



Research Project
How to free creative energy in people

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Beeld en Atelier

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Introduction

How can I free creative energy in people, so that they can act in the world in a renewing way? That is a question I have been asking myself for a long time as an artist who works with materials and with people.

The 'creative' in people is what makes them free, self-creating beings; co-creators of the world; people who will contribute to evolution. The 'creative' makes them independent from themselves, from their environment and from their gods. In the process it gives them the responsibility to use their forces in a justified way.

The creative energy we talk about is the power that is no longer needed to maintain the body. We can call it 'freed life forces', life forces that are no longer needed to satisfy our daily desires, needs, impulses, sentiments, thoughts, but forces that can be available to use where needed, according to the decision of our free will. We can also call them 'vital' forces.

Is creativity a moment? Is it a stream, a current or an encounter? Is it nothing but silence? Is it a force?

Joseph Beuys speaks in his 'widened understanding of art' about a resurrection principle: "transforming the old, fixed and dying shapes into new life creating, soul and spirit supporting shapes". This he calls the element of 'movement' überhaupt, the form in which the incarnation of the Christ principle is fulfilled.

Three elements are important for me in this statement:

- Transforming old and dying shapes,
- The encounter with the 'Christ principle', which Beuys considers as a principle of movement, the way that the Christ incarnates in our time,
- Transforming into new life creating, soul and spirit supporting shapes".

This seems to indicate a process. It is not just the creating of new shapes, but the transforming of old shapes into new ones, meeting the Christ principle. This could give a completely new vision of creativity and of art, in the sense that it could become possible for every human creature to become an artist, to become creative, independent of the talents he has brought with him.

In this sense the transforming of old shapes stands in the middle. Exploiting old talents no longer counts, what counts is how we use these old talents, how we transform them into new qualities. In transforming old forms there is often a low point, a struggle, where we are confronted with outer resistances but also with our self. We have to go into ourselves to meet our real source, to meet the trust and the conviction that what we want is real, is important, is not nothing. Struggle often leads to self-encounter and in the process to the encounter we strive for. I call it a creative moment, a moment where the entire human being, with his thinking, his feeling and his will, has an encounter with his self and with the world. This encounter finds place in his middle, in his heart. That is the place where our higher individuality, our spiritual being, connects with our body. A creative moment we could describe as an encounter with our deepest being, with the Christ principle in us. According to Beuys, this encounter can only find place if we are prepared to sacrifice a part of our old self, of our lifeless form. It is a naked moment, an open moment, a zero point, it is a moment beyond time and space, as each real experience finds place beyond time

and space, according to Wilhelm Zeylmans⁽¹⁾. One has to expose oneself. Are we prepared to let a part of ourselves die; give it away, so that the spirit can weave into the world through us, as a creative force?

Is that what Beuys meant with 'the element of movement'? In a moment beyond time and space, a new piece of our path is revealed to us, we could also say, a new part of truth, humanity and the life force is created. It makes us able to understand, to experience and to do new things, which was impossible before.

The 'widened art understanding' of Joseph Beuys will be the core principle that my vision on creativity and creative forces, is based on. These ideas are extended by my own experiences and by contact with other authors.

„Die Chrisuskraft, das Evolutionsprinzip kann nun aus dem Menschen quellen, es kann aus dem Menschen hervorbrechen, denn die alte Evolution ist bis heute abgeschlossen. Das ist der Grund der Krise. Alles, was an Neuem sich auf der Erde vollzieht, muss sich durch den Menschen vollziehen...

Wer mit dem inneren Auge zu sehen sucht, der sieht, dass der Christus längst wieder da ist. Nicht mehr in einer physischen Form, aber in der bewegten Form einer für das äußere Auge unsichtbaren Substanz. Das heißt, er durchweht jeden einzelnen Raum und jedes einzelne Zeitelement substantiell. Also er ist ganz nah da...

Die Form, wie diese Verkörperung Christi sich in unserer Zeit vollzieht, ist das Bewegungselement schlechthin. Der sich Bewegende... Er ist also das Auferstehungsprinzip: die alte Gestalt, die stirbt oder erstarrt ist, in eine lebendige, durchpulste, lebensfördernde, seelenfördernde, geistfördernde Gestalt umzugestalten. Das ist der erweiterte Kunstbegriff.“²

The field where 'creativity' can express itself can vary. It can be in acting, in sensing and in thinking. According to the principle described above, a creative process always goes through the middle, through our hearts, where encounter can find its place. Creativity can appear differently depending on the field we are active in. Creativity in the cognitive field appears when we suddenly start to understand something, if we find a new coherence or if we find a solution to a problem. We get a kind of image. Creativity in the field of feeling is often called 'inspiration'. We are in contact with a source that fills us with new impulses that we do not directly perceive as images, but as sentiments. Inspirations can be translated in a wider understanding of things, in deeds, or they can just stay what they are. In acting creativity shows itself in new deeds. Can we describe a creative deed as a deed in the right place, in the right moment and in the right way? Is this intuition?

Getting creative is always connected with warmth. It is connected with enthusiasm, with energy and maybe with 'love'. The 'warmth' had a very central position for Beuys his life and his work, as he declared three days before his death.

¹ Die Menschliche Seele, Willem Zeylmans van Emmichoven, Stuttgart 1995

² Was ist Kunst? – Werkstattgespräch mit Beuys, Volker Harlan, Stuttgart, 1986.

Guidelines for a creative process.

What does a creative process look like? What we have talked about so far can be considered as the inner workings of the creative process. To get a grip on it in a practical way, we need to describe it much more concretely.

If we read 'Fritz'³, we find a very practical and pragmatic description, which is very useful. He says that creativity is the movement between a double tension or a double polarity.

The first tension I would call the 'horizontal' one. It is the polarity of matter. It is a polarity that moves us back and forward between problems and solutions, between possibilities and impossibilities, between wishes and resistances, between being able and not being able. It is a tension that confronts us in everyday life. It never releases us as long as we stay in it. Fritz gives some examples:

The stronger one desires to become rich the stronger the counter forces that work against it. The stronger one longs to lose weight by eating less, the stronger the desire remains to eat more once one has reached the ideal weight. Fritz describes it as being pulled to the left and to the right by elastic. In the middle the tension is in balance. The more we pull to the left or to the right, the more the elastic will pull us to the middle again. As long as one is submitting to the pairs of opposites one remains dependent. Paying attention to a tension often prevents us from being released from it because we feed it, it needs another point of view. Nevertheless, submitting to the polarities is a part of the process because it generates a resistance with the world. It causes a relationship with it. Without mountains there are no dales, without light there is no darkness and no colours, without resistance there is no freedom. That is why polarities are inherent in life. We can't get out of it. It is life itself.

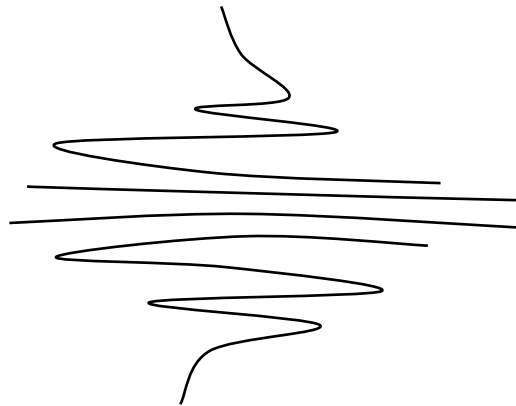
The other polarity that lies square to the first one is that of time. This polarity is caused by the discrepancy between what is here now and what could be possible in the future. It is a stream that works as a driving force; it gives us the motivation to act, because we want to reach something that is not yet there.

Take a mountain trip as an example; the aim is to reach the summit, to admire a beautiful panorama, that is the motivation that pushes us forward. This is the second polarity. On the road we meet resistances. The path is the resistance, usually a natural mountain track, often made by animals; it is constructed so that it takes the least possible effort to reach the summit. Fritz calls this the path of least resistance. It is going up, there is a rock, a steep slope or a river, but the aim drives us forward. This example makes it clear that the aim and the resistances (the path) come from different spheres. But they always co-operate together.

The vision of Fritz is a good completion of what Beuys says. If we talk about a creative process, we see an amount of time in which a transformation is occurring. This can be done with material substance, with social substance or with spiritual substance. In order to understand the process we have to study the different stages in **time** and the different layers of **matter**.

³ The Path of Least Resistance, Fritz Robert, 1989.

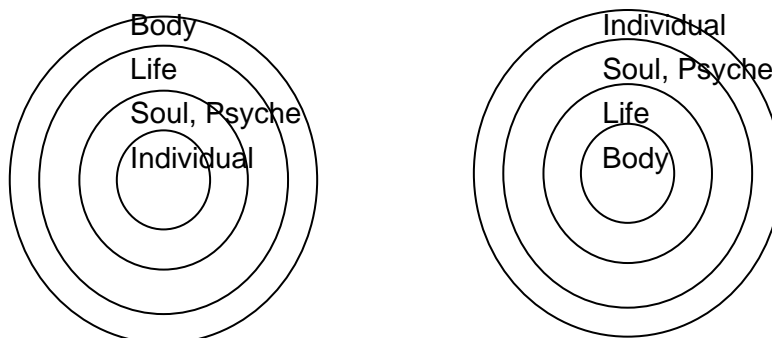
Schematically it can be drawn as follows.



Horizontally you have the stream of matter; vertically you have the stream of time. We can learn a lot from the research of Coenraad van Houten. He developed a threefold path for adult learning. He bases this path on the 'life processes', these being the processes necessary to maintain life. Rudolf Steiner⁴ discovered and described them as breathing, warming, nourishing, secreting or "absondern", maintaining, growing and reproducing. According to Coenraad Van Houten 'learning', 'developing of oneself' and 'creating creatively' occur at the level of the life forces, in this way he goes much further than psychology. The existence of the 'life forces' is not usually recognised by mainstream science, although some alternative movements and methods do recognise and work with them, such as anthroposophy, bio-energetics, healing and other ancient systems handed down from primitive cultures. As an artist one knows that there are forces between the soul level and the level of the physical body. These forces are also known as 'form forces'; the forces one needs to give the forms its shape. The same forces are used to form the child in the mother or in healing wounds. They keep us alive; they make the difference between life and death. The layer of our life forces contains all the information the body needs to find its shape and its health. It also contains our memory. The brain is just a sense organ for the memory. If the memory would be situated in the brain, we would not be able to forget.

Sculptors know the life forces very well because they work with them every day getting the information to create living form. These forces make the difference between life and death on the form level.

The next scheme shows the position of the life energy in the constitution of the human being. Observing the other from the outside (fig.1) and the other as seen from the inside. (fig.2)



⁴ Rudolf Steiner, Das Rätsel des Menschen, Die Geistigen Hintergründe der Menschlichen Geschichte, 15 Vorträge, GA 170, Dornach 1992

fig.1

fig.2

The first figure shows the human constitution experienced from outside, how I perceive the other. First I see the physical body, and then I see the movement, the dynamic and the activities. When we are more attentive we perceive moods, thoughts and a certain character. When we are very attentive it strikes us that there is something very individual about the other which expresses itself in the face. Somebody or something that is not completely involved is steering. Seen from the inside, observing myself through introspection, the human constitution looks different. To start with there is self-consciousness. I know that I exist, that I do think and feel. I call myself "I", somebody that is directing myself. Mostly I am not aware of this direction because the directing itself and perceiving this activity usually do not coincide. I can't split my consciousness. When driving my car I observe the environment, not myself, when observing myself I am not aware of the environment. What I do perceive, when I observe my inside, are thoughts, feelings, desires, impulses, emotions, that is the soul level in which a lot of our consciousness is disappearing. The life forces we do not perceive anymore. We only perceive our general state of health, of energy, of enjoyment of life. We do not perceive the physical body at all from the inside, only through the normal sense organs, although there are people that are conscious on the cell level. From the outside the life energy is not visible yet in its pure form, unless one is so-called clairvoyant. We only see the effect of it. Seen from the inside the life forces are situated beyond the limits of our consciousness. That is the reason that knowledge of these forces has been neglected until now. In the beginning of the last century humanity became conscious of the psyche. A pioneer in this matter was Sigmund Freud. The new discovery for this century will probably be that of the life forces. This discovery will take a long time because these life forces are situated on a deeper level. But slowly our senses are becoming more sensitive. We will find a lot of answers concerning life and death.

Coenraad Van Houten describes learning, developing and being creative as a transformation of the life forces.⁽⁵⁾ He developed new methods so these functions of learning, developing and being creative no longer absorb life energy but generate it, which is diametrically opposed to a lot of classic learning methods. Even 'art' is often still taught in a way that kills the life forces and also creativity. Here Coen Van Houten approaches Joseph Beuys. He says that learning and developing go hand in hand with overcoming resistances. In this way blocked forces are set free that can be used for future development. This phenomenon we know from psychology, but what kinds of forces are set free? The path Coenraad Van Houten developed is no new psychology; it is literally a way of living. It is a path borrowed from life and given back to life, generating life forces. It is a way of learning that makes people younger by developing new talents.

'The encounter' has a central position in Coen Van Houtens way of learning, the encounter with the world around us and with our self. It produces a melting together of the past and the future, of the inside and the outside, a moment in the here and now, a moment beyond time and space, maybe a reunion from time and space. Without these moments there is no real learning or developing, there is no real

⁵ Erwachsenenbildung als Willenserweckung, Van Houten Coenraad, 1996.

creativity. Maybe that is what Beuys meant by the Christ principle, an encounter, a principle of movement.

I would now like to derive the next thoughts for a creative process.

A creative process is a process of development that starts somewhere, with a challenge, with a resistance, with a question or a commission, by relating to it we can work up enough enthusiasm to make it to a part of our own life. The resistances we meet show a part of the way we have to go. Real answers and solutions only now reach us intuitively, often in moments of silence, unexpectedly. All the things that do not pass this 'moment of now'; I would call variations on old patterns. The encounter with really new elements gives us the insight and the power to work new things out further and to give it back to the world in a new form that works fruitfully for the future. One can find different stages in this process. Each step has its own dynamic and generates energy when it is good.

The Process

I would like to call what follows here a creative process or an artistic process. It can be compared with the growth of a plant where the different stages get more visible in the changing form. There is the **seed**, waiting in the earth. When there is enough warmth and water it starts **germinating**. In the beginning all kind of plants look the same, but as soon as they start **growing** they reveal their own unique form. The flowers start **blooming** and are **fertilized** from the outside. Then the **fruits** form, they **ripen** and are **sown**.

This process starts in the earth and returns to the earth while penetrating other qualities, water, air, space, warmth and light. The seed is related to the element earth. The process of germinating is related to water and warmth it needs both. The growing plant penetrates space to find its' form. Blooming and being fertilized are connected with warmth and light, with the outer space. The fruits get more volume and weight again, retiring themselves out from the space, find a new shape, ripening and are left as a seed on the earth.

A creative process shows different qualities:

- It is a path that leads an adult from the outer world to his inner central being where he meets his self. This is the creative moment from where newborn forces want to penetrate the outer world again, developing new, life creating, soul and spirit supporting shapes. It is a twofold way, leading from the periphery to the centre and back to the periphery again. In this movement the different layers of our constitution, the physical, the life energy, the psychological and the individual, are affected. It looks as if nature is repeating in the human being how it was creating before. But now the human being is directing. That is the widening of our consciousness that we are standing in front of. It is the development of our constitution that will lead us to unborn qualities. The self-conscious human being using his natural forces to create. The Christianising of our life forces.
- In the first steps, old qualities are activated, in the last steps new qualities are generated. In the first steps we move from the periphery to the centre, in the last steps we move from the centre to the outer world again. In the middle the encounter finds place between the outer world and myself, between the past and the future.
- In each stage forces are set free that are needed for the next step.

The steps could be described as follows.

- Making contact with the environment through the senses. Perception and self-perception through the higher and the lower senses. Experiencing by doing things. The material to start a creative process is delivered.
- Getting in a movement, playing, becoming creative through a warm connection with the perceived, penetrate in it, becoming enthusiastic, taking time.
- Possibilities appear, forms are accepted or rejected, things differentiate. There is an inner struggle with own habits, with old patterns. There is argumentation, longing and decision.
- Elements are coming together, there are new discoveries, new openings, there is inspiration; I discover what I want, and myself. There are key openings, moments of NOW.

This is the path I had to follow to reach the core of what I was searching for, and myself. It seems to stop here, but it actually goes further only the other way around from now on, starting with our self.

- What we experience is expressed. The fantasy is inspired. I express myself.
- The expressed is becoming a living shape, a living whole of different elements. The whole is more than the elements.
- The work I have done fertilizes the world. The created shapes are set free. They work further without me.

Again the different steps, but worked out more.

Also the life processes will be mentioned here. In the last part they are described better and some guidelines are worked out to support them.

1. Making contact with the outside and the inside

Image: the seed is waiting in the earth until, under the influence of moisture and warmth, it is awakened. The seed lies under the earth, carrying everything inside it that it needs to grow, except the warmth and the water.

Life process: breathing.

Outside there is the world in its present form, as we perceive it. In our soul there are thoughts, feelings, impulses, questions, needs.

Our inner world becomes conscious when it is mirrored outside and the outer world becomes conscious when it is mirrored inside. We look with two different pairs of eyes. One is watching the outer reality; the other one is facing inner activities.

Perception plays a crucial role in this process. Our sense organs are the gates through which the contact is established. According to Rudolf Steiner there are twelve senses, some serve the thinking, others serve the feelings or the will. The idea of the existence of twelve senses opens a huge field of experiences.

Through the encounter of inner processes with that which is outwardly perceived, a creative process starts because there exists a discrepancy. There is a tension that becomes conscious. We experience it as a need, a question or an impulse.

There is a devotional part in the process of perception that can be seen as an encounter, a meeting between the perceived and myself.

When I see a stone, as a sculptor, it can leave me cold or it can speak to me.

Sometimes I am even driven to places, seemingly by coincidence in order to find stones, but this only happens if I am in the mood to find some, if I am open for it. The better I know the stones the more likely they will speak to me, it is like meeting their elemental being, they give me the force and later the inspiration to start a project with them.

This level of perception is not often spoken about. The more we are devoted to what we perceive the more we come into contact with its essence. Intensifying our observation and schooling our senses are a huge support for finding new impulses. This is the key to freeing forces in this phase. The reality is teaching us when we stay in contact with it. If the reality is a stone, the stone will teach us. My experience is that stone teaches very practical, technical things, for example: how to handle it, what tools I will need, how I will develop and repair tools. Very favourite subjects among stone sculptures are technical matters. It is different with wood, wood teaches more about processes. Technical concerns are not so vital here.

The knowledge that is taught through observation will guide us through the process. It gets us started and will help us to find our way back. Everything is in it, like in the seed. Perceiving questions or possibilities through observation is a kind of clairvoyance. How can I see unborn qualities by observing a student? That is a mystery. But it is possible and necessary to introduce a creative process. It is the potency one works with.

2. The movement.

Image: germinating. Two young soft leaves are searching for the light under the influence of warmth. Under good conditions they will continue to grow.

Life process: warming

The second phase, that of germination as Fritz describes it, is a very real stage that is often experienced as dazzling. The creative impulse is set in motion and moves all involved. Fantasy is becoming alive, ideas appear, and experimentation and trying out reveal a glimpse of possibilities. A game is being played between the author and his subject, between fantasy and reality. Everything remains open, nothing is obligatory. Staying free and freeing time and space is an art now. Everything has its own time and rhythm; it is necessary to connect to this. The life forces are activated and relate similar to in a mother – child relationship. Small children notice immediately when you start this relationship with your work. Suddenly they feel alone and they start wailing. Pregnant women often do not have enough forces to really connect at this stage due to the life forces being needed somewhere else. People arriving in this stage often become wild and enthusiastic, and once they have had this experience, they often want to reorganise something in their lives. Life forces are set free in their purest form. Very typical is the enlivening of the fantasy as the weaving images, in contrast with fixed pictures or death thoughts, nourish it.

Men and women experience this step slightly different due to the fact that life forces are masculine for women and feminine for men as Jung and Steiner describe. Men get stuck in their patterns, not easily enlivening these forces because they are feminine and require agility and sensitivity to develop. For women these forces are masculine and require form forces and clearness to develop.

What happens here? It could be seen as a second encounter. It is as if the essence of our project speaks to us in living, weaving images. Through the fact that we give ourselves time we can let ourselves float on the stream of our fantasy and on what is happening. We penetrate another layer of our creative project, a layer that is composed of life energy. Therefore rejuvenation takes place, warmth and enthusiasm develop. Skipping this stage leads to rigidity, our old habits will harden and our thoughts will become inflexible, conversations become abstract and there is alienation from life.

Nevertheless we need to find a balance between too much structure and no structure. Too much structure leads to a hardening of our life; no structure leads to unrealistic conceptions.

3. Direction

Image: when plants start growing, they find their own form and direction as they penetrate into space.

Life process: nourishing.

That which is emerging and what it meets determine the direction.

There are resistances, the circumstances are not always ideal, and without these resistances we would have already found the solution. The resistances often mirror our inner state; showing the qualities we have to develop. Of course we can let ourselves remain in the past and make variations on old discoveries for a certain time, this I would call 'deepening' and when it is done well it is quite appropriate to steps 5 and 6. The solutions for each project are unique and can only be found when the challenges are accepted. Without resistance there is no freedom.

Nevertheless Fritz talks about the path of least resistance, he compares it with mountain tracks that have been built over the years by animals, they are often the easiest way to the summit. I think there is wisdom in these tracks. The stones, the slopes, the rivers, the plants and all other obstacles, show the direction, they are like route indicators.

Often some refinement is needed to get further in this stage, to reach deeper layers and to get rid of old habits, these being the old forms that Beuys talks about. It is the work that has to be done. Thoughts have to become clear. Decisions have to be taken. A lot of searching has to be done, also studying and schooling. The fantasy has to clarify. A glimpse of the core of what has to be brought is seen.

Often this stage is reached too quickly; there is a premature jump from stage 1 to 3 because these two stages are closely related with each other, moving in what was called a horizontal dimension. We live in a very horizontal time that is mirrored in our modern communication systems, in media and multi media. The vertical 'time' dimension is threatened nowadays, time is money and has to be bought.

Step 3 leads to 4, the top of the mountain. It really can be compared with a mountain trip.

4. Individualising.

Image 1: the flower is the plants most vulnerable, most radiating and dissolving; the most admired and loved part. It is as if an absent complementary element is needed for it to evolve further.

Image 2: tightrope walker.

Life process: "absondern" (taking apart).

We will describe this phase in fragments because it is not really possible to describe it fully.

"An art piece is borne. It went through a zero point, a point I am naked. I myself, facing the world, being prepared to carry a part of it, courageous and modest. That's how new impulses can be born."

"The vision, which we want, becomes an entity." (Fritz, Robert)

“It is as if the composer is led to the result by the vision of the inner eye. Many creators give expression to this feeling of being caught, and worship their own creations. The vision of the inner eye sees what is not there yet; it reaches beyond existing conditions to describe things that were never there before. It is really a bewildering human skill that surpasses the present and the past to design something from the unknown that didn't exist before.” (Fritz)

“More and more I get inspired and do the right deeds in the right moment. I find myself in my centre and at the same time in the world. That's the occurring encounter, a self-encounter as well as an encounter with the essence of my project. For the first time a new impulse is meeting itself in the world through me starting a fertilizing process. I mediate conscious.”

“Through the purifying of the soul a spark of energy can jump to the higher self because bound forces are freed. There is an opening, a wave of warmth, an idea, a new insight; it is the encounter with the content, with the other side. The new is born. A part of the future appears and uncovers a part of the past. The past and the future meet in the present. This needs an inner balance, a moment of peace, of silence. It is a moment on a threshold.

Of course there can be anxiousness in this vacuum. Often it is experienced as a crisis through shedding old elements of our being.”

“Questions that arise here.

- Who am I? What do I want? What is my biography? Are occurrences coincidences and are there laws ruling these coincidences?
- What is encounter and self-encounter? How does it happen when we experience breakthroughs, moments of light or warmth, in moments of suffering?
- How do we develop imagination, inspiration and intuition? What is the difference between unconsciousness and consciousness, between instinct and intuition?
- What is synchronism, the coherence between what happens in different places in different moments, between what happens in my inner being and the outer world?

Until now the process moved from the outer to the inner world. We started with perception and arrived at our 'Self'. The core of the impulse we started moved from unknown unconscious spheres to conscious clarity. From now on the new impulse will have to become outwardly visible. It will have to be translated, unwrapped, given back as a contribution for others to use so it can live further.

5. Expression

Image: a whole world of animals, wind and space are related to the process of fertilisation that can never be done by one flower alone.

Life process: maintaining.

Being inspired, self-expression, expressing what lives in one. There is a difference between talking and saying something. One can talk the whole day without saying anything. Saying something means there is a content that wants to be expressed, to

be uttered. My fantasy is fed with the pictures that serve my quest. A musician can play music as a habit or he can play it while he is inspired. Without being inspired a composer can't write music. An artist who is not inspired is no artist although he can produce things. An inspired actor 'is' the role and doesn't just play it. There is identification, an experience.

This kind of expression becomes curative, rejuvenating and old hardened forms are renewed. A new healing dynamic comes into being. It is a mercurial principle. Old abundant forms are set into motion. Beuys calls it: "transforming old forms into new life-creating, soul and spirit supporting shapes". The healing first finds place in our self, later it takes place in our environment.

Here the difference has to be mentioned between free fantasy and real fantasy, the latter is always related with reality, it serves as an instrument to find the truth, whereas free fantasy is leading away from reality and belongs rather to step 2.

In this stage an artist would probably make sketches or models so as not to lose his images, he will search viable possibilities for them.

6. Shape

Image: fruit formation. A new shape is created from a new impulse.

Life process: growth.

The rejuvenated (healed) substance finds a new order according to newfound inner principles. So a new organic life-creating whole comes into being. Without this new order the healed would fall back into its old patterns. Order would become dogmatic if it is not permanently nourished with new, younger substance. Older people miss the force of youth whereas the young miss the force of wisdom. That is what happens here. Newborn inspiration searches experienced form and order. It searches cosmic law to be able to function. Young substance is penetrated by wisdom.

People can walk a long way to gather knowledge, if they are not prepared to be confronted with basic substance, like daily life, they become dogmatic, because the knowledge they bring does not stay relevant. To realise the new we have to carry a part of the world with us.

If an artist wants to realise an artwork that 'works' he will be confronted with substance penetrated by the laws of shape. Shape is a living whole. The different parts of it react to each other. The whole is more than the total of the parts. Good art is real, it is more than the incorporation of an idea, it is alive and creates life.

Shape is realised by an encounter between new life (warmth, wisdom and force) and the world, life is bound to create shape. The inspired is written down in life forces.

The shapes live further alone. The opposite happens as in step 2 where the life force is freed, here it is bound again.

7. Finishing

Image: ripening and sowing. The ripened fruits contain the seeds, the most contracted concentrated element the plant brings forth. It is given back to where it came from, to the earth.

Life process: reproduction.

The idea found its shape in something that can live further and enrich the earth. Idea and form penetrate each other thus making the whole independent from its creator. It

is like a seed leaving the plant carrying in it the idea of a new plant waiting for the ideal moment to germinate. Something dies as a sacrifice, so the new created shape can live further, to serve the evolution of the earth and the human being.

All the necessary steps have to be undertaken to fulfil this process. The seed can be held too long and it will rot, or it can be sown too fast when it is not yet fertile.

There is a reversal from the first step where the essence of a question, of a discrepancy, of a need is perceived. This essence found a new shape and is released, given back to the earth. Evolution progressed thanks to the work that has been done. He who did the work finished a step in his own evolution.

It is very easy to see how each artwork has its own biography and its own being after it is released by the artist. Some pieces travel around the world, others break and vanish, some find a beautiful place in a nice garden. Each work has a mission to fulfil as a terminal step to fulfil the process.

The process can be split into 7 parts, but it can also be simplified further by reducing it into three steps: initiation, forming and fulfilling. Other terms also might be used. It is not important how many steps there are, what matters is what happens on the way, where does it go further? Where does it get stuck and why? I think the steps mentioned above are very fundamental and deeply connected with life itself. They are not inventions, but experiences.

Attachment

Research for general artistic exercises that support the life processes and the creative process.

A lot of exercises grew out of this research that also serve the life processes as they are described by Coenraad Van Houten. The next part shows the results of research on that matter.

This practical research has as aim the development of artistic exercises that free forces in the vital body to serve the creative process. They are meant to trace resistances in our vital body and to overcome them.

The exercises go into the seven life processes: breathing, warming, nourishing, individualising, maintaining, growing and reproduction.

These exercises have to be practised over a longer period so that resistances or blockages are really resolved.

Essential in developing art-exercises is the integrated function they have in the program. They have to fit in the aim, in the rhythm and in the effects of the different parts of the program.

Breathing / observation (balance between self perception and perception of the outer world)

The breathing process is seen as a breathing through the senses, the taking in of impulses and the answering of them from inside.

Resistances: no contact with reality, losing devotion (dedication), fixed (photographic) attentiveness, going into concepts, prejudgement.

The aim of the exercises is learning to observe with the HEART, because it is in the heart that perceiving and dedication meet each other. Here one can move towards the object, but also allow it to come into itself.

In a book by Betty Edwards the subject is handled quite thoroughly. She makes a comparison between the two halves of the brain. One half is more focused on the outer world whilst the other half is focused on the inside. She developed a number of drawing exercises to develop a co-operation between the two brain hemispheres.

- Drawing (starting from the line, the surface, the movement, the composition or the form)
- Drawing or modelling from memory (by heart)
- Drawing left-handed
- Drawing without looking
- Copying by drawing or modelling
- Transforming the observed to another form (e.g. from a photo to modelled form)
- Modelling or drawing only the main lines of the observed

Warming / getting connected (balance between forming and letting oneself go)

Warming up is a condition in which the ego can get connected with the body. It causes an inner movement in the life forces so that these forces are freed allowing one to dedicate oneself to something.

Resistances: habits, fear to live and enjoy, not being able to play, not having coped with emotions, becoming hardened.

Artistic exercises supporting this life process aim to prepare a warm situation so that the person can more easily connect with an object. Examples of warm form elements are the sphere (in modelling), the surface (in modelling, painting and drawing) and the atmosphere (in drawing and painting). These form elements already carry the warmth in them so it gets easier to dive into the object and to come into movement. The study of young life in the plant world (seeds and germ structures) has the same effect; here life is manifesting itself in a pure form. Life in its pure form is condensed sun force or warmed substance. Life is moving between the earth and the sun, between cold and warmth.

- Moving exercises that go outwards from the atmosphere, the surface or the sphere
- Modelling of a moving surface
- Modelling blind
- Dynamically drawing
- Drawing out from the surface
- Drawing with a flat pencil, chalk
- Wet on wet painting
- Studying of growth processes: drawing a growing plant in its different stages
- Studying of water processes (Schwenk)

Nourishing / digesting (the balance between empathizing and working)

Substances (in a very differentiated form) are digested in such a way that they nourish our body. So digested information sets life forces free so that the soul, our fantasy, our thoughts and our deeds are enlivened and the creative process is nourished.

Resistances: patterns of thought, patterns of the will, undigested emotions, fixed imagination, compulsiveness, death theories.

The exercises have to stimulate the digestion process and feed the soul in this way. They should become much more concrete than in the previous life process. One can go directly into the form here. We will have to work with the deeper laws of form. By freeing the archaic forces on which form is based, the soul can be nourished. E.g. forces which are set free when two polar elements meet each other in a powerful and harmonious way, or forces which are set free by expressing the essential gesture of a moving animal. Essence means the archetypal primary force of a form. When doing these exercises it is important to go through the former stages so participants do not fall back into their old patterns. The middle has to be cared for.

At this stage animal forms can prove very rewarding to work with, one can use them to go through movement and to express their archetypal form.

- Form exercises: how do different sorts of form work (e.g. the platonic bodies)
- Playing with form and composition (Bauhaus)
- Studying opposite forces, their balance and their connection
- Studying the human and the animal skeleton
- Studying animals to learn to distinguish the essential from the inessential
- Studying human movement to get more insight in oneself.

Individualising (an inner balance between the own centre and the periphery).

Individualising can only take place when we create an open space in order to free a NOW moment. In this space the ego can manifest itself. It is a kind of zero point. Stirb und werde.

Resistances: existential fears, ego blockages, too much or not enough self-confidence, feeling guilty.

To work on the resistances we have to create a space with art exercises so the ego can better incarnate, there has to be an open space for free expression. Resistances can push one over ones limits both inwardly and outwardly without disturbing the inner balance. Self-expression and free choice has to stand central in these exercises. The final aim is to develop the free will.

- Free expression
- Working free in stone, wood, clay, colours...
- Discover ones own way of working by working together with others
- Exercises on finding a balance between different elements
- Exercises to discover inner and outer limitations
- Exercises to develop courage (to transform outer limits)
- Meditation exercises (to transform inner limits)
- Studying artist biographies to filter out the most individual
- Studying the human portrait to experience how the individual expresses itself into the form.

Maintaining / practicing / expression (balance between impression and expression)

To maintain something the image of the ideal must stand central, without this image we can not know how to maintain it. If the ideal balance is disturbed, the organism has to react immediately in an adequate way.

Exercising also means that we have to invent exercises and this asks imagination. The inner image of what we want to reach is standing central in order to develop exercises. If we really went through the individual stage of self-knowledge, this image will free enough energy in ourselves to raise the right means to express it.

Resistances: immovability, too movable, lack of fantasy, uncontrolled fantasy, a weak will, impulsivity.

The exercises are focused on the maintaining and the applying of the new ideas, which started to grow over the stage of self-knowledge. They are directed in a varied way in the expression of new individual impulses. This happens through the development of an exact fantasy towards the inside (a fantasy that finds answers on the needs of the body, the needs of the learning process) and through the development of a large scope of expression forms towards the outside. This is a very creative phase.

- Expression exercises (impressionism and expressionism) with the accent on exact fantasy, not on free fantasy
- Transformation of inner images in form and colour e.g. on the basis of a story or a theme
- Visualisation exercises to school the fantasy
- Translation exercises: from a sculpture to a picture or the other way around or from a form to music...
- Practising the exact fantasy by looking back on works to evaluate what is really expressed
- Studying inner qualities and expressing these

Growth, shape (balance between substance and laws of living form)

The living creature is inextricably linked to the shape that it is becoming. The plant is already present in the seed, but the warmth of the sun must awaken it in order to grow. The substantial side is hidden in the seed; the formal side is hidden in the warmth. We could say that a plant is growing toward its form through different stages. The form is present as a blueprint in the environment. The shape is a living whole where form and substance cover each other entirely in a living way. To shape means: creating with substance according to the laws of form and life.

Resistances: too few form forces, rampant form forces.

- Metamorphosis exercises by drawing, painting and modelling
- Studying from everything which grows towards a form
- Embryology by drawing and modelling
- Artistic exercises on the organs
- Art history as a metamorphosis
- Rhythmic exercises by drawing (Formzeichnen)

Reproduction / creating (a balance between keeping and sacrificing)

By creating we manifest ourselves with our (new) faculties. A new relationship with the world is growing and with ones self. The world accepted our faculties and allows

us to work with them. The freed energy can be used outwardly to serve the world and inwardly to develop new questions.

Resistances: being afraid to show oneself, social patterns, no confidence in the environment or in oneself, giving everything away, keeping things for oneself.

Exercises have to be focused on the products of the others and on the review of the self produced products.

- Enjoying art
- Visiting exhibitions and art-manifestations
- Exhibiting own work, e.g. music, paintings
- Evaluation of own products
- Reading other authors

Epilogue

This was a short written report on the research I have been doing for the last 5 years. It is a summary and it contains many new questions and items for further research. The text is, however, already useful and the guidelines for exercises can be applied. I would be very happy to receive feedback and comments on the text in order that I may continue this work. It is my wish to understand further the fundamentals of the creative process so that many more people can work with them and thus apply the statement of Joseph Beuys. "Everybody is an Artist"