

Opening Talk  
35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Tamalpa Institute  
October 19, 2013  
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The banner for our 35th anniversary year is honoring the past, celebrating the present and seeding the future. I would like to begin by honoring the past, and in doing so I want to thank Larry Halprin for creating the magnificent site of the Mountain Home Studio and deck. This place has served as inspiration and refuge for the Halprin family, for countless artists, dancers, designers, psychologists and students from around the world since 1952. It has been an incubator and a stage upon which innovative work and transformative experiences have unfolded- and it has been the physical site of much of Tamalpa Institutes work since 1978.

As much as our history is about a body of work and a school - our history and work is seeded by Anna and Larry Halprin - by their early inspirations, endeavors and discoveries ~ so the story of Tamalpa Institute begins with the story of a young, passionate, incredibly talented and brilliant young couple determined to do great things in the world. They arrived here from the East Coast at the tail end of WW II when Larry Halprin landed in the port of San Francisco Bay on his damaged destroyer for repairs. He fell in love with the spirit of the place. While waiting to re-deploy, the war ended, and he sent word to Anna to come out. Recovering from the trauma of war, breaking free of conventions, supported by what looked, smelled and felt like a new world, where urban life and nature coexisted side by side, they began their family and their work. They transported inspiration drawn from Bauhaus studies at Harvard, from Larry's life - long connection to Israel and the dream of a utopian land-based society, and Anna who had an early childhood calling to dance, from her mentor Margaret H'Doubler, the dancer Frances Boaz, and her own early experience as a teacher of children's dance.

**1950's** ~ In 1952 Lawrence Halprin built the dance deck and studio, surrounded by these old growth redwood trees, at the base of Mt. Tamalpais for his wife Anna to begin her new dance movement. She would, over the decades, become recognized as one of the seminal dancers of our times. From earliest childhood, my sister Rana and I danced here daily with our mother and her company on the deck, in the studio, on the land, at Sea Ranch, and in theaters around the world.

**1960's**~ Anna opened the Dancer's Workshop Studio in San Francisco where

she continued developing her performance works. She had evolved a workshop approach and a performance company centered in integrative dance, based on the notion of non-stylized movement drawing upon the inner and emotional life of the dancer – it was process oriented and embodied research, experimentation, study and performance – it was a multimedia/ cross pollinating laboratory that drew into collaboration with the Halprins and their work, many of the great innovators, psychologists, poets, artists and designers of those times, among them Lamont Young, Meredith Monk, Yvonne Rainer, Simone Forte ~ musicians John Cage, Terry Riley, Morton Subotnik, the sculptor Charles Ross and visual artist Bruce Connor, the great beat generation poet Michael McClure, Alan Kapro of the 'Happenings' movement, Merce Cunningham, Odetta and Butoh dancer Min Tanaka all performed on the dance deck ~ and the founder of gestalt therapy, Fritz Perls, who spent years working with the original Dancers' Workshop and performing group. Later senior student of Jung, Joseph Henderson, came to dialogue with us around the Self Portrait Process we were developing. It was during this phase that Anna coined her approach a Life/Art Process.

In parallel Larry was developing a unique approach to urban and residential design using nature as his principle source – but also deeply informed by Anna's work with dance and environmental motion. Each in their own fields was searching for an organic, non-formalized, natural way of expressing and living. One, which would put people into contact with their own bodies, imaginations, feelings and habitat. Out of their collaborations Larry crafted a remarkable model which he coined Collective Creativity and the RSVP cycles – a system that is a centerpiece of our work and education at Tamalpa.

In the late 1960's and into the 70's, Anna began working with a group of young African Americans from Studio Watts in response to the LA riots, addressing racial discrimination. This would continue well into the 70's through her development of an outreach program and performance group devoted to working with themes having to do with multi-culturism and social justice. In response to Anna's own challenge facing cancer, the onset of the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco, and a desire to confront domestic and community violence, we began our legacy with social engagement and the use of our work as a healing art.

**1970's** ~ Throughout the 70's students from diverse backgrounds began to come from around the world to join and learn from the experiments, explorations and living research. Like three great circles within the old growth

redwood trees of Mountain Home Studio, the work of Anna, Larry and Fritz Perls, and their related discoveries and innovations in the intersections between dance, environment and therapy, grew to become ever more central to the evolution of the work. I was particularly influenced and inspired by these intersections between dance, environment and therapy, and felt something more could be developed and articulated out of it.

Moved by a compelling desire and need to ground and stabilize in the work both artistically and psychologically, in 1978 I proposed to Anna that we make a change in direction from Dancers' Workshop. For one thing it seemed to me that if we were going to insist that our approach to Integrative Dance was for everyone not only trained dancers, and if we were going to continue to try attracting people of all interests and backgrounds to our school, then we ought to come up with a new name.

It also seemed to me that what was happening both at the Halprin studio and also in the culture around us had to do with a search for new systems that were rooted in embodiment and creativity. The question became could we shift from boundary breaking provocation, experimentation and catharsis oriented expression to articulate a strong anatomy of practice with a well developed rationale? Could we create a coherent repeatable methodology but that would remain process oriented, open to change, and accessible to a diversity of people and styles? I was particularly interested in relating our work to an embodied psychology based in the arts and creativity. After some debate, I convinced her.

**1980's through 90's** ~ The work at the institute focused us even further on our search for an embodied anatomy of practice informed by a philosophy, theory and methods. Integrating and systematizing 25 years of development, bridging the fields of movement/dance, somatics and psychology – to bind together healing, creativity and learning, bridging personal and collective experiences with performance, moving from work-shopping formats into an ever increasing commitment to train others who would then become practitioners and ambassadors in their own right, in their own communities and countries. In 1992 I assumed directorship of the institute. We began to focus on organizational networking and substantiating the education and work of our students in the world.

### **Celebrating the Present:**

Formed out of this rich and deeply rooted history, for the past 35 years our focus

has been on the development of an innovative and comprehensive training in the Life/Art Process - our vision, research, pedagogy is articulated and shared in stage work, educational centers, hospitals, studios, therapy rooms, in nature and in cities, in organizations and grass roots community gatherings, in thesis work and in books.

**2000's** ~ The development of a formalized leadership training program empowered our students even further, in becoming artists, practitioners and embodied scholars in their own right, in their own communities and countries, interconnected in a web of shared and well defined approach and practice. Alliances with professional associations and universities support our approach to substantiated embodied scholarship. Our students are now able to achieve advanced degrees in Tamalpa partnership with Meridian University, the European Graduate School, International Somatic Therapy, and International Expressive Arts Therapy associations.

Building bridges and international branches, seeding the future of the Institute and the work through the creative endeavors of all who have studied and taught here; we have spiraled deeply inward and extended outward across the globe.

**Acknowledging** the waves ~ Immense appreciation is extended to the committed and talented waves of teachers who have been part of our school and its work:

The first waves of teachers have left lasting imprints on the work, the institute and on our student body. Norma Leistiko G. Hoffman Soto, Alice Rutkowski, Ken Otter, Jamie McHugh were students from the earliest years and went on to become significant collaborators in the work as artists and as educators.

A new generation of teachers studied with us in the 80's and 90's and now contribute in their own right: Adriana Marchione, Taira Restar, and Joy Cosculluela. Now as we shape our present and future, the next generation of organizational leaders and teachers are contributing to the new wave: Maria Luisa Diaz de Leon Zuloaga , Rosario Sammartino and Dohee Lee.

**Seeding the future** ~ Our circles are expanding outward to the international branches we have opened in the past 4 years ~ Lian Wilson began this vision with me 6 years ago and now we have opened branches in the UK, South Korea, Germany, France and Latin America. Tamalpa has Alumni Practitioners around the world. We have renewed our legacy in the healing arts, through a new

branch, the ***Tamalpa Art Corps*** - training and supporting people to develop and implement Tamalpa movement/dance and art based programs focused on social justice and community service.

In the 35th year of Tamalpa Institute, we honor the originator of the work, Anna Halprin. We celebrate her earliest students who became collaborators, artistic fellows and teachers. We are so inspired by, and give thanks to, the countless courageous, talented, committed, brilliant students who have come to study and explore with us, who have embodied our work and made it their own as teachers, artists and therapists, and passed it on to others.

As I see how it has grown and developed, I feel cause for great celebration in the many accomplishments- as a school and as a body of work we have learned by doing it, by interacting with hundreds of students who have traveled here from around the world, it has reinvented itself changing with the changing world which we hope to serve - it has matured and while doing so reinvented itself so as to reflect the relevant issues and discoveries in related fields and in response to the changing evolving needs of the world we hope to serve.

***The roots are strong, fertile and deep. The trunk contains many circles now! The branches are alive and full of harvest.*** We are extending out into the world around us. We look to the future with hope and with intention that our Tamalpa work and community reaches all we hope to serve. We invite you to witness our dance and to dance with us, to honor, celebrate and help us plant seeds for the future of our Institute and its work