

The Swan Lectures

on the nature of things ~

"[One] day it come to me: that feeling of being part of everything, not separate at all. I knew that if I cut a tree, my arm would bleed" (Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*).

"[a vision] in virtue of that primordial property that belongs to the flesh, being here and now, of radiating everywhere and forever, being an individual, of being also a dimension and a universal,—[an] intercorporeal being" (Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*).

"I was connecting everything: death, spirits, bodies, life; [to] turn every aspect of life into a spot [for] civility, beauty and compassion" (Karim Wasfi, 'Cellist of Bagdad,' on playing his composition, *Bagdad Mourning Melancholy*, 2015).

On Sunday, July 26th, The Wilbur D. May Arboretum hosts, "Art & Nature,"—a new venue bringing the work of artists and nature together in close proximity to the magical greening powers of the birds and the bees, bushes and trees, flowers, earth, sky, and squirrels,—a world animated by color, scent, shape, and movement for a harmonious aesthetic adventure for artist and public alike. Envisioned by Ms. Diane Rugg, arts educator, gardener, and Member of the May Arboretum Board, "Art & Nature" lays groundwork for The Wilbur D. May Arboretum becoming a new arts venue for the Reno-Tahoe region. "I hope to create a new venue for arts education programming," states Ms. Rugg.

Following her visionary lead, The May Arboretum Society Board has invited THE SWAN LECTURES© to be the first arts education experience this fall 2015. "Art & Nature" briefly introduces this project as a community-based, collaborative, and experiential project.

What is THE SWAN LECTURES?

... an immersive 20-hour lab experience entreating participants to a daily somatic, anatomically-sound and deconstructed movement practice; participatory lecture; perceptual writing; and final public presentation;

... an integrative experience that returns us to the content of our bodies, sensual, intellectual, imaginal—the primary site for empathic engagement, for making conscientious choices, and the substance by which transformational possibilities are enacted and understood;

... cultivates intimacy with our body's sensory systems, our original techné, and bridges somatic knowing with poetic perception as constitutive of empathic being. Together we discover the rigor and the ecstasy of empathic responsiveness to one's self and the world;

... time for deep observation and articulation of 'what happens' in terms of our bodily experiences throughout the practice,—breath, skin, viscera,—noting the movement toward the experience of corporeal compassion.

*uva uvam videndo varia fit,—
"a grape changes color (ripens) when
it sees another grape"* (Juvenal)

A community-based and collaborative project, THE SWAN LECTURES© explores the 'image-body-empathy' connection. Generative in nature, this project is part of my ongoing life work, SWAN: a poetical inquiry in dance, text & memoir. New writing becomes part of the current cultural conversation regarding the body and empathy; and the movement material explored throughout the labwork contributes to choreographic choices for my next SWAN performance installation.

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L. Martina Young, Ph.D., invites members of the community to participate in THE SWAN LECTURES©. For information and reservations, please visit her website: apoeticbody.com