

Emergence, resonant felt sensing and the arts: With/in relational spaces of us

Stacey Bush

Abstract

In this paper I speak to the idea of emergence as a key quality of processes of coming to knowing or understanding, with/in relational interaction. My research into relational interactions began with an intention to focus on a therapeutic context, however, this focus quickly opened up to include all relational interactions, including interactions with artworks and materials. When we, as individuals, engage with each other we are in a process of ongoingly responding to each other in an improvisational dialogue. We respond as a means to clarify or express what we feel or sense may be meaningful, and we can do this very effectively using the arts, especially when what feels meaningful is not quite known, is unformed, or evades words. Emergence has to do with staying with what arises and maintaining an attitude of openness to uncertainty.

Keywords

Emergence, intersubjectivity, multimodal arts, resonant felt sense, arts-based inquiry.

Noticing, attending to, and following or responding to your bodily felt sense of what is happening in the relational space of an arts-based inquiry is, I believe, an emergent process.

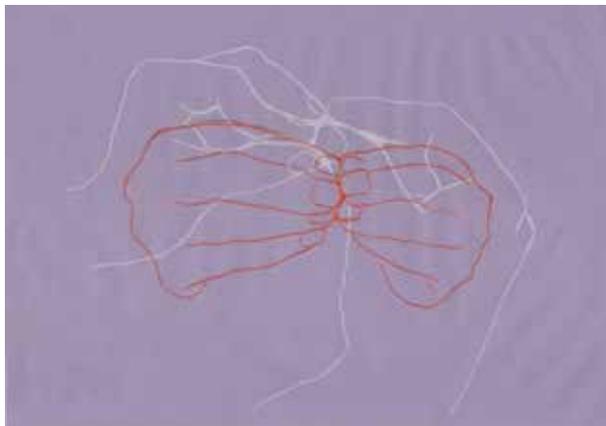


Figure 1. Stacey Bush, *A shifting exchange, a dialogue*, 2011, coloured pencil on tracing paper, 297 x 210mm.

The image above depicts an exploration of being with/in a confronting relational space. The hands are a representation of constantly shifting movements, in a responsive process of trying to find a fit, of trying to find a place of meaningful meeting. I hold a curiosity about what happens in the relational space of us...

Being present is already an exchange, a dialogue. Being present to self and other with/in experiencing means being present to many different energies. It means holding many

different resonances and responses at one time. Difficulty can lie in holding different and conflicting resonant dialogues. What is important here is to stay with and give voice to the felt senses and resonances that call strongly and persistently when responding. It is this dialogue of resonance that constantly moves between us. In this way the spaces between self and other/s shift constantly and can never be definitively pinned down. Space definition can become clearer and stronger when emotion runs high. Yet this strength and clarity is somehow intangible, here one minute and gone the next. This intangibility invites continued attempts to catch hold of definition and clarity of self in relation to the other, it invites constant searching for form and to make sense of what there is between us. You, me, and the space of us move together in an ongoing interactive dance to find the shape or form of us. There is never just one story to tell of an exchange of resonant responding, of a dialogue with others. This too is shifting and unpindownable, each of us who come to an interaction will have a different story to tell. The very act of engaging with another, engaging in dialogues of resonant responding, is an act of co-creation; it is an active process of engaging imagination and agile processes of association. It is a shared, ambiguous, open-ended, and dynamic process of interaction.
(Bush, 2014, p.346)

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