



Somatics Living Lineage – generative somatics and Strozzi Institute

Living Lineage

- We hold this lineage as alive, growing and evolving. Our commitment is to practice and use it for deep personal, community and systemic transformation; as an accountable path for liberation.
- We acknowledge that it has developed in a context of colonization, slavery, white supremacy, patriarchy, global capitalism and class oppression, and systemic inequity. These histories and forces are part of the lineage, our lives and our current historical moment.
- We acknowledge that there have been contributions and innovations from many people along the way. These are also part of the lineage.
- Our commitment is to discover and hold the lineage's contradictions complexly and honestly, to use this work toward personal and systemic transformation and to continue this discovery. We see this as a work in progress.

Cultural Appropriation

Cultural appropriation is the adoption of some specific elements of one culture by a different cultural group. It can include the introduction of forms of dress or personal adornment, music and art, religion, language, healing, ritual or social practices. Once removed from their indigenous cultural contexts, these elements may take on meanings that are significantly divergent from or less nuanced than those they originally held.

Most often the dominant culture uses these practices for their own ends without acknowledging, crediting, compensating, or serving the indigenous culture from where they originated. Cultural appropriation commodifies a culture, practice or people without serving those same peoples. The dominant culture gains (monetarily and culturally) from the use and promotion of the art and practice while the history, context and meaning of the practice is most often lost.

Cultural appropriation has been and continues to be a practice that destroys cultures, especially when used for colonization, gentrification, and global capitalism.

Cultural Exchange and Cultural Appropriation

Throughout history, diverse human cultures have come into contact with each other to share practices, world views, and to exchange goods and ideas. Cultural practices from one group often become integrated into another.

The key difference between cultural mixing and cultural appropriation is systemic power--meaning domination and means of exchange (economy, global capitalism). In sorting out the overlapping distinctions, ask:

- Who “owns” the cultural materials? Is ownership even a concept that came with the cultural orientation?
- Who is benefiting from it? Who is making money off of it?
- Is the originating culture respected, compensated, and supported?
- Toward what mission or vision are the practices being used?
- Is it removed from its original context? Is the context and history lost?

Acknowledgement

Many people contributed to the interviews, research, and writing that went into this lineage power point.

Initially, the interviews, research, and writing were done by Staci Haines, Vassi Kapali (Johri), and Elizabeth Ross. Lisa Thomas Adeyemo, Liu Hoi Man and Jennifer Ianiello were also a part of these initial conversations.

The process was deepened with Spenta Kandawalla, Nathan Shara, and participants in gs teacher training. This lineage was presented to many gs programs where further feedback was given. This is an ongoing learning process.

In this deck

In this deck you'll find more detail on some of the key influences that emerged into the lineage of somatics. Near the end, there is more information about Strozzi Institute and generative somatics, and their connections and differences.

If you have points you'd like to add, change, or suggest, please email us at:
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Somatics

- The term “Somatics” was coined in 1972 by Thomas Hannah
- Soma has a Greek root and means “The living organism or body in it’s wholeness.”
- This is an attempt to name and understand the human being as an integrated biological, psychological, social and energetic whole.
- This is a shift in paradigm from a Cartesian worldview

Somatics

Somatics: *The living organism in its wholeness*

“When we use the term “body” we use it in the somatic sense of the word, which from the ancient Greek means *the living body in its wholeness*. This is not the sleek, airbrushed body on magazine covers or the Cartesian notion of body as beast of burden that ferries a disembodied mind to its intellectual appointments. Nor is it the mechanical, physiological body of modern medicine or the religious formula of flesh as sin. The body, in the somatic sense, expresses our history, commitments, dignity, authenticity, identity, roles, moral strength, moods, and aspirations as a unique quality of aliveness we call the ‘self’. We cannot act or live in the world without the body, or the self in this sense.”

- Richard Strozzi-Heckler

Somatics Toward Liberation

Personal, collective, and systemic transformation

“Somatics is a holistic change theory that understands both personal and collective transformation from a radically different paradigm. Somatics understands both the individual and collective as a combination of biological, evolutionary, emotional and psychological aspects, shaped by social and historical norms and adaptive to a wide array of both resilient and oppressive forces. All of this gets embodied through both resilience and survival strategies, and social and cultural practices become “shapes” or embodied worldviews, habits, ways of relating, automatic actions and non-action. What we embody becomes familiar, “normal,” and habitual, even “feels” right...even when what we embody may not match up with our values or vision. Then, what we embody connects to our identity and how we see ourselves. (cont.)

Cont.

“To transform, to create sustainable change, we need to feel and perceive our individual and collective “old shapes.” We need to increase our awareness of the default shapes we have embodied. Then, we get to open or deconstruct these shapes, often healing and developing a much more substantial capacity through the opening. This somatic opening allows for new ways of acting, feeling, relating and knowing. It is the pragmatic process of deep transformation, shedding to change. Somatics then moves us toward embodying new ways of being and action that align our values, longings and actions. Often our social conditions and our family and community experiences do not teach us the embodied skills we need. This focus on developing embodied skills, whether it's centered accountability and liberatory use of power, building deeper trust through conflict, or the capacity to be with the unknown or love more deeply, is essential to sustainable change.”

What is a Politicized Somatics, gs, Staci K. Haines and Spenta Kandawalla

Somatic Lineage Foundations

Theoretical and Practice Basis of Somatics

Elsa Gindler, Wilhelm Reich M.D., Doris Breyer, Randolph Stone M.D., Dr. Ida Rolfe, Magda Prower and Moshé Feldenkrais Ph.D.

Aikido

Morihei Ueshiba

Meditation/ Paths of enlightenment

Charan Singh (India), Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche (Tibet)

Western Psychological Distinctions

Fritz Perls/ Gestalt Therapy, Lomi School, Jungian Psychology

Other Influences

Theoretical Basis of Language and Action

J.L. Austin, Ph.D., John Searle, Ph.D., Fernando Flores, Ph.D.

Fernando Flores, a Chilean linguist and philosopher, partnered with Richard Strozzi-Heckler in the 1980-90s bringing a deepened articulation of language as action that was integrated into the lineage (i.e. declarations, requests, offers, assessments, declines, etc.).

New Neuroscience Research

Bessel van der Kolk, M.D., Daniel Siegel, M.D., Candace Pert Ph. D., and more.

The last 30 years have shown radical growth in our understanding of neuroscience. Much of this research gives Western scientific grounding for why somatics works. It is also having a strong influence on the field of somatic psychology, bringing its own biases and questions of access.

Foundation: Elsa Gindler (1885-1961)

- Personal experience of recovering from an attack of tuberculosis (by concentrating breathing with her healthy lung and resting the diseased lung)
- Created whole school of bodywork in collaboration with Heinrich Jacoby based on “Arbeit am Menschen” which became Sensory Awareness
- Awarded “Righteous Among Nations” for using her approach to help those persecuted by the Nazi Regime
- Taught through Esalen Institute in the United States
- Her work and the work of her key students influenced: Wilhelm Reich, Fritz Perls, Erich Fromm and others.
- Lived and worked in Germany

Foundation: Wilhelm Reich M.D. (1897-1957)

- Contemporary of Freud and pupil of Elsa Gindler
- Known for Freudo-Marxism, “orgone” and theories on sexuality, and body psychotherapy
- Freud's talking cure wasn't effective on many. Claimed pathology is in the body. Body armor. Theories of sexual repression and “orgone” energy. Interested in social causes of neurosis
- Founded Socialist Association for Sexual Counseling and Research, wrote *The Sexual Revolution* and *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*. Very controversial in his field
- Member of the communist party until expelled in 1933. Fled Germany to Austria (1933) Scandinavia (1934) then U.S. (1939)
- Died in prison serving 2 yr. term for FDA violations with the orgone devices and literature. Considered subversive activities by FBI

Foundation: Ida Rolf, Ph.D.

(1896-1979)

- Biochemist and founder of Structural Integration (Rolfing)
- Holistic system of soft tissue manipulation and movement education that organized the whole body in gravity
- Left academic position for health and family problems (1927) continued studies in mathematics and atomic science
- Developed approach (1930) out of a number of sources including osteopathy and Feldenkrais techniques
- Lived and worked in the US, born in the Bronx, New York City

Foundation: Moshe Feldenkrais

(1904-1984)

- Founder of Feldenkrais Method. Improve human functioning by increasing self awareness through movement
- Doctor of science in engineering
- Strongly influenced by Jigoro Kano the founder of Judo and his life long martial arts practice
- Severe knee injury, refused surgery rehabilitated through somatic awareness and movement. Became base of the methodology
- Studied with Elsa Gindler, G.I. Gurdjieff and Matthias Alexander
- Taught throughout Europe, North America and Palestine/Israel
- Left the Ukraine for Palestine/Israel

Foundation: Dr. Randolph Stone (1890-1981)

- Founder of Polarity Therapy
- Initiated into Surat Shabd yoga, Sant Mat meditation tradition and member of Theosophy Society. Western doctor for Charan Singh for many years
- Osteopath (in the cranial field). Avid learner earning degrees in midwifery, massage, chiropractic and as a naturopath
- Studied acupuncture in the U.S. and China
- Studied Ayurvedic traditions in India, which is a central influence in his work
- Polarity Therapy: Central focus is moving energy for physical and emotional healing through touch, sound, nutrition. Polarity therapy terms taken from Chinese philosophy describing polarity and balancing forces of “yin and yang;” Indian and Chinese concepts of “prana” & ch’i
- Richard Strozzi-Heckler and Robert Hall, M.D. met him when he was 80, and studied with him until his death (in India)
- Emigrated from Austria to the U.S.

Foundation: Aikido, founded by Morihei Ueshiba (1880- 1969)

- Founder of Aikido. He is considered a national living treasure in Japan
- Goal was not to fight and defeat but to bring people together, individually and socially. “If you study for 6 months, you will have no enemies under heaven.” Philosophy and practice of harmony in the face of aggression
- Roots of Aikido in Aiki-jujutsu. First dojo 1927, Aikido named in 1942. WWII brought strong focus to resolving conflict in harmonious ways
- Follower of Oomoto, considered a new religion in Japan, founded by a woman (Deguchi Nao). This thought to have influenced his thought that Aikido be an “art of peace”
- He reported many awakening experiences that deeply shaped his form
- Aikido exists on six continents, with hundreds of thousands of practitioners
- Many aikido practitioners now bring the principles of “Aiki” into other forms of work without teaching Aikido in its full martial arts form
- Lived and practiced in Japan

Foundation: Charan Singh (1910-1989)

- Sant Satguru (spiritual master) from India. He became the fifth Satguru of the philosophical organization, Radha Soami Satsang Beas (RSSB)
- The RSSB philosophy, based on the teachings of mystics from all religions, has been headquartered at Dera Baba Jaimal Singh in northern India since 1891. Has other centers world wide
- Shabd meditation (sound current yoga meditation)
 - Concentration, visualization, and being (listening to the sound of the universal current)
- Enlightenment philosophy and practice
 - “Union of the Soul with the Essence of the Absolute Supreme Being”
 - Individual enlightenment focus
- Lived and taught primarily in India and traveled to the US and Europe

Foundation: Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche (1939-1987)

- Internationally renowned, and controversial, teacher of Tibetan Buddhism. Adherent of the *ri-me* ("nonsectarian") ecumenical movement within Tibetan Buddhism. Buddhist meditation master and holder of both the Kagyu and Nyingma lineages
- Followed the Dalai Lama who fled Tibet during the unsuccessful 1959 Tibetan uprising against the Chinese communists
- 1963 invited to study at Oxford (comparative religion), 1967 to Scotland to head meditation school which become the first Tibetan Buddhist monastery in the west, 1970 to United States, 1984 to Nova Scotia
- Originator of a radical re-presentation of Shambhala vision. Founder of Shambhala Meditation Centers (over 100 world wide) and Naropa University (Boulder, CO, first accredited Buddhist University-1974)
- Hired Allen Ginsberg to teach poetry and William Burroughs to teach literature at Naropa. Invited Robert Hall and Richard Strozzi-Heckler to start the Somatics program at Naropa University
- Vision of an actualized enlightened society

Foundation: LOMI School, Robert Hall, M.D. (1934-2019)

- Initially a surgeon, then a psychiatrist. Major in the US Army as a psychiatrist
- Studied with Fritz Perls, Randolph Stone, and Ida Rolf through the 1960s and 70s
- Student of Charan Singh in India and during U.S. visits
- Founded LOMI School with Richard Strozzi-Heckler, Alyssa Hall and Catherine Flaxman. Focus of holistic transformation and psychological healing through the body
- Was primarily a meditation and Gestalt teacher in the last years of his life
- Came out as gay in late 70's, in his 40's
- Lived primarily in California, and then with his husband in Mexico

Foundation: LOMI School, Strozzi Institute. Richard Strozzi-Heckler, Ph.D. (b 1944)

- Aikido sensei, 7th Dan (degree blackbelt) and awarded a Shihan (master teacher) through Hombu Dojo, Japan
- Began meditation with Charan Singh (1969-70) in India. Met Dr. Randolph Stone there, and studied with him until his death
- Studied with Moshe Feldenkrais, Magda Prower, and Doris Breyer and Reichian-based somatic work
- Ph.D. in mind-body integration and transformation
- Part of counterculture movement in the U.S. in late 60-70's
- Integrated principles and practices of Aikido with somatic awareness, practice, and somatic bodywork
- Took Somatic work from primarily focused on healing, to working with transformational leadership and taking action in the world. What is it to be an embodied, empathic and accountable leader and community member? Brought somatics to groups and organizations
- Written many books on somatics and on aikido

Lomi School & Strozzi Institute

- **Lomi School** (1970 - present)
 - Founded by Hall, Strozzi-Heckler, Elysa Hall and Catherine Flaxman
 - Gestalt, somatic bodywork, movement, and meditation
 - Physical and psychological healing and spiritual growth
 - Lomi Clinic offers somatics to marginalized communities in Santa Rosa, CA
- **Strozzi Institute** (1994 - present)
 - Founded by Richard Strozzi-Heckler
 - Embodied transformation and action. Using somatics to further one's vision and values, and take action in one's life, leadership, etc.
 - Unique in integrating Body, Language, and Action for individuals, teams, and organizations
 - Certification program for somatic coaches
 - Aim of the work: Pragmatic wisdom, grounded compassion, and skillful action

Foundation: Staci K. Haines

(b 1967)

- Studied Polarity Therapy and Neuro-Linguistic Programming beginning in 1988. Studied at LOMI School with Richard Strozzi-Heckler and Robert Hall in 1995, and continued at Strozzi Institute, becoming a senior teacher
- Strongly influenced by Third Wave Feminism, intersectionality, ecofeminism and environmental justice. Started activism in college, and has been in social/ climate justice work since
- Founded generationFIVE in 1999, a social justice organization with mission to end child sexual abuse (csa). gen5 developed Transformative Justice for csa, and forwarded an integration of a trauma analysis and somatics into the work.
- Originator of Somatics & Trauma programs (2001), a somatic approach to healing personal and systemic traumas, and brought this approach to social justice movements
- Co-founded generative somatics with Spenta Kandawalla
- Author of *The Politics of Trauma: Somatics, Healing and Social Justice* (North Atlantic Press 2019), and *Healing Sex* (Cleis 1999, 2007), *Healing Sex* DVD (SIR productions)

generative somatics (methodology and organization)

- generative somatics (gs) is based on Strozzi Somatics, as part of the living lineage. Gs adds an intersectional social and political analysis to all aspects of the methodology, as well as how to use somatics to serve equity and liberation. Gs also integrates the Somatics and Trauma work.
- Uses somatics to serve social and climate justice, and to support transformative justice. Brings a politicized somatics to communities impacted by oppression, and those who are organizing for structural change. Develops politicized somatic healers and coaches to serve social justice movement leaders, members, and activists.
- Uses somatics to serve leadership and organizational development for social/climate justice organizations. Explores how a politicized somatics can support community and systemic change models, and forward the intersection of personal, community, and social transformation
- Gs, the organization and methodology, have been influenced by partnerships the National Domestic Workers Alliance, Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity, Social Justice Leadership, Racial Justice Action Center, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, and more. And, gs teachers including Spenta Kanawalla, Alta Starr, Nathan Shara, Lisa Thomas-Adeyemo, Liu Hoi Man, Chris Lymbertos, Xochitl Bervera, Jennifer Ianniello, Raquel Laviña, Sumitra Rajkumar, and more.
- Co-founded by Staci K. Haines and Spenta Kandawalla in 2009/10

Practice toward Transformation

“Practice is transformative because you begin to embody new ways of being. Through repetition what was a new practice becomes natural, easy, a new habit. You are, in fact, beginning to become somebody new. You will begin to see more clearly and quickly, the choice that opens up in the moment about how you want to be. We are what we practice. Are we practicing what is most aligned with our vision for the world, for justice? This is where we want to continue to hone ourselves, our organizations, and our work.”

- Staci K. Haines and Ng'ethe Maina