

Meditative improvisation in the tundra biome:

*In the tundra I am surrounded by epic space. An Earthly scale. Exposure. Far-ness all the time, in every direction. I sit in this extremely open and spacious land. The large peaks and huge valley encircling me way off in the distance.*

*I wait. I sit. I meditate. Mindfully in the quality and experience of 'distance'.*

*I begin to sense the feelings of far, very far and very, very far. Each different. The very, very far feels like a dream, a yearning. A bit closer I sense relationships and patterns. Then a bit closer is a feeling of presence.*

*I am still. Silent. Meditating on these various distances.*





*Soon the improvisation emerges. The presence of the mountain side begins to tip and fall. The view of the very, very far rolls on its slope. The patterns of the black rock over head project upwards and crumble.*

*I move. I glide and curve my body along the distance. Texture catching gently each leg. Tumbling, tossing, animated from behind the stark stillness.*

*From behind pure distance. I can almost touch the 'far away'. I caress its slope with my hand. I step my foot across her valley. If I look inside, I am large. I move with her motion. Falling into her ridges.*



## The Land

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The most important element in the co-creative process is the landscape. And the landscape is different in each biome: the feelings, the types of plants and animals, how dense or spacious the landscape is, the color compositions, the weather patterns.

This uniqueness of land influences and effects the co-creative process. It is always surprising to me when I enter a new biome. The interaction is never the same. The aesthetic experience is so embedded in place it's almost as if it emerges directly from it.

Below, are three examples from three different biomes that illustrate this land-based movement improvisation. Since each landscape is unique, each co-creation example below will be unique. The only thing I can find that they all have in common is that they are all deeply tied to the landscape. Not to *any* landscape nor to *every* landscape, but to a specific landscape.

### Grasslands: something from nothing

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In the grasslands the creative process began with wandering through the empty grass-scape. At first the landscape appears simple, only yellow grass and blue sky. Lots of empty space in-between. One undulation blends into the next.

Wandering the grass-scape feels like traversing a blank canvas. Everywhere I step is really just anywhere. Neither closer nor further to anywhere else.

The more I wandered, the more the sameness of the landscape began to unveil itself. What once appeared uniform now is filled with dry riverbeds, gullies, hills, even small canyons.

These wanderings began to feel more like journeys, nuanced and exciting. Strong memorable moments imbedding themselves into the empty landscape.

*Here is where we shared the juicy orange together.  
Over here we stopped and discussed about movement and land and art.  
Over there I improvised. Lifting, tossing myself through grasses.*



Then things began to change. Certain areas of the grasslands started to have a sort of presence. It wasn't about strong moments and memories anymore. Specific areas began to attract. They emanated. Like a scene from a play. Like a story, about to be told right here in this place. Like the land is saying something or about to say something. Not narrative, though. There are no words. No plot.

I wait. I listen. I don't hear anything. Day after day, I continue waiting for something to emerge from these scenes. Waiting for a story to be told to me.



And then I realize that possibly the land is waiting for me to tell it, for me to step into the scene, to dance and improvise there. To start a kind of telling through movement. To collaborate. I begin. The images come. The dance emerges. Imagination emerging through landscape.

It feels a bit different than improvisations I have experienced before. Not quite myself... more human. Not specific... more a potentiality.

*It is grass and also isn't. It's more than just grass by being just what it is.  
Here is an arm gesture and also something more.  
The land says as it is being received.*

## **River: the artist**

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I stand in the middle of the river with the water about knee-high. I watch the current move around my skin. Tiny rapids pass on both sides of my legs. I can feel and see the current running, running, running for a long distance into the landscape. I am surrounded by motion.

I begin to improvise...



I pick up some water in my hands and let it go. The droplets merge with the liquid and then continue down the river. The water I held, is now flowing away through the landscape.

I arch my torso. I see the top of the hill and then hover my face over the surface of the water. An aesthetic moment. A meaning. And now this too is being carried down the river.

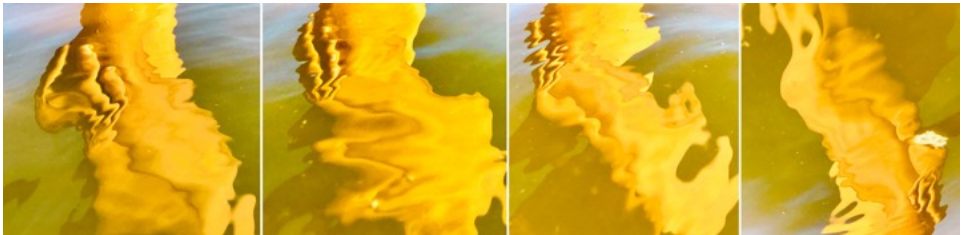
I lift my arm, my head curves towards the yellow color as my foot sinks in. Another improvisation moment. Another meaning. This too is being carried down the river accompanied by the first moment ahead of it.

Moment after moment. The improvisation continues. Each moment feels like it is adding to the previous moment along the surface of the water. As if the entire improvisation is being spread out on the liquid

A movement painting growing longer and longer.

The more I improvise, the longer it becomes. It feels about a mile long. And then it ends. I can't see any further down the river and I can't fathom it any larger. A dance as a painting stretched out in a watery landscape.

*skin on the surface  
spreading  
my head splashes  
a light descends and the river deepens  
aesthetic moments riffle, swirl  
a current turning  
my torso  
moments along a painted waterway*



## **Swamp: liminal spaces**

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I walk to the edge of the swamp. I look. Not quite water. Not quite land. Grass and moss grow in the tea-black liquid. Lilies, root hairs, tubulars and organic debris float and congest on the dark surface.

I want to walk through the swamp but it's too wet and deep. I want to swim through it, but it's too dense and shallow. How do I interact with this? I begin to realize the swamp is a liminal space, in transition between water and land.

I step in and slip right through the glassy surface. Groundless. My feet sink into the unevenness. Toes then ankles feel the wetness. My hands entangle themselves with the vegetation rolling mud along my skin. I squat down lower, more wetness, more dirt. I am submerging.

Immediately I feel enlivened. I feel young. Excited. An initial layer of inhibition or fear has been removed as I improvise ankle high in the mud.

I go further. Not knowing what's underneath. Sinking. Drawn downwards. The deeper I descend the more animate I become. As if the intensity of my vitality is in direct proportion to how deep I sink. I am feeling more risky. There is more to express.

We improvise. I reach my arm through the mud and let her smear and wave. I plunge into where I cannot see. How long will my hand reach through her darkness? All the pores packed in soft mud. It clings.



The improvisation feels different. Less like an *event* and more like a *place*. Like this improvisation is actually happening down there under the surface of the swamp. I don't *find* the aesthetic moments. I *enter* them. The deeper I literally go in the swamp the deeper we go in the improvisation.

I also notice that the deeper I descend the more inhibitions I release. The co-creative process is already there. I don't need to add to this relationship or to find it. It's more about removing what's in the way.



*I twirl the water, closer, dirtier, muddier.  
My head reaches gently under the water.  
A root floating.  
I feel.  
Free.*



## What endures?

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I have written about imagination and creativity as the substance of aesthetic connection with nature; a little bit about what movement improvisation is; and more extensively about the many sources of finding a co-creative process with nature through improvisation.

What I would like to discuss now is what happens after the improvisation is over. What is left behind in oneself and in the environment?

What resonates afterwards in my body? Visuals, emotions, meaning? And what imprint do we leave behind in the landscape? An aesthetic moment, a myth, a conversation?

I don't think I was actually aware of this stage of the creative process until recently in the desert biome. One experience in particular brought this to the forefront of my awareness.

## Desert: how the landscape responds

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The surface of the desert is smooth and firmly packed with sand except for a few holes where animals live. Overall the desert feels like a blank brown canvas. I stand in this open desert-landscape and begin an improvisation drawing and creating patterns in the ground as I move.

*Feet curl, drag, draw. Designs, images appear under my feet. The sand frees and flies in the wind. Pulse my fingers. Vibrations. Sharp breaking through my torso. Dig the images. Find them. My back caresses the sand and leaves a sign.*



After the improvisation is over, I look down to see the imprint left in the dirt. I see designs. Abstract patterns. No pictures. No literal images. It is an abstract expressive painting. Light and dark waves of sand stretching, rhythmical indentations.



Then I slowly wander around the desert alone. I see a raven flying in the blue sky towards me. The only animal I have seen for many days. He's alone. He flies over the hill. He calls out. I call back. I try to make my sound more and more like his. More guttural. More forceful. He becomes silent. I keep calling.

He turns to face me. He's clearly facing me. He begins to fly figure 8's in the sky in front of me, above my head, getting lower and lower, closer and closer. Never going behind me. Always face to face. Back and forth. I go silent. He gets closer, weaving. Our eyes engage. We're looking right at each other. I'm not sure what to do or where this is going.

It gets more intimate. I break the connection and walk away. Then I turn around again. The sun is blinding me. I can't see him. Where is he? I notice another raven has joined him. And slowly, not abruptly, he moves his attention from me over to his friend.

The experience and the memory continues on inside myself. Inspired. A mysterious connection. I never had before nor tried to have. All this, right after improvising with the dirt of the desert.

The next day I go for a jog alone in the desert plains. After the jog, I am drawn back to the improvisational imprints left in the dirt from yesterday. I find one. I look at it. It is amazing! The imprint is not an abstract design at all, like I thought yesterday. It is not shades and contours of light and dark.

The imprint is the image of a bird. A huge bird with outstretched wings facing a person below him. The imprint looks just like the raven experience I had after the improvisations. The same perspective. The same physical relationship.



How could I have missed seeing this foreshadowed in the imprint? Is the raven experience somehow part of the creative process? What is the source?

I look at this sand imprint of the image of the raven and find it difficult to believe. So I walk around the imprint. I view it from a different angle in the hopes of encouraging my mind to see something new in it. And yet, from every angle it still looks like a raven flying over me.

*Meaning is found but also must be lived, to be found.*

This has sparked many questions about how the landscape responds to creative connection.

Did the raven see the dance improvisation and feel some kind of connection?  
Did the improvisation inspire some kind of openness in me to experience the raven?  
What other processes are now set in motion through the landscape?

I have come to realize that no matter how we experience the co-creative process with nature and no matter how she experiences the co-creative process with us, we are all changed by it.

The layers and stages of co-creation manifest in mystery. The inner and outer aesthetic voices we hear and follow begin to merge. The effects of artistic connection are wide, present and ultimately unknown.

Improvisation unfolds as an act of reverence.  
A spirituality we inhabit.

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## Correspondence

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