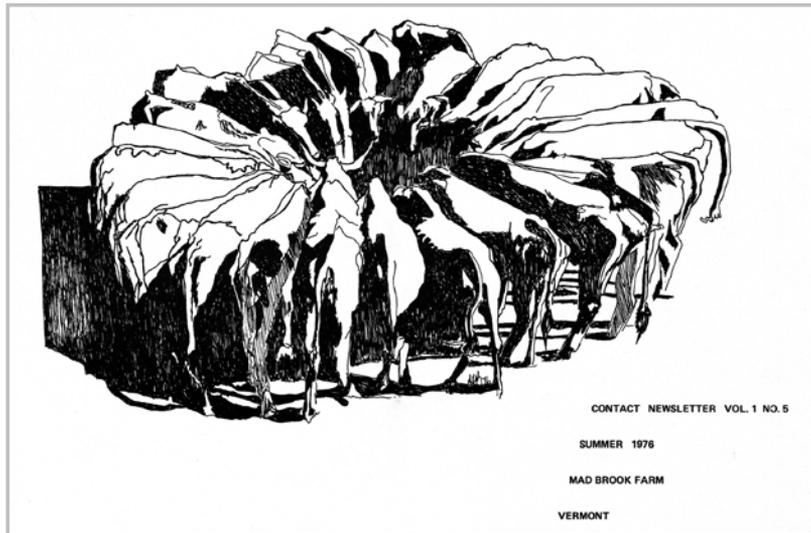


Editor Note



drawing © Ann Horton

Sensation as Portal: Worlds within worlds within words

Front and back covers of *Contact Newsletter*
Vol. 1 #5, summer 1976.

I took a dive into Continuum for Emilie Conrad (and for myself!) during the 3 Day Dive in August that Emilie, before she died, requested that her Continuum community do in lieu of a funeral or memorial (many of which also took place). Emilie died on 4.14.14 after a lifetime of passionate, visionary pursuit of and engagement with the pulse of life as it lives in the tissues and movements of our bodies.

Ellen Cohen, my dear friend from college days at Oberlin, has been involved with Emilie and Continuum for 20 years, and we met in Northampton at the end of August to sort through the deepening pile of materials she was gathering for the small tribute to Emilie and Continuum that we've offered in this issue of *CQ* (talk about diving, immersion, flood, fascination).

I was eager to experience this movement work/world directly—all the better to help share it with *CQ* readers. Plus, I wanted to do it, learn about it from the inside.

First step, lying down, to settle body/mind into an open, relaxed, engaged *baseline* state. Next, Ellen showed me the classic Hu breath, one of many used to get the fluids in the body vibrating. After doing this for quite a while, moving very slowly, I came to rest, as instructed, in open attention. *Open attention*—awake, relaxed, present, noticing sensation, and following the openings to move that I felt inviting me, including ones so small I could hardly tell if I was outwardly moving at all. This felt almost fast but took at least an hour.

The next day's entry point into the Continuum experience was an imperceptibly slow rotation of one leg, then the other, in its thigh socket while lying supine. I n w a r d d d d d , then o u u t t t t w a r d d . So arduous! And so utterly simple. Each tiny effort felt HUGE. How long this took, I can't tell you, but it felt like I was climbing Mt. Everest.

After this interminable, microscopically rigorous, and amusingly difficult-to-perceive movement journey, I was instructed to rest again in open attention and follow any movement my body wanted to make. More than an hour on the clock went by (which again felt short) as I experienced a huge openness of time. No external pressure, only the arising of a deep internal movement in extremely slow tides, swells, flows, redirections, sinking, pausing, extending... through my tissues, in an infinite morphing of time and perceived body-shape. It felt very pleasant. Spacious. Embodied. Open—not only to movement direction but also to images, sensations, insights.

This wasn't *about* anything, wasn't *for* anything; it was just a feeling of engagement, pleasure, and curiosity throughout my body tissues, one that seemed to connect "me" to an experience of the body as part of a much bigger system of life and movement and communication than just my immediate "civilization," however I defined that.

In February 2015, it will be 40 years since the first ReUnion CI tour group (Steve Paxton, Nita Little, Curt Siddall, and me, with Lisa Nelson videotaping) and my fellow communitarian, Koriel, sat in the big open room of the Stinson Beach, California, gay men's commune where I was living, and we pushed aside the half-signed copyrighting papers for Contact Improvisation and decided to write letters to each other instead. A communitarian's access to a free copy machine helped, as did monies from the short-lived Contact Fund into which the handful of folks involved with CI at that time agreed to give ten percent of CI earnings. And thus, *Contact Newsletter* began.

The watering hole was a frequent image for the mag in those early years—a place where people came together to feed, to slake a thirst to connect to others working in their microfield, to share their stories and discoveries.

Has anything changed since then? Well, definitely, and well, no. Fluidly speaking, *CQ* is no longer just a watering hole but a delta, a whirlpool, an eddy of overlapping circles of practice and concern within our contemporary mindbody-conscious dance and movement world. Whirls of worlds.

I humbly and gratefully accepted my Continuum experience as a grain of sand in a vast realm of possible experiences and in no way *the* experience of Continuum. Just mine on those days. But it did offer me a valuable base for reading and resonating with the materials that were being sent to honor Emilie in our tribute. Which made me wonder: What's the difference between reading about something you've experienced and being exposed to something that you're opening yourself to for the first time through that exposure? Can words and images actually convey movement worlds?

I believe they can.

Nancy Stark Smith