

# NEW LANDINGS: SHARING TIME TUBABA, INDONESIA



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# New Landings: Earth Time As a Source For Art Creation

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Firstly, I would like to acknowledge this land we are on, the generations of people cross-fertilizing with each other here, and the visionary nature of Tubaba. What is taking place in this region of Sumatra expands beyond the limitations of contemporary cultural beliefs into poetics - the poetic creativity of living as connected to source.

This talk is in honor of beloved friend and mentor, Suprpto Suryodarmo (Prpto). I experience his influence in most every moment, feel the respect and care so many of us have for him having been touched by his open presence and profound creations. I want to thank the Bupati Umar Ahmed, all of the *Sharing Time* committee, Diane Butler, and especially Prpto for the invitation. I thank all of you for being here, since we are together creating a common field.

I am here as choreographer and cultural instigator from the United States. Although I indeed write, the main source and context for my research is through practice, through making art, and in the action of cultural life. My work is highly influenced by years of practice in Suprpto Suryodarmo's *Amerta* Movement. In this talk, I hope to give a picture of some ways art





practice can interact with our inherent connection with the earth, and how art can change our relationship to culture, creation, and time.

Through Amerta Movement we experience the changing and changing of time and place. In dance and the movement arts, movement can be passed down many ways, through lineages, or created by a choreographer in the conditions of a particular place and time. In Amerta, the movement is free; we each sense and attune to our surroundings and move in receptivity of the moment. These are all different ways of enacting time in dialogue.

As many of you know, much of American culture is heterogenous. And even so, dominant culture induces segmentation of thinking, disconnected from the organism and natural flow of time and place. Through the increasing revelations of the impacts of supremacy in the U.S. land upon which our society was formed, many of my colleagues and friends are asking ourselves, how do we decolonize our practices? How do we recover traditional practices with respect for the indigenous population on whose land we have settled, and how can creative practice offer new ways of thinking, imagining the world we seek to create? How can we be a part of art creation that rather than appropriating from traditional forms is open to the sharing and non-violence that can happen through respect and intercultural practice? From positions of relative privilege, how can we find ways to really receive our position and use it towards more faceted and attuned living? So along with colleagues, we are working to recover and discover the ways to feel the relationship with the whole, through art, movement, somatics, research, exploration. We are forming ways to reimagine traditional fields such as science and philosophy, inclusive and grounded in embodied life.

In Amerta, we relax within ourselves so we receive and offer where we are - with all present. Like the megalithic structures, these breathing stones placed to be in relation to earth, sky, and all time, we too feel these relations, in constellation. With the creative energy of art, we can move in dynamic arrangement. In a sense, we can embody being human megaliths, in the garden of so many elements - stone, creatures, music, wind.....

As a movement artist, I consistently ask how I can contribute to culture, engaged in transformation of daily life. I work with the intellect - with societal and ecological perspectives, yet rooted in the sensorial, sensual experience of





the current moment. How do these poles of experience actually dance with one another, and how are they inherently facets of a whole being?

I use the term ***New Landings*** as a way to talk about artistic possibilities. How deepening our understandings of the the many aspects of society, culture, nature, and movement can help us find ***New Landings*** in our practices with humility, accountability, creativity, and reciprocity.

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My art work over the years has had several streams, mainly in the fields as a dialoguer, doing community organizing, making art, organizing large-scale embodied research and cultural projects. For one example of my work, I co-founded a festival for ecology and arts called ***seeds (Somatic Experiments in Earth, Dance, and Science)***, bringing together artists, scientists, spiritual leaders, and culture practitioners to grow in ecological experimentation.

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Starting in 2014, I began a project called *Cave Forms*. Mara Poliak, Frances Rosario and I have danced in *Cave Forms* over the years. In the project, we explored *Earth Time*, by moving and being still in actual caves and caves we made out of cloth. Caves offered a place to slow down, to connect to all the people who have spent time in caves for time immemorial. We could feel the feedback of the environment, and dance with the sensation of experience, and from that slow and conscious place, design. It was like living sculpture. As Americans, slowing down is a necessity for our capacity to evolve in relation. Through the art project, we found that cave dancing helped us nourish life, that to slow down provided a rich base from which much creativity could grow, and that being in caves connected us more deeply to our environment. Being in the cave supported *Body Time*, and then came the understanding that being in relation with others was like a channel, and we could constellate together and with the stars. It was a project that connected Earth, Human, and Sky. So we worked with micro- and macro- through dance, in nature, and





in the theater. We were accessing dance as a *Stone Time*. And we were finding the genius of each place.



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*All the past made this present, and in fact is the future.  
We are connected to all time, and through all time.  
The past present and future are inextricably linked.*

Through movement, through being with the place of megalithic structures, I have found myself slowing down and feeling in to the possibilities of communication across vast fields of experience. I slow down to feel the unique details and many atmospheres of a place. And as artist, this





experience is fertile for creation for the future of our planet. By expanding our ideas about time, place, and connectivity, we can create the world we wish to seek. Human, nature, all. These activities can change the patterns of our being.

*What is Stone Time?*

*And what is the rhythm of Earth Time?*

*What are the actual sensations of feeling the earth moving?*

*What are the many qualities of stillness, and what happens to a person who makes time for breathing?*

*How does one's perception of time shift in order to sense the breathing of stones, and how do these changes change the surroundings?*

*This is the question about how all facets of life effect one another.*

*We are in the unfolding of time*

*We are with the changing and changing.*

*We can find ourselves in Time*

*When we are in Time, relaxing, we can tune, attune.*

*We can experience the richness, feel the patterning, relations, the forming, and the organic nature of living.*

*The pulsing of Life, itself*

*From the smallest creature to the whole planet*

*From an intimate experience to the vast resonances of the flapping of a butterfly's wings on the other side of the globe*

*We are in creative evolution*

*In dialogue*

My thinking grows through dialogue. We are multitudes. We are literally covered and filled with millions of organisms in our biome, and are in reciprocity with all we breathe. As Prapto says, "with the breathing of life in living communication." Not many could express better the dimensionality of life itself than Prapto.

Since our ideas have so much overlapping, I would like to include some writing from Sandra Reeve, fellow Amerta practitioner and friend from the U.K. - we have been in touch and she wished she could have joined in this





event, as her work on the *Ecological Body* would have brought a useful perspective. She states that there are two types of time explored in biology, with a view to the future: present and evolutionary. She asks: what is the *Ecology of Time*, and what are the many times experienced through movement art - it feels resonant with my thinking- she makes this list, and suggests we can add to it:

“TIMES of TIME – please add and share!

*Synchronic /Static time – successive moments -product*

*Diachronic/Evolving time – duration of time - process*

*Organisation time*

*Organism time*

*Nature time*

*Chronos – clock time/ on time/ 'objective' time*

*Kairos = 'subjective' time*

*Academic time*

*Apprentice time*

*Embodied time*

*Mind time*

*Media time*

*Incorporated time*

*Inscribed time*

*Individual time*

*Group time*

*God time*

*Creative time*

*Reflective time*

*Present time*

*Evolutionary time*

*Proximal time*

*Ultimate time*

*Developmental time*

*Cyclical time”*

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How to translate these experiences of art into a proposition for Tubaba?

Another aspect of the caving process that is important to mention here is something resonant with the breadth of the project of Tubaba. Because our activities were earth-based, unlike much dance in the US, the practices were magnetic, and people joined, and with the perspective of inclusivity and porousness, a garden sense, we created exuberant spaces for many to participate.





A place has its own kind of genius, and to slow down and sense offers the possibility to learn from that place, to be in dialogue. Art creation is a context in which one can explore and learn from the unique nature of a place. Many disciplines have their own methods for research, and in movement art making, our research is done through curiosity, practice, sensing, and expression. We are reading our environments and translating what we experience into a new form, so we are forming with our whole body-being.

My hope is that the poetic invitation of Tubaba wakes up the culture here, supports the maintenance of the aspects of traditional culture that are vibrant, that Tubaba wakes up earlier dreams as well as the unknown, and that what grows here can expand beyond what is yet imagined. May this place create a quality of exuberance that can open up new notions of time and place, and from that creative pulsing of life, create ***New Landings*** for the future.

