

Review of: "Somatic Arts and Liveable Futures: (Re-) Embodying Ecological Connections"

Jen Seevinck¹

¹ Queensland University of Technology

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

In this paper, Rufo draws on a workshop and presentation to articulate an approach to the unfolding planetary ecocide that is focused on changing perception as a means to shift away from dualities such as nature and man, environment and person, body and mind, to instead reconnect the body with nature. This, Rufo argues, is achievable through critical embodied practice and, in particular, somatic arts.

The paper provides a succinct and thoughtful overview of prior work in somatics and eco-consciousness. This forms the foundation for subsequent practice-oriented writing that engages the reader less traditionally and more actively, performatively, and physically with the ecological concerns at stake. This is the most exciting part of the article. Here, the writing draws on Rufo's workshops and is accompanied by some documentation and participant responses, and their translation of that interactive, in-person workshop to the written article form is successful. The reading experience is compelling and effective, eliciting physical and emotional responses from the reader's body and, in so doing, demonstrating the exact somatic processes for embodying and connecting to ecological concerns that Rufo extols.

For future work or to improve the paper, the author could better 'close the loop' on that reader experience to connect it back to the literature and somatic discussion as a whole. As a reader engaged in this more embodied reading experience, I am left thinking 'now what' and 'how does my memory and experience connect to the literature'. Also, more clearly stating that/ if the form of the writing is indeed intentionally illustrating the proposed methodology. This could be addressed through making more explicit the knowledge and understanding elicited from the author's practice (as a somatic dancer), i.e., increased reflexivity as is required in much practice-based/led research. Another approach could be to analyse workshop participant data through a 'lens' of somatic and embodied literature, where that data might be their reflections on the somatic experiences. Either would strengthen Rufo's novel, thoughtful, and exciting proposition for a way forwards in these grim times.