



Somatic Expression® - Jamie McHugh  
Body Wisdom for Modern Times



Autumn Creek (2021) [www.naturebeingart.org](http://www.naturebeingart.org)

*"Pain and pleasure are thus part of two different genealogies of life regulation. Pain is aligned with punishment and is associated with behaviors such as withdrawal or freezing. Pleasure, on the other hand, is aligned with reward and is associated with behaviors such as seeking and approaching. Punishment causes organisms to close themselves in, freezing and withdrawing from their surroundings. Reward causes organisms to open themselves up and out toward their environment, approaching it, searching it, and by so doing increasing both their opportunity of survival and their vulnerability." - Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio*

*"When you become more sensitive to your body, you have the impression that the inhalation-exhalation is no longer localised. It is all around you. It is important to see how we live mainly in our heads. Think with your whole body, feel with your whole body. In the whole feeling, the global sensation, you go into your room and touch your whole room. You go outside and touch the clouds, the trees, the water. You do not live in isolation. In your radiation you are in communication with all things." - Jean Klein*

Dear Friends,

I have been asked more than once: With so much misery and turmoil in the world needing healing, why would people spend time journeying within the somatic landscape? Isn't that a self-indulgent distraction?

Learning to be a *thinking body*, a body that is aware of itself in both movement and stillness, is the foundation of a sensitive reckoning with one's self and the world we inhabit. Entering into the intimate realm of proprioception (fr "proprio-" one's own + perception) is potent medicine for the modern age of sensory over-stimulation and distraction, a sensate looking glass reflecting back to us our nature as nature! Tapping into this delicious nature and the felt sense of inter-connection is immensely pleasurable - and, as Damasio pointedly observes, that pleasurable opening not only increases our ability to survive, but also increases our vulnerability.

And there is the rub - how to live with fierce tenderness and ongoing care in spite of our personal heartbreaks and the ravages of the world. Gently and meticulously building the muscle of proprioception in tandem with the grey matter of the brain creates a tangible buffer, some physiological insulation and psychological cushioning to fortify the heart and strengthen the spine in facing the inevitable suffering that is part of the package of being a temporary inhabitant of this earthly domain.

Open to the pleasure of your breath, your skin, the form of your body in space - rising and sinking, expanding and shrinking, congealing and dissolving...

I hope these thoughts can stimulate some reflections of substance for you!

**Below** are my latest offerings on the horizon. Come and gift yourself with some breathing room - whether for just an hour, or more, in an ongoing series of classes.

I am also including a few recommendations...and my latest visual meditation video - Wander & Wonder - from my new surroundings.

Warmly,  
Jamie

PS My Winter/Spring 2022 Calendar of Events is gradually taking fuller shape - stop by and get a quick preview of the year at hand for planning ahead [HERE](#)

### The Power of the Pause: Breathing Room Online

Experience 360 degree breathing and individual variations in these **FREE** hour-long sessions. Open to all, these sessions are a good introduction to basic somatic practice and the class series "Thinking Body, Sensing Mind".

December 19: 9-10am Pacific time  
December 19: 4-5PM Pacific time

All information [HERE](#)

### Thinking Body, Sensing Mind Online

**Thinking Body, Sensing Mind** is a progressive series of guided journeys into the inner landscape of the body designed to highlight sensory experience by increasing awareness, relaxation, and presence through breath, contact, movement, stillness and sound. Each series continues a process of repeating a nuanced vocabulary of basic practices to formulate a unique repertoire of body-centered mindfulness, somatic explorations, and personal innovations for an intimate encounter with the not knowing, and a coming back home to ourselves. *The focus of the new series will be on sitting upright to support relaxed tone, mobility and solidity.*

**PLEASE NOTE NEW TIMES:**

**Series N**) November 29-December 22: Four weeks, Mondays & Wednesdays **10-11am PST**

**Series O**) November 29-December 22: Four weeks, Mondays & Wednesdays **4-5pm PST**

Sliding Scale: \$75-250 for 8 class series. All classes are recorded for participant downloading and playback. All information [HERE](#)

### RESOURCES & RECOMMENDATIONS

My colleague and "somatic collaborista" **Clare Maxwell** is offering a donation-based hour of cranial nerve sequencing explorations on January 12 that should be highly engaging. Information [HERE](#)

My dear friend **Siobhan** sells the most exquisite hand painted silk scarves from her studio in Northern California. I go nowhere on cold days without my colorful silk/wool blend scarf wrapped around my neck! Information [HERE](#) (She also generously shares her talents with women going through cancer treatment with her "Empowerment Through Accessories" program.)

**Jamie McHugh** is an interdisciplinary artist, somatic movement specialist and the creator of Somatic Expression® - Body Wisdom for Modern Times. His somatic-expressive practices for re-wilding the body, mending the mind and restoring the spirit have been developed through intensive study over time with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Emilie Conrad, Anna Halprin, Thich Nhat Hanh and the wild places of the planet, and through working with diverse groups of people internationally for over 40 years. Jamie continues to study and research the mystery of the body as an element of nature and as an expression of our humanity.

**FEATURED VIDEO:**  
**Wander & Wonder (2021)**



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