

**CHANTERELLE~A MUSHROOM SPIRIT'S LIFE
THROUGH THE PROCESSWORK LENS**

*A CONTEXTUAL ESSAY TO ACCOMPANY THE
PERFORMANCE PROJECT*



By

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**A Final Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Diploma Program in
Process Work**

**THE PROCESS WORK INSTITUTE
PORTLAND, OREGON, USA**

FEBRUARY 2020

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project is based on the foundation of process work. Therefore, I am immensely thankful to *Arnold and Amy Mindell*, the founders of process work.

To *Amy Mindell*, for always being there for me and modeling an inspirational way of life.

A very special thanks to my dear *study committee*:

Ingrid Rose, for supervising and focusing my work, as a magical velvet-like guide.

Suzette Payne for her loving support and a special sense towards the artistic side in me.

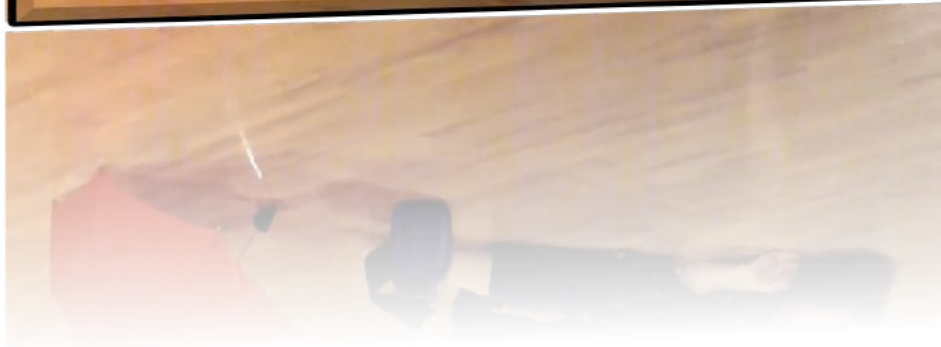
Aleksandr Peikrishvili for simply modeling living his very unique authentic self while making warm body sounds.

For *Salome Schwarz*, for being my final project advisor in the kindest, funniest, most spirited, and intelligent way. I would have never imagined these qualities existed in a person, especially in a role of an advisor.

Dawn Menken, for helping me by highlighting my strengths that I could not see in the moment during the many inspiring supervision sessions.

For *Craig Baker*, my partner and boyfriend, who encouraged and helped me in every possible way with every single step of the study. Without him, this would have not been possible.





My dear children: *Alma* and *Soma Baker* were two influential people during my studies throughout the years. They were my Zen masters during their very early years of life, by keeping me to my momentary awareness, holding onto and insisting the fairy tale spirit in me, through all their years raising me, to be their mother. I also would like to thank all the amazing teachers guiding me, and students for experimenting with me along my studies.

Poster of Final Project Performance



Final Project multimedia dance performance
February 1st @ 8pm- Process Work Institute, Portland OR

A one-woman show about a fantasy figure's life through
process work lens.

Nóra Hajós, a native of Hungary, teaches and performs
worldwide, dance improvisation, performance art and
process- oriented movement.

She was given the Second training eldership mastery
certificate in 2012 by Arnold and Amy Mindell. As an
improvisational performer, she is interested in sensation-
rooted-movement- explorations and action painting.

She is completing her Diploma in The Self-Guided
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

My final project was presented as a one-woman show. It was a multimedia dance/theater performance, held on February 1st. 2020, at the Process Work Institute (PWI) in Portland, Oregon.

I portrayed a character called '*Chanterelle*', an imaginary mushroom spirit, who under normal circumstances is not visible to human eyes. The audience got a view into her life and doings. I tried to show that through a large process work lens. Process work is based on following signals and feedback including the ones that are the most subtle and following the flow. The performance video is available for viewing.

About me: I have been introducing/teaching process work in various artistic fields. My experience includes dream work, body work, coma work, relationship facilitation work, alongside with teaching movement work. Over the past 20 years, my work has been portrayed in many settings such as giving workshops to dancers, musicians, body-mind centering conference participants, movement therapists, psychologists in hospital setting, social workers, psycho-drama theater groups, and many others. I have been teaching in USA, South America and Europe.





I developed various dance-theater performances that included or were based on process work concepts. I will outline the central concepts later.

These performances are:

- Dances under the St. John's bridge (Las Meninas)' in the years of 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 in Portland Oregon.

Comenowgo & Soongosee, a duet with Craig Baker.

The duet was performed at the world work conferences in Denver, Colorado, Warsaw, Poland and in Greece. It was also performed at the Creative Arts and world work Forum organized by Suzette Payne in 2014, at the Process work Institute (PWI) in Portland, Oregon.

- Numerous dance theater performances in Europe, USA, Canada and South America.

It was a great honor and delight for me to perform my final project in front of a blend of long-time master and senior teachers as well as process work teachers, practitioners and friends who are not familiar with process work and some who have little exposure.

Photos: From Las Meninas ~ Dances Under the St. John's bridge ~ Performance 2008, with Midori Hirai, Makiko Tadokoro, Alma Baker, Jiro Isetani, Craig Baker, Soma Baker, Nathaniel Holder, Cuti Walberg and Many More Guests





Photos: From Duets with Craig Baker



Photos: Nóra Teaching in Spain, Transylvania, Uruguay



Photos: Nóra Teaching in Spain, Transylvania and Uruguay



CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

My in-depth studies journey with different teachers connected to process work in one way or another. All my teachers have a natural intersection point in their teaching style and being, which require certain emptiness and flow to just follow the field and see where it takes me. That is the essence of improvisation, as Arnold Mindell refers to as “*non doing*”.

“Anything You observe arises through the sentient participation of everything involved. When you notice this Dreamtime interactional experience, you are lucid; you are doing what the Chinese call ‘not-doing.’ “When you are lucid, you sense the seeds and tendencies of things and divine future”. (Mindell, 2000, p. 67).



In this chapter, I will present different perspectives from my dance masters, and the influential work of Amy and Arnold Mindell’s processwork training. Although these teachers come from different schools of knowledge, they cross over paths at a point that is rooted in me. This intersection involves a somatic base; primarily thinking with and through the physical body, which I will highlight further in this chapter.

1. Simone Forti

Simone is an American-Italian postmodern artist, dancer, choreographer, and writer. Since the 1950s, Forti has exhibited, performed, and taught workshops all over the world. Simone Forti said:

“It’s been a way for me to know, what’s on my mind before I think it through, while it’s still a wild feeling in my bones.” (Forti, S., 2003).

Photos: Nóra Performing with Simone Forti, Budapest, 1992.



What really landed for me through Forti's modeling is the beauty of simply observing the moment in myself and my surroundings and communicating that. Feeling the truth and necessity of this simple action became a backbone so to say, of the joy of "doing" preparations, my teachings and also the style of my performances.

I chose to show these photos, with Simone's quote above because I believe this way of 'doing' and 'living' is shining through these photos. In this duet performance in Budapest, 1992, both of us were talking and moving simultaneously and spontaneously together. We were remembering an experience we recently had in Spain on a hike to a monastery. It was a profound shared experience. We never rehearsed the actual memory beforehand. The words or the movements that came to life were spontaneous. One of my biggest learnings or a gift I would say, I received from Simone, was how she prepared herself for a performance. Sometimes we had studio space scheduled, but we often just spontaneously followed the Tao. We stayed on the streets instead, wondering, noticing things and just being present to the moment. Other more seldom times, we would go into the studio and move together in an improvisational way.

In a way when neither of us knew what would happen, we just moved. We sometimes rolled together on the floor or just stood in space, observing sensations quietly. The observations included whatever happened to us in space and time without talking about it. There was never a program for the rehearsal time.

Back then, she was in her 50's, and I in my 20's. So, simply to say, my gift from her was through her modeling, that to just to be, is enough and it is plenty. That was news in my life. A big relief, and at the same time a big wonder opened up in me. Forti was a master of following her present state. How she was curiously wondering about the

moment and how she let us in on it was a gift for me, for students or audience members. So, then we would be wondering together. Or that's at least what I did.

Around the year 1988, we were both at a dance festival, where she was teaching and to my surprise, she asked me to work with her in a duet performance form. I was honored and we did many performances in different places at different times. I felt fortunate to observe her art so closely and travel together as friends.

2. Steve Paxton

Paxton is an experimental dancer and choreographer, founder of the dance form contact improvisation and Material for the Spine. I was honored to have studied with him for 30 years, and occasionally assisted him with a wide variety of projects in the USA, UK and Europe.

In Steve Paxton's words:

“With Material for the Spine, I am interested in allowing a technical approach to the process of Improvisation. It is a system for exploring the interior and exterior muscles of the back. It aims to bring consciousness to the dark side of the body, that is, the 'other' side or the inside, those sides not much self-seen, and to submit sensations from them to the mind for consideration” (Paxton, 2008).

Photos: Steve Paxton dances with Nóra Hajos in Dartington College, Totnes, England, 1989.



Paxton reflects on the experience of being his student, he said: *“Ms. Hajós is clearly a serious and persistent researcher who has successfully embodied her studies and is a sensual and technically accurate exemplar of my approach, both characteristics I value highly. I have also seen a number of her solo works, finding them humorous or emotionally moving, always with a special characteristic she possesses, a delicacy of line and energy that gives her performances an arcane or archaic quality which is unique to her and quite riveting”*. In *Material for the spine*”. (Paxton, 2008).

Steve indicates numerous exploration methods towards exploring our spine. The one I would like to point out here, is called the Small dance, which is a standing meditation. During standing, we observe all the little, tiny movements and reflexes that happen in our bodies, and bring our focus to our inner sensations.

He further writes on this:

“Standing because it’s at the opposite extreme of the high activity; it’s unique instead of duet; it’s an incredibly human thing to do. It’s one of our basic archetypical events. Standing because it’s a chance to observe systems in the body. What is happening in standing is that you are looking at your reflexes hold you up. The standing is meant to be done in a very relaxed way, with the knees a little bit bent. You are not holding tight anywhere. Letting gravity take the limbs down, you are letting the spine rise against gravity. And then you just hang out there and you start to feel the event that is holding you upright, that is keeping you from falling. And it seems to be going at quite a rate. The speed of thinking for and in the body could be trained to that speed, which is the speed of the body supporting itself”.

“What we have is the senses and the really ordinary stuff— breath, the heartbeat and pulse. In the standing, we have the reflexes as easily observable events that the consciousness is not causing and can take a moment to wonder at”. (Paxton, 2008).

I was amazed about all the little things that happen. Without trying too hard, I trained myself to pay attention through sensing my body. The way Paxton was leading these body sensation explorations inspired me to feel through and beyond my body into space, relative to gravity. It made me wonder through my senses what gravity is as I am truly sensing it's force against my body in a meditative-like state. This is where I see and experience an intersection point with process work.

One of the most valuable discoveries in process work that has to do with movement is that often when someone is moving, there is a hidden figure. That means that when someone moves, he/she is often moving against some force which pushes the person in other way, or if he/she is hitting someone who is there but who we can't see. Mindell says that every motion is against something, if only gravity. The slightest bit of resistance will help amplify the movement and bring out what he/she is moving against. Amy Mindell quotes Arnold Mindell's thought on gravity, in her Hidden Dance Thesis: *“Every motion is against something, if only gravity.”* (Kaplan, 1986, p.113).

3. Lisa Nelson

Lisa is my very inspiring teacher and mentor, who I studied and worked with for long periods of time. She is a dance-maker, improviser, videographer, and collaborative artist. She writes:

“In a study of the process of sensorial perception, I found a filter for looking at the roots of our dance behavior. Genetic and learned skills of survival—our

deepest patterns and habits--give instruction for what we need to know, how we look at things, and the subconscious process of editing spontaneously in order to make meaning out of any moment. The Tuning Score is extrapolated from this study.” (Nelson,2008). And she writes about me:

“Nóra has a unique perspective on the body, its physics, its motivations, and its felt-senses and transmits her fascinations to others with great specificity”.

Usually, after working with Lisa for even a few hours or a day, I would feel like I am slightly living in an altered state. Everything danced, moved and inspired me constantly. Therefore, I used to say, I am getting drunk on Lisa`s material in a very good way. Seeing her art, made me feel more alive than ever.

4. Amy and Arnold Mindell

When I was introduced to the processwork training with Amy and Arnold Mindell, it struck me how they were paying great attention to inner sensations. So, I continued the studies in the land of inner-work, dream-work and later in coma-work, all aspects of the processwork umbrella. Here, I am going to link my work to Amy Mindell`s master`s thesis (The Hidden Dance), she writes:

“I discovered a way of working as a therapist in which one did not need to begin with a set of paradigms, but rather followed nature itself. This leads at times to movement, at times to talking and at other times to body feeling experiences, dreams, or relationships issues. Therapy becomes a creative event which cannot be predicted ahead of time. One learns how to work with movement when it arises as part of a process and also when to drop it and move on when necessary.” (Kaplan, 1986, p.14).

“Process weaves and flows through various pathways as its expression and meaning becomes clearer. The art of the process worker is to follow this dance of spontaneous events -or what I call the hidden dance”. (Kaplan, 1986, p.24).

This way of thinking opened a door for me. An old door of mine, that loves to be inspired to be opened again and again. The reader might see now how Simone`s and Amy`s teachings were hitting a common ground in me, which refers to following ‘*nature*’.

Amy Mindell has created many amazing artistic ways to translate process work through composing music, creating videos and numerous puppet beings, drawings, paintings, sculptures and all sorts of artistic creations. During her classes she encouraged many of us to allow ourselves to create from our inner child`s mind. I am immensely thankful to her, for showing me the way, so from here on, I could move and sound from a more specific inner world, present in the very moment. Her books on Metaskills (Mindell, 2003), and alternative to therapy (Mindell, 2006) has been a great inspiration for me throughout my studies.

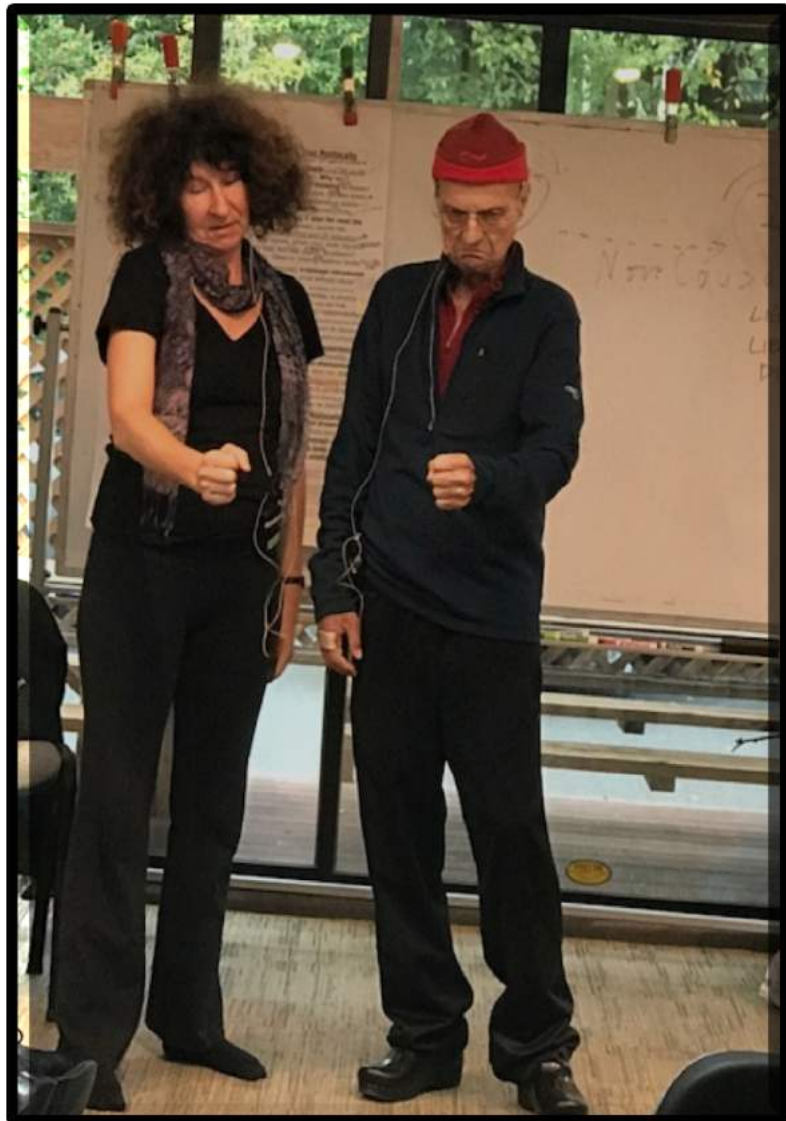
Photo: One of Amy Mindell’s Flower creation

Photo: Nóra playing with 2 creation she made at Amy’s class



In many seminars and classes, Arnold Mindell modeled to me the importance of the momentary sensations of the individual and following one's own process. Through his modeling, I feel as if, there is suddenly an allowance inside me to live that way and catch the moment when it can happen. By doing so, an aliveness and insight can arise. I can also feel the effect on others. It seems to create a whole circle of freedom to follow one's truth and wisdom.

Photo: Nóra Working with Arnold Mindell on Momentary Sensations



CHAPTER 3: HOW I DEVELOPED THE PERFORMANCE

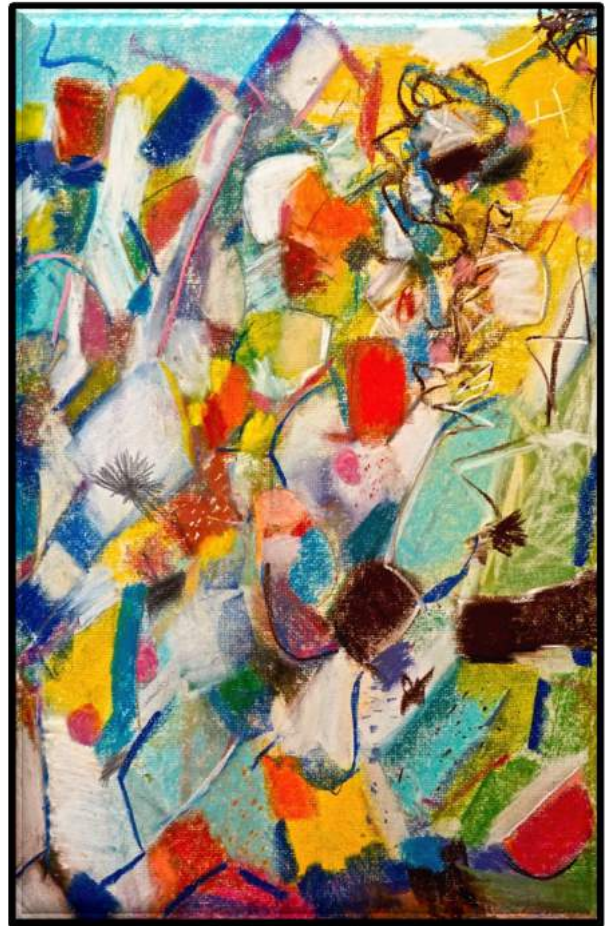
It came out of an empty creative mind which is called ‘process mind’ in process work. Arnold Mindell mentioned about this in one of his classes in 1986: “*It is right under our nose in each present moment, what we are looking for*”. His book on dreaming while being awake has been a great source for me for the practice of lucid dreaming (Mindell, 2002). Below, you can see how this book has been a guide, and ensurer of my belief in my own dreaming, and this is how I could hear *Chanterelle*’s existence.



The character *Chanterelle* appeared to me while I was hiking at Gwynn creek trail on the Oregon coast. I was walking quietly and just saw *Chanterelle* in her full self-talking, moving, and being. She was a spirit from the forest talking with the creek. When it was getting closer to performance time, I focused more on her and she started showing me all kinds of fun things that she was occupied with. For example, how she related to the impulses in her being and the sounds that came from the birds and the creek. She told me about her friends and surroundings. Sometimes it was so much information and it came so fast that I had to record it all in my recorder. I could not write it down fast enough. I noticed that she was pointing out to me more and more with process work based activities, and the subtleties of them.

At some point, I asked my advisor Salome Schwarz for guidance to help me sort the topics for *Chanterelle*. I asked her help with selecting from the increasing amount of material. *Chanterelle* came up with things in the most exciting way, day and night to me. Salome's clarity, sense of humor and belief in my dear character *Chanterelle*, always encouraged me in a very fun environment. So, I began to see and feel more clearly how I can bring her message to the public. In this way, I could allow for a loving, yet sharp focus in my preparations.

When I rehearsed the actual time frame of the performance piece, (30 minutes), I ended up editing out most of the exciting actions and could only leave in a few, in order to really deepen in the present time. Here I am very grateful for Craig Baker, my partner, for helping me see the following things during the rehearsal. I was rushing through things to let my character speak versus allowing time for going all the way through an embodied experience. All my teachers have modeled the possibility of listening to inner sensations while in public and relating to people about them or just simply living from that inner presence time. This to me seems very essential to life, and easy to understand.



Pastel Drawing by Nóra Hajós Dedicated to Amy Mindell

Yet, the actual doing of it for me, is difficult because at times I tend to rush. That is why it seemed crucial for me that an outside eye could help me pointing that out. Craig would suggest to me, to allow time, in order to communicate “the real experience of it”.

Generally, I work with an open structure in performances. This time I wanted a little bit of structure ahead of time. Why? To have a completely open structure is, that I am just living out of a creative empty mind. A little structure allowed me to have a focus in which I can improvise. Further below, I will explain how it relates to the process work concepts of Essence and Dreamland.

During a session with Amy Mindell, *Chanterelle* found a way through me how to come alive during the performance. The message I got is “*If only I could slow down enough for the moment!*”. At that point, a large stuffed bear named *Moses*, helped remind me of that inner timing. How did that happen?



Photo: Teddy bear Moses & Geranium Plant

Arnold Mindell has written about how we are living in a self-reflecting universe where the outer can remind me to remember the timing (Mindell, 2010, p. 243). During the session, when I was looking at *Moses* and interacting with that stuffed animal, the self-reflecting universe showed itself. So, it reminded me to listen to my inner timing during a performance because I have a tendency to rush. Amy allowed me to take *Moses* on a field trip. *Moses* lived with *Chanterelle* and me for about 10 days and best friends with Nóra’s *Geranium*.

This beautiful plant over wintering in my studio under my easel, *Geranium*, (shown on photo, left) seemed to me as it had many conversations with *Moses*. *Moses* also accompanied *Chanterelle* on stage.

Arnold Mindell also widened my horizon through stressing field thinking. I am not doing the performance alone. Indigenous cultures all over the world have this practice. When something is happening in the circle of a group, everybody is in it together, and community can emerge. This refers to ‘field theory’, meaning that every awareness in the room brings a contribution. Arnold Mindell mentions in his book that *“The processmind is usually an invisible field that tends to move our bodies and organize our dreams, environments, and nations. In many ways, our sentient body experience is like a compass needle or pendulum, moved by an invisible field. It is a self-organizing, self-reflecting mysterious space between us and all things.”* (Mindell, 2010, P.233).

In the performance, *Chanterelle* also showed how she can use the sometimes surfacing or inner turbulence creator X energy. This X energy is a frequent disturber for Nóra as well. With Arnold Mindell’s help, Nóra is often able to locate and pinch it.

What is helpful for me in unraveling the X energy? X energies stand for something that we don’t really want to have or look at but if we develop a relationship with those energies than something transformative can happen.

My daily meditations on my dreams and energy sketches helped me with further guidance on the how to create a production with many details. Being a very visual oriented person, I also included some of my paintings and drawings, as well as demonstrating doing energy sketches on spot as a way of finding the essence during the performance.

How do I work when I draw or paint? I often move around first and tune in with my body and then let “IT” make the strokes through me. The “IT” could be also called ‘processmind’ here, I am referring to Arnold Mindell’s Process Mind book in which he quotes, Taken Soho (1573-1645), legendary Japanese Zen master, talking about the swordsman’s way: “ *When he strikes, it is not the man but the sword in the hand of the man’s subconscious that strikes*” (Mindell, 2010, P.35).

I am going to further describe how this works, since it truly excites me to talk about it, in the hope that ‘You’ the reader enjoys it too. Since many years, I have been drawing my energy sketches with my eyes completely closed and most of the time I paint with my nose almost touching the canvas or surface, (whatever it might be), that way I don’t look at it, I only see enough in order to pick up the color, I ‘hear’ to pick up. I have complete trust in this process since it is my processmind that does it, and whatever is the outcome, it is not me, who does it, but nature itself.

What precedes the drawing/painting time is either working on a dream, flirt, a disturbance of body symptom, relational issue, or simply nothing, but getting in touch with my empty mind. How? Mostly by moving and getting into a dancing state of mind, which than is open and empty to be free.

It is especially interesting for me to discover, that for example, when I previously channel the energy of a disturbing X present for me, let’s say in a strong headache, or in a difficulty in a relationship, after feeling it as a sensory grounded experience in my entire body, move like it and sound /speak like it , I also see it simultaneously as an energy in a piece of nature. Then, I make an energy sketch with my eyes closed. Often, I draw a face of this energy, and it shows up with very dynamic lines. This is how Arnold Mindell describes what happens here:

“From the consensus reality viewpoint, your relationships are created by your everyday self and other people. The viewpoint of the processmind is different. Relationships between people begin as a sensation or interest that occurs before those involved realize it consciously. The people and objects that flirt with your attention just happen to you as, if they were a puppet with an ever-changing face. Behind that flirting puppet face is the processmind, which, like a puppeteer, organizes what you notice”. (Mindell, 2010, p.201).

Here are a few of the many thousands of blind energy sketches of mine to illustrate.



Many other process work students have also used performance art as their final projects presented at the Process Work Institute. Students have used movement/dance work (Blair, 2009), theatre/movement work (Docker 2004; Peikrishvili, 2010), cinematic expression work (Palazzolo, 2015), and many others.

CHAPTER 4: WHAT I SHOWED THROUGH THE PERFORMANCE, CONCLUSION & SOCIAL RELEVANCE

Chanterelle, the character in the performance, is modeling a way of living process oriented inner work, as an art form. So, this performance is meant to be teaching various levels of awareness to interact with her inner experiences and outer experiences. This is an inspirational art form.

The performance adds to the variety of theater pieces shown in the theme of process work. For the audience, a reflection process can emerge and be experienced through the inner work of the character. This can inspire people to do their own inner work in a playful and fun way. She brings together an embodied wisdom to her path and process. She does this by deeply listening to her experiences and thoughts not just mentally and through her mind, but also through really feeling the different energies. She is teaching central aspects of process work in a different way, rather than only talking. It is seen and felt through theater.

Throughout the performance *Chanterelle*, is showing the audience what it is like to be in contact with the three process-oriented dimensions (*levels of awareness*):

1. ***Consensus Reality***: The piece portrayed consensus reality elements such as the lighting arrangements, the soundtrack and the visual stage setup highlights how the performance manifests here and now.
2. ***Dreamland***: An example of Dreamland can be experienced through the relationship facilitation between two lamps having an argument.
3. ***Essence***: The Essence level can be felt by the way the character is setting an atmosphere through projected paintings and movement sensations. The

performance strongly encourages the experience of imagination and dreaming.

In the beginning of the performance, the audience is invited and encouraged to imagine that *Chanterelle*, this micro creature, that humans normally can't see, enlarges and becomes visible for them during the performance time. She encourages them to dream and evokes a capacity to follow more subtle sensations. *Chanterelle* also shows an embodied modeling of process work and process-mind awareness inside a character.

I wanted to not only have a free-flowing presentation, but to demonstrate the concepts of the phases as well as the “burning” inner-work method which I will explain thoroughly below.

This was shown in the episode, when *Chanterelle* notices that two of her lamps are having an argument. One is shaped like a flower, the other like a crane. In process work, this relates to the moment when diversity shows itself. In other words, each one of them is taking an individual stand. *Chanterelle* listens in and is showing concerns. When she hears the content, she gets overwhelmed and wants to ignore it and walks away. This is the moment which has to do with being close to one identity. But then, she comes back and starts facilitating. She suggests that the lamps switch roles, this refers to the moment when, there is an attempt to understand the other side.

She further suggests to each lamp to go deeper. The crane lamp pops out a chestnut. The flower shaped lamp has an image of floating clouds. At this point, the two lamps unite ‘momentarily’. Here we can witness the moment when spontaneous insights can happen.

The performance demonstrates the moment of the burning process, a method of Arnold Mindell, in which he recommends burning the X energy, the divorced part of ourselves and get to the Essence that way (Mindell, 2015).

The performance demonstrates how experiences that we have in life, free themselves and engage with each other and transform. Arnold Mindell refers to this in his book *“The Shaman’s Body”* as:

“Alchemists, forerunners of modern science, believed that the different elements of our personalities must be “cooked” before they combined to create the unaustrumundus, or mystical “one world”. (Mindell,1993, p. 43).

CHAPTER 5: WHAT I PERSONALLY LEARNED

This performance made me remember in a deeper way, my capacity of living in a magical fairy tale mind state, and simultaneously being able to navigate consensus reality and structure. One of the difficulties I encountered is that most people are using one or two types of awareness, but we need all the other types of awareness, to get along better with ourselves and our environment. For example, if we leave out awareness of everyday reality (*Consensus Reality*), we might not pay attention to medical issues, or if we leave out awareness in *Dreamland*, we will likely overlook power and diversity issues. We are not looking at conflict inside and outside. If we leave out awareness of the *Essence Level*, then we can get burned out.

A second learning was that after the performance, I was able to take in more positive feedback deeply. I think the reason is that I have been working in great details structurally preparing for this performance. As a result, I had the feeling that everything was in place inside of me while performing. Afterwards, there was no dissonance between what I felt or thought about the performance and the feedback that I got.

I included more structure into my performance than I would have done in the past. I felt supported by it during acting and dancing. What I learned from that is to bring together what I call divination and teaching. In other words, to really integrate, divination, free improvisation and teaching.

In terms of therapy, Amy Mindell talked about it the following way: “*Therapy becomes a creative event which cannot be predicted ahead of time*”. (Kaplan, 1986, p.14).

CHAPTER 6: LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

Based on my inner-work, I would like to bring out more often a sharp and a warm energy within the character of *Chanterelle* in future performances. I would like to add this to my facilitation style and working with people. I am looking forward to developing my direct style while having an open and holding attitude.

I also would like to create more performances titled '*Chanterelle's tales.*' I have a desire to deepen more for future performances. I will be experimenting with slowing down enough in the moment in order to read my momentary sensations, unfolding their knowledge, and relating insights about them to the audience.

Through creative contributions like this one, people can get inspired. A sense of communal dreaming can happen. Sharing together something uplifting creates a sense of community and belonging. It's like a tribal experience. By witnessing together, the forces of nature create a sense of belonging. What an individual contributes is supported by the communal field. The more I can be in touch with myself in public, the more this communal field can open.

Pastel Drawing by Nóra Hajós



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Photo: Nóra in Kindergarten, Hungary, 1969

