

***Impressions of the Amerta course: "Movement in the Sacred Art
Movement in the Sacred Garden" in Andalucía, Spain***
Daniela Coronelli

Just a flavour of the Amerta Movement workshop I co-facilitated this summer in Spain, an innovative teaching approach which could inspire future movement courses. The title Suprpto gave to the workshop became evident to me when I arrived at the centre where the course took place: "Baile en el Aire". Located on top of 1,500 metres hill, the centre is surrounded by the Alpujarras Mountains in the Sierra Nevada. Benefiting from a large Chestnut trees woodland, an orchard with almond, cherry, apricot and peach trees and an organic vegetable garden. A skilful network of torrents and irrigation channels echoes their watery sound across the landscape. Other local sounds came from a variety of colourful birds and the daily church bells. At night an echo of flamenco and jazz music could be heard across the hill from the nearest village.

"Baile en el Aire" is a dance centre which was founded by two women: Isabel from Switzerland and Ina from Germany. Their gardening, building and healing skills have transformed this place from a ruin to a beautiful centre. In addition to running the centre, Ina had a son Jaro and Isabel was expecting her first child. Amable was the other resident and also Isabel's partner.

The Structure

The idea of the course and the choice of location came from Isabel Moros, whose dream arising from her first meeting with Suprpto, was to re-discover the sound of her native country, after many years of being resident in UK. She had chosen Andalucía as it was the last place in Europe where Christians, Muslims and Jews lived predominantly in harmony. The innovative approach of the course was the format which consisted of two periods of 5 days each. During the first 5 days, a teaching team of 4 teachers including myself led the course and opened the space for Suprpto to join the teaching team during the last five days. The other interesting feature was that all teachers were of different nationalities and shared an awareness of cultural integration between their native and resident countries. They were all resident in Devon, UK, had a Buddhist meditation background and met periodically to share their movement professional development. The participants were all women from UK, Germany and Spain. They all had long-term experience of other forms of movement, with little experience of Amerta Movement.

The Movement Journey

During the first 5 days we held two movement sessions a day of 3 hours each. The spaces we chose to move were the Tablao and the Chestnut trees woodland. The Tablao is a wooden platform designed and constructed by Ina for movement and dance workshops. The roof of the Tablao consisted of a yellow hexagonal cloth tied to wooden poles. The cloth would undulate with the wind giving a sense of a "breathing roof". The sun light would shine between the gaps of the moving cloth creating a reflection of light and shadow on the platform. The view from the front of the Tablao consisted of the Alpujarras Mountains and valleys. The structure of the course was first laid out in response to the participants' current needs. Gradually we continued to work with what developed from the collective movement with a variety of methods. Art and movement using placement of stones, proportions and change of perspective, was the method introduced by Kate Coombs who teaches art professionally. Isabel Moros, a lecturer of Spanish at Exeter University introduced sessions on making home, moving from the pelvis and guiding walking meditation. I led

sessions on the 5 elements, how they combined in the Alpujarran landscape and their effect on moving our physical and mental condition. I used a combination of postures and activities which integrated sound, spatial awareness of elements and movement between internal and outer landscape. I am a senior teacher of Shiatsu and Movement with long-term experience of working outdoors in a variety of landscapes. The skills, resourcefulness and positive response of the participants to our programme offered a good foundation for Suprpto to enter the space with his teaching skills. Participants were ready and enjoyed the change in the group. They continued their individual and group movement development and welcomed the enriching contribution Suprpto brought during the latter part of the course. Other bonuses of this course were visits to the Alhambra Palace in Granada, a visit to a typical Alpujarran village and to a Flamenco dance performance.

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