



Embodying Nature Online 2025 with Jamie McHugh, MSMT

"We must uncenter our minds from ourselves. We must unhumanize our minds a little and become as confident as the rock and the ocean we are made from." - Robinson Jeffers

- Cultivate a somatic-expressive relationship with your own terrain
- Investigate, explore, and in-corporate place in an ongoing manner
- Create to share with others, using your phones for images, videos, and sound recordings as part of your expressive repertoire

For the past 30 years, I have been guiding Embodying Nature immersive retreats in varied environments - from the beaches of the Northern California coast to the French and Swiss Alps and the German forests. To say it is magic is an understatement! And yet it is increasingly harder for people to leave their lives for a week of retreat. This online forum is an accessible way to experiment with this approach in one's own backyard over time.

So what is Embodying Nature and how does it work? Read an article for an overview of the methodology **[HERE](#)**

Embodying Nature combines *sensorimotor engagement* with *aesthetic channels of creativity* in relationship to the natural environment. What makes this approach unique is the confluence of mindfulness, bodyfulness and playfulness as a means for deeper relationship with the body of the planet.

We land in the place of our choosing, open up our perceptual capacities, engage

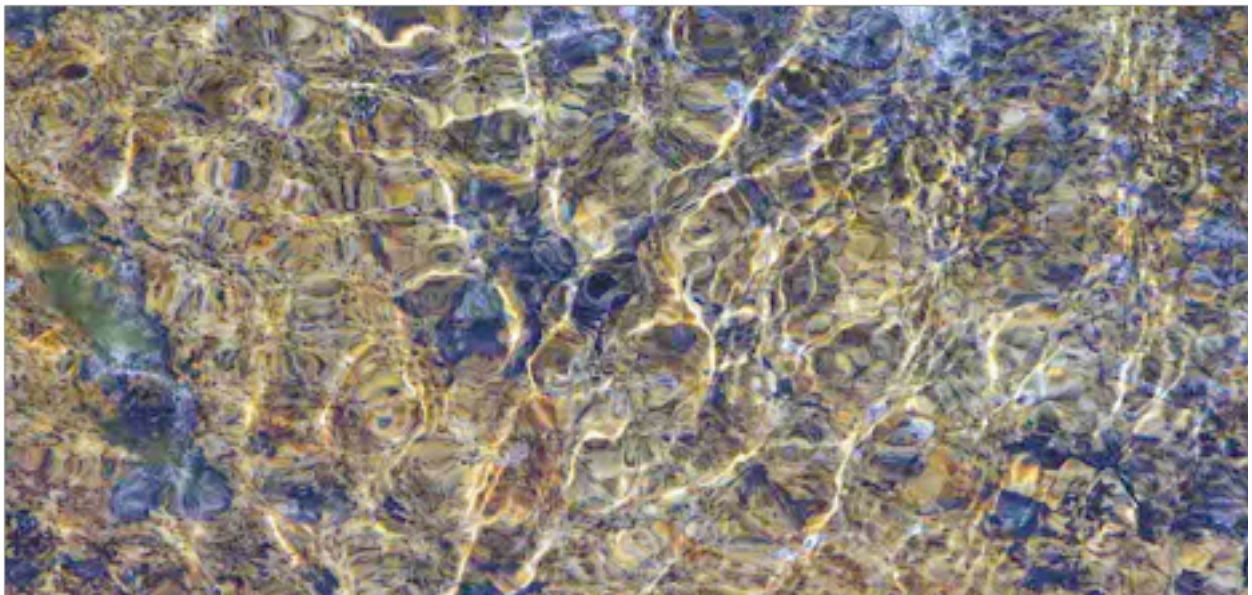
with the immediate environment mindfully and playfully through our somas, and use varied channels of aesthetic creativity to integrate our experience in a tangible way.

Sensorimotor engagement: We begin by attuning to the body's sensibilities through the five somatic technologies. Simple somatic practices create the transition from the ordinary body to the extraordinary one, shifting from automatic ways of breathing, moving and thinking to varied ways of perceiving in present time. Clearing the mind with this inner re-orientation recalibrates attention to perceive the outer landscape in unaccustomed ways, creating an opening into substantive contact and connection.

Sensorimotor engagement consists of The Five Somatic Technologies (Breath, Vocalization, Contact, Movement and Stillness) with the Five Phase Relational Map (Witness, Contact, Mirror, Respond and Rest).

Aesthetic Channels of Creativity: Art is re-creation and inspiration, the multiple languages of the senses heightened, expressed and formed. We knew how to do this naturally as 5 year olds – to make up songs, spontaneously dance, sculpt our environments, and play with color and words. Art was fun and joyful, an effortless expression of our aliveness. Coming into contact with place through sensorimotor engagement stirs the art of nature within to be revealed and expressed.

Aesthetic Channels of Creativity: Writing, Spoken Word, Recorded Soundscapes, Images (Drawn and/or Photographed), Videos, and more...



MONTHLY STRUCTURE
(Phase 1: Witness) May 17-18

(Phase 2: Mirror) June 14-15

(Phase 3: Contact) July 26-27

(Phase 4: Respond) August 16-17

(Phase 5: Rest & Harvest) September 13-14

Saturdays: 9-noon PDT/ noon-3pm EDT/ 6-9pm CEST

Sundays: 9-11am PDT/ noon-2pm EDT/ 6-8pm CEST

All sessions recorded for playback and download.

How:

Each phase is a total of 5 hours online: 3 hours on Saturday and 2 hours on Sunday. Saturday is dedicated to experientially learning a few somatic practices in relation to the particular theme of that phase. A hands-on 1-2 hour score will then be given to follow in the environment of your choice before we gather again on Sunday. So for those of you in the US, you would go out in the environment on Saturday while those of you in Europe would go out on Sunday. Sunday session is for sharing discoveries and being guided in ways to articulate aesthetically your experience.

Full Program Fee: \$350 paid in full by May 11/\$400 after

Phase One only: \$90 paid by May 11/\$100 after

(If you decide to continue with the series after phase one, it is an additional \$350.)

Fees for this course are deliberately below market value to encourage participation.

Who:

This online forum is an accessible way to use this approach in one's own backyard over time. The Embodying Nature learning lab is for people who want to explore somatic-expressive engagement with the natural environment for 5 months, either as continuing education and/or personal re-creation.

Embodying Nature is as diverse as the individuals who show up, and has been used as a foundation for performance, creative writing, environmental education and ecopsychology.

Make space in your life for an active relationship with your bioregion and learn from your own practice of exploration what nature has to offer – and what you have to offer nature.

Submit an application to Jamie McHugh naturebeingart@gmail.com with a little information about yourself and your intention for being part of this group, as well as payment through Venmo @Jamie-McHugh or Paypal

<https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/somaticxpress>



YOUR GUIDE Jamie McHugh

I primarily lived in rural locations on the US West Coast for the past 20 years before moving recently to the hills of Western Massachusetts. While staying connected to the modern world virtually, the bulk of my time was spent in the vastness of the environment. I became a photographer of water in all its many dimensions, in particular the coastal ecosystem of waves and eddies, coves and tidal pools.

The beach was my movement studio where I could lay down in the embrace of sand, breathe and move while listening to the ever-present drone of the ocean, and enter another frame of consciousness. Taking my camera on these excursions amplified this kinesthetic state of mind though focused attention on the visual domain.

Where the confluence of breath, vocalization, movement and stillness enabled a wide-open fluid perception, the focus of the lens brought concise attention to detail, form, and color. Suspending time temporarily to touch an ephemeral moment and embrace a still image became a practice of action-reflection, impression-expression, gather-hold...and then release and re-set.

This rhythm of concentrated attention modulated by spacious breath and movement was its own reward, deepening my relationship with place while altering my state of being. Having all these countless "souvenirs" (from French, *memory*) to share with others as prints and video montages was an extra bonus.

www.naturebeingart.org

Making art has potentiated and amplified my relationship to place just as place has done the same to my aesthetic sensibility. This reciprocity with the natural world is the essence of this learning lab dedicated to Somatic Attunement, Relational Presence, and Creative Engagement. It has been my soul medicine, and I am happy to share it with you!