

June 13th, 2013

Global Water Dances 2013:

As a part of a larger tandem piece which I have choreographed and danced, called ***Wolfwalks and Waterdances (a dance odyssey)***, the June 15th dances have been performed for Global Water Dances 2013.

Mary Lee Sanders, (soloist/independent choreographer/dancer)

Santa Barbara (Montecito), California

Shiva Prakash: videographer, photographer

Tallulah and Manitou, wolves walking in *Wolfwalks*, and occasionally dancing in *WaterDances*

WolfWalks and WaterDances (a dance odyssey) 2013

Sites:

Santa Barbara, California, U.S.

Summerland Hill overlooking Pacific Ocean (May 2013) *wolfwalk* on Bella Vista trail circling Summerland Hill, visiting Pacifica labyrinth and progressing through Oceanview Park and Greenwell Preserve.

Lagoon Island, Isla Vista (Santa Barbara) California (May 2013) *wolfwalk and waterdance*, dancing the labyrinth.

British Columbia, Canada

Quadra Island, the beach near Cape Mudge (low tide at the petroglyph rocks, Tsa-kwa-Luten), Quathiuski Cove, Strait of Georgia (May 2013) *wolfwalk and waterdance*

Cortes Island, (Smelt Bay beach, Ka-hoose trail/the beach at Von Donop inlet, canoe in Desolation Sound, near Squirrel Bay) (May2013) *wolfwalks and waterdances*

June 15th Global Water Dance , migrating sites (Santa Barbara, California, USA; Carpinteria Salt Marsh, Sandyland Cove , Harbor Seal Rookery on the bluffs, Loon Point/Summerland to Padaro Beach) 3:00pm to 11:00 pm. *Waterdances* at all sites, Loon Point included a *wolfwalk*.

This project, ***Wolfwalks and WaterDances***, includes my contribution to Global Water Dances 2013. It is actually a dual project, a tandem migrating movement meditation for, and with, Nature.

One branch is ***WolfWalks*** which has been performed in solidarity with Mato Woksape's spiritwalks (Prayer Walk for the Sanctity of the Wolves and all Wildlife.) I have long been a wolf advocate and activist, and throughout my career have created art projects, choreographies, poetry, site specific works, and wolfwalks to bring attention to the plight of wolves. All who care about our natural world have been devastated by the assault on these important predators, in our country and others. Currently, our nation's wolves face sweeping loss of all protection, although they have already been massacred (once again) in many of the Northern wolf states. In this past year, Mato, and other supporters, have been fasting and walking/running through the wolf states, urging protection and reverence for all life, in opposition to the current policies of disdain, ignorance, and destruction of the naturals. My journey was done to reinforce those efforts of respect, intention, and attention.

The other branch of my project, ***WaterDances***, is based on previous signed outdoor choreographies and focuses on the core movement sequence from the ***Cetacea*** dance series I, II, and III . This year the core movement poetry is aligned with the efforts of Marylee Hardenberg's Global Water Dances Project. I've been doing ocean edge dances for almost 4 decades, and the first complete ***Cetacea*** piece was performed in the 80's (Santa Monica, California) with a community group of professional dancers and children, and interested community members from all walks of life. ***Cetacea*** has since been performed on the beaches of Santa Barbara and Zuma Beach, California and also on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts.

The GWD's audience participation movement chorus was added to the signed poem to reference GWD. The issue that I have chosen to dance for specifies cetacean wellbeing, since dolphins are iconic of our city of Santa Barbara, California. The cetaceans are experiencing lesions due to pollutants in the water and other numerous and significant stresses imposed by human activities. Whales are also impacted by boat strikes, and sonar testing, and all who care about the health of the beings immersed in the channel waters cry out for care and reverence for those who are so vulnerable to our actions. I acknowledge the efforts of Toni Frohoff's **P.O.D. (Protect Our Dolphins)** a local non-profit whose mission is to activate protection and positive action with regard to these beings. It is a project of **TerraMar** encouraging an evolved, compassionate, and respectful approach for human interaction with fellow beings on this planet.

I performed these movement pieces in pairs. A WolfWalk was almost always paired with a WaterDance (and vice-versa.) The wolfwalk was generally 2-4 hours, and the waterdance typically occurred at the halfway point of the walk.

Home base for the movement pairings are/were Santa Barbara, California. The piece begins and returns here, venturing from dry Central California Coast to moist/rainy islands of the Great Bear RainForest.

The dance moved to increasing moisture, remoteness, immersion into water/nature, and pristine exhilarating abundance.

Wolfwalks and Waterdances: a dance odyssey, 2013

The itinerary of this migratory movement meditation (performed for/and with Nature

Summerland: wolfwalk around Summerland Hill visiting Pacifica labyrinth and following Lillie to Oceanview Park and Greenwell Preserve. From Summerland Hill we viewed 2 pods of dolphins leaping out of the water, swimming separate but parallel up the coast at Loon Point. Pack walk.

Lagoon Island, Isla Vista, Santa Barbara: WolfWalk to Lagoon Island (along bluff trails and beach), WaterDance performance in the labyrinth on bluffs above the

ocean and lagoon. Herons, egrets, and other waterbirds present, curtains of mosquitoes made stillness difficult. A rabbit entered the labyrinth as I wolfwalked and waterdanced. Ambient audience included a family with young children, several pairs of joggers from UCSB campus, a lone guitarist on the cliff's edge. Pack walk.

Quadra Island, Discovery Islands, British Columbia: Wolfwalk through Tsa-kwa-lu-ten's grounds through beach at low tide and along the forest trail. Waterdance took place at the site of the ancient petroglyphs. More than magical, and just like a fairy tale, the beings emerged to witness my dance: a pair of eagles watched from treetops and occasionally flew overhead, a pair of deer came down the cliffs, over the rocks and boulders to the low tide line, a family of grebes with their young were swimming at the water edge. A powerfully large sea lion slowly swam by to spy on the activities. Crabs and many mollusks were present in the encrusted rocks. The beach pulsed with aquatic, terrestrial and airborne life...clearly present and engaged in the communication! The wolfwalk continued through the forest and onto the bluffs. We were even, very conspicuously followed by one particular eagle, who trailed us through the thick growth of the forest, pausing on branches when we were tempted to eat salmonberries. The dance was also witnessed by hikers from the bluffs above.

Cortes Island, Discovery Islands, British Columbia: Wolfwalks took place at Manson's Landing, and Brigitte's Beach Trail, in addition to the walk/ dance combinations listed. On Manson's Beach we were intoxicated by the green rush of water from the ocean into the lagoon during the dramatic high tide. Herons hunted on the sandbars while grebes bobbed and dove. On Brigitte's Beach the waters offered up a mysterious large piece of driftwood, perfect for a dancer's headpiece. We saw a lot of wolf scat on that particular trail, an even and consciously placed message. The wolves were definitely there, but unseen. There were many magnificent and healthy slugs, obsidian colored with frills, or olive colored with spots.

Smelt Bay: sunset, fairly high tide. Many people gathered for picnics on the sandy beach, and several were gathered to watch the sunset. This reminded me of the

sunset watching tradition on Martha's Vineyard. A grebe family was present for the dance, as well as a trio of eagles. One of the eagles particularly kept watch on the activities, flying overhead during the piece. He also flew far out to the horizon to hover and look at some curiosity, never diving into the water, and returned to the treetop perch on the bluff. I danced to the mesmerizing sound of tide washing over the many pebbles on the beach. It was a hypnotic moment, tranquil and ecstatic, of gentle breeze, incredibly soft golden wash of light (Maxfield Parrish), and rhythmic water/rock pulses. The water was especially shimmery, and twinkling with bright flashes of white light. As we left the beach I was lucky to glance at a quiet folded snake sheltered by a large driftwood log. The log was framed by overhanging blossoms of wild plants.

Von Donop Inlet and the Kahoose trail: This was a 5 mile trail roundtrip into pristine wilderness. It was an especially conscious walking meditation as we hiked in the constant rain in wolf habitat. We had to be ever vigilant because the narrow trail which cut through verdant vegetation of the forest was traversed by slugs, and rough skinned newts which we carefully and painfully avoided with almost excruciating attention. It required so much constant focus downwards, that we could have easily missed a pack of wolves if they were quietly observing us. We only passed one human couple, during the entire excursion, who were mountain-biking from the inlet. On the beach at Von Donop there were 3 sailboats anchored in the distance. I saw a river otter in the waters along the shore preening and diving. As I danced drenched in the rain, a merganser flew a circle above me to observe, and then landed in the water nearest us. She did a dance in response, first on the water and then on a rock perch in the inlet. On the return walk we sang. We jokingly clapped a tree with a stick (inspired by Sasquatch tales,) and received a tree clap in response in the distance! A shining wet black toad caught our attention as he disappeared in thick leaves. We saw a salmon enhancement project at the entrance of the trailhead that locals later told us about. We were so drenched and hyper-focused on the wet earth that we felt we had absorbed the forest into our skin... secluded and overflowing with moist life!

Desolation Sound near Squirrel Bay: This was a canoe dance. We stepped into the waters of Desolation Sound from a beach white with giant Pacific oysters. We headed first along the shoreline of a few neighboring cabins. This was the only time that day that the water became still and glassy, and the rain slowed to a mild drizzle. We pointed the canoe to the neighboring island and snow-capped mountain range on the distant mainland for the signed poem. The canoe was very unstable and reactive. This became a meditation on balance, as every gesture seemed to illicit a hyper-sensitive response from the canoe. My signs became more conscious, quiet, delicate, and contained. Every tiny movement had reaction from the canoe. (*how like our place on this watery earth, a delicate balance rich with consequence.*) This became a dance of balance, and sheer beauty in immensity. I was overwhelmed by the abundance; the beach was white with giant oysters in their creamy colored shells. I felt we would capsize at any moment, so this was also a dance of extreme consciousness, care, preservation, and awareness. We had to be grounded in exhilarating beauty!

GLOBAL WATER DANCE DAY, June 15, 2013

Santa Barbara Channel, California: The “plan” was to bring the signed dance by kayak into the Pacific Ocean. The intention was to take the movement core of the migrating mediation into the channel waters in its culminating moments, where the dolphins/cetaceans, the focus of these choreographic waterdance efforts, swim. The dance gesture would carry the energy of the previous contributions towards the Hawaiian Islands where the Global Water Dances conclude.

The Ocean and her watery beings had other ideas, and we simply flowed with her plan (as we had all along.)

Around 3:00 in the afternoon we arrived at the kayak rental facility at Sandyland Beach to find it prematurely closed due to strong wind conditions on the water. The idea of kayaking, and possibly surprising/engaging/improvising from the water with the other local G.W.D. group on Summerland Beach, was sadly impossible.

This resulted in a series of migrating dances at sites that seemed to call for the experience. Sandyland Cove was busy with fisherman, and beachwalkers. And although the dance was presented at the windy point, the egret called me elsewhere. Carpinteria Salt Marsh was alive with birdlife. Hummingbirds dived from great heights towards the chaparral, a glorious egret stalked in the waters, crows chased a hawk above. Fence lizards and butterflies witnessed as the Surfliner train roared by in the distance. A jogger came quietly to sit on a boulder as I danced.

The next site was the Harbor Seal Rookery on the Carpinteria Bluffs. We processed across the fields that were bright with sunlit grasses. I danced briefly for the train that intersected our path, and it responded with its wails. The magic happened on the bluff ledge. Although I hoped to see the dolphins I was dancing for, it was the seals who answered my "call." Several were lying on the beach at rest, but as I danced many came to watch from the waters. They were curious, but more than that...they were engaged and responsive. Although several hikers passed by, it was the seals that were entwined in mutual focus. I watched them leap and play in the surf, steal kisses from one another, return with friends. When I completed my dance, they danced for me. (Not anthropomorphism...this was exhilarating communion and exchange!) When we left, I turned for some last glances. They were leaving too.

The day ended (from sunset into night) with a wolfwalk with the pack, and a waterdance to Loon Point from Summerland Beach. The beach was empty of people except for a pair of beachwalkers. The dance was brought from day into night and from the sand, pebbles, and shells, into the water.

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I reflect on this journey that filled me with so much gratefulness. The natural world always responds. She waits for our conscious return. The beautiful and sacred moments of communion that were experienced (less rare in a more conscious, patient, and respectful state) are as near as a dream resurrected.

What a precious, precious world!