

*Speaking about his father's art, Christopher Rothko said:*

*On the most basic level, we see the paintings; but if we suspend the experience at our visual receptors, we have not really seen.*

***if we suspend the experience at our visual receptors, we have not really seen.***

*Mark Rothko's son was talking about the emotional power of artwork,  
the power of a work to MOVE us,*

*I want to focus on this idea of being MOVED.*

*Of Movement.*

*THAT art can move us emotionally and intellectually is a familiar idea,*

*But what about art that can move us physically?*

*Try this:*

*Place your hands on either side of your head so your thumbs tuck under the base of skull, right at top of neck*

*You're touching your sub-occipital muscles*

*A set of 8 muscles that are very small, but incredibly important.*

*Now I'd like to invite you to move your eyes back and forth*

*and then up and down*

*all around*

*Can you feel the movement?*

*Of your eyes in these muscles?*

*Close your eyes and try.*

*You can even feel the movement with eyes closed!*

*You can not move your eyes without your sub-occipital muscles moving too.*

*You can try it — its impossible.*

*It may be subtle, but this yoked movement directs all other movement in your body downstream.*

*Why? Because as babies we were born unlike other animals that could hop up and walk within minutes or hours*

*We had to learn to move, just like we had to learn to see.*

*Learning to see is something I talk a lot about in the color workshops I run.*

*Did you know that most kids are still learning to see at the age of 5 or 6?*

*Facial recognition alone is an incredibly complex skill — and its learned*

*That I can look at Karin from across the room and tell in an instant that the angle of the shadow on the corner of her eye means she's amused by what I'm saying instead of angry is astounding.*

*The ability to see and make sense of what we see is not something we're born with.*

*We have to learn it.*

*Just like we have to learn to move.*

*Did you know that experiments have been done with kittens where they are deprived of movement from day one and on through the early stages of development,*

*and these kittens grow up functionally blind because they've never had the opportunity to connect vision with movement.*

*See, as an infant, we learn to move our eyes to search and to find the source of mom's voice,*

*When we do this our sub-occipital muscles learn how to turn the head and neck to follow the eyes, and then the muscles of our spine learn to twist, arms to point, legs to walk, all to get to mom or anything else we're learning to see*

*All this happens because we learn to move our eyes at the same time that we learn to move our bodies to*

*follow our eyes*

*Our abilities to see and to move are inextricably interwoven.*

*Without movement the kitten will be blind.*

*And without movement (and touch) an infant will die.*

*The medical term is Failure to Thrive*

*and yes, it's real*

*This is serious stuff.*

*Our bodies were designed to move.*

*We were designed so that what we see MOVES us,*

*PHYSICALLY.*

*The job of your sub-occipital muscles from infancy to death is to respond to the movements of your eyes in order to keep them level*

*— fine movements of head and neck —*

*and then coordinate the whole rest of the body to get organized under your eyes to maintain this level.*

*They are, amazing little muscles!*

*They are, TRULY, the eyes in the back of your head.*

*Are you using them?*

*Are you being moved by what you see?*

*Kinesthetic intelligence is a concept I was introduced a little over a year ago and it's captivated me and directed my work ever since.*

*The human body is intelligent.*

*We have a felt sense that is our*

*kinesthetic*

*proprioceptive*

*spacial sense of orientation and movement,*

*it helps us know who we are and where we fit into the world around us in a way that the brain alone simply can not.*

*It is*

*— unlike the special senses rooted in the eye, the ear, the nose, or the tongue —*

*it is body-wide.*

*It is our skin, muscles, skeleton and fascia*

*It is the intelligence behind the experience — the embodied experience — of being alive.*

*I grew camping, hiking, playing sports*

*I didn't grow up going to galleries and museums*

*I grew up with art, yes — my mom's an artist*

*But my mom is also very active — she still is*

*So I grew up with these two ways of being in the world from a young age*

*The artist and the athlete*

*And it always seemed like these were two separate things, things I needed to choose between.*

*When I went to The Cooper Union my athletic endeavors were largely ignored by the art department.*

*But Cooper wasn't just art, it had architecture and engineering schools*

*and so it was barely big enough but it was D3 and had some rag tag sports teams*

*It had a men's basketball team, but not women's*

*And see, basketball was my thing...*

*so I tried out for the men's team, made it, and and played all four years*

*I think the art department was always a little embarrassed by this.*

*But my freshman year I wasn't the only artist on the team.*

*Colin Page was our starring center.*

*Many of you know Colin's work; you can see it right upstairs.*

*Many of you also know that Colin is 6 foot 7 and, well, in high school I had never played against a 6 foot 7 girls*

*So getting my shots blocked by Colin was quite the kinesthetic education!*

*Colin is still a large figure in my life; I so admire and love the work he does.*

*But let me get back to art school and athletics,*

*a marriage that was, in my experience,*

*not a happy one.*

*And it was about as awkward as my attempt to be a landscape painter at a progressive art school in NYC.*

*That I came from the land of the Wyeths and was proud of it*

*was not something that made many of my professors very happy.*

*So after school I moved back to Maine in order to paint its landscape,*

*my most loved subject,*

*in peace.*

*But a funny thing happened*

*I struggled — there was no peace.*

*There was just a constant sense of fidgety discomfort.*

*I would stand there in front of my easel, my easel in front of a beautiful scene, and feel completely distracted.*

*I couldn't stand still.*

*What I was looking at moved me to want to paint it, yes, but it moved me to want to hike, bike, swim, or climb through it more!*

*So my strategy became sequestering myself inside, to contain my energy.*

*I started to paint landscapes seen through windows*

*And a number of these paintings were shown here in an exhibition six years ago*

*I loved these window paintings, the inside and outside shimmering back and forth between each other, and I still do,*

*but its funny...*

*I look back now and I see the window panes a little bit more like prison bars  
beautiful prison bars, for sure!*

*but prison bars nonetheless*

*They contained me.*

***The kept me from moving in the direction that my eye was trying to lead me.***

*After college I got into triathlon,*

*and then into long distance open water swimming.*

*I loved the sensation of traveling through the water for a mile, three miles, six miles even*

***I LOVED BEING IN THE WATER.***

*Any of you who know the sensation of jumping in the lakes and rivers of Maine, you know that it can become an addiction.*

*I joined a group of women that would go out early in the morning, three days a week, to swim a mile.*

*And there was always this moment...*

*..swimming back*

*..breathing to left*

*..muffled murkiness below, and at the same time*

*..sun rising, light glinting, splashes, confetti swimmers caps*

*...the visual sensation and the somatic sensation at the same time like  
(sharp breath in)*

*The sight and the feeling of the movement were the same.*

*I loved this and wanted to figure out a way to paint it — I'm still trying to figure it out! —*

*and so one day I brought a waterproof camera with me and*

*my whole world as an artist busted open*

*Forget standing in front of an easel and FORGET that I'd always been told that painting from photos was bad*

*My new swim buddy,*

*my olympus tough crashproof and waterproof camera*

*allowed me to step through the windows and into my own paintings.*

*In a sense, I became my paintings.*

*My paintings were, and still are, made in my body first*

*and then in paint.*

*That's why I say I load my body with movement just as I load my brush with paint.*

*Here I've got my brush saturated with this delicious, juicy glop of exercised paint...*

*Here I've got this body, this total miracle of systems and cells, of fulcrum points and joints and power...*

*And both*

*BOTH*

*are all about action potential*

*What am I going to do with that brush?*

*What am I going to do with that body?*

*The artist and the athlete MET*

*Kinesthetic Intelligence BECAME Kinesthetic Imagination*

*So I'm having these experiences swimming*

*And it's like I'm that infant looking for the voice*

*and learning how to let my looking teach my body how to follow, how to move*

*My husband and I began to plan adventures*

*snowboarding, rock climbing, hiking, paddle boarding, surfing, you name it*

*We went, we saw, I painted*

*I started to explore the broad concept of play*

*the human body at play*

*this expressiveness*

*this kinesthetic intelligence that seems so starved in our lives once we strap kids into restrictive shoes, sit them at desks, and tell them not to move from first grade on*

*Most of us are still these first graders in adult bodies as we sit at our desks, sit in the car and on planes, sit down for meals and movies, sit even when we go to the gym as most machines are designed so that you can sit and do your adductor exercises or bicep curls*

*There's a huge range of our bodies movement capacity that is simply dead — dead and blind, just like those kittens I mentioned earlier — because we sit so much — we don't move enough.*

*Here's the thing:*

*unless we're in a hot tub, when we're in water,*

*we don't get to sit down*

*We get to bring our body into full extension, full flexion,*

*We can circumduct our shoulders, push and pull in any direction we want*

*We can move fast, we can move slow*

*And there's privacy*

*— why do you think we love water aerobics so much?*

*We're covered by the water's surface and there's this feeling that*

*We can move in ways we wouldn't otherwise dream to in our sitting life*

*We're free and we're safe*

*We can imagine and then act out ways of being in your body that are new and creative  
refreshing and restorative.*

*Water is amazing.*

*I just finished Dian Dincin Buchman's "The Complete Book Of Water Healing"*

*a super practical guide to using hot and cold water to heal almost any ailment you might be experiencing*

*We're mostly water right?*

*So it would make sense that this element would be key to our health.*

*More than any other type of water therapy, cold water in its various forms of showers, baths, compresses,  
and just for drinking,*

*can bring us back to ourselves with profound simplicity.*

*A daily cold shower is and always has been one of the best ways to tone the body and to strengthen the  
immune system.*

*The coldest water I've ever experienced was at Rattlesnake Pool in western Maine.*

*Absolutely frigid*

*On a nearly 90 degree, humid day spent hiking in the Evan's Notch area the scream of vitality that went  
through my body when I jumped in this hole...*

*There are no words*

*JUST PURE LIFE*

*Swimming in this hole is still one of my most favorite experiences in all of life*

*(give general location description)*

*Rattlesnake Pool was the second stop in a very specific series of adventures my husband and I planned  
and executed last summer*

*After discovering the magic of Frenchman's Hole during a weekend spent in the Grafton Notch area  
we decided to spend the rest of August and September jumping in as many Maine swimming holes as  
possible before fall arrived.*

*You see, even though my love of swimming was already many summer's deep,  
something happened at Frenchman's Hole that was new.*

*For the very first time, I not only felt the desire to paint my swimming experience,  
but I also felt the sensation of a painting,*

*fully formed,*

*in my body,*

*before I made it.*

*I COULD FEEL THE PAINTINGS I WAS GOING TO MAKE AS I SWAM.*

*I'm not quite sure how to describe this except that*

*when I say that my paintings are made by my body before they are made by my brush  
this is what I mean.*

*I know exactly the what and how of the painting and then it just comes down to getting home and letting  
the painting,*

*THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN FULLY FORMED, come out.*

*The big movements of my body travel through the smaller movements of my arm and hand and finger.*

*I didn't struggle with these paintings*

*I mean, there are a couple,*

*but any struggle I experienced in the studio was the result of forgetting what a certain experience felt like in my body,*

**HOW WHAT I SAW MOVED ME.**

*In the water I am playful*

*I imagine and discover ways I can move and stretch and float and bubble and flail*

*Back in the studio I make the exact same movements, just on a smaller scale*

*Instead of a swimming hole, I have a panel of wood to play in,*

*and in this space I use my brush as an extension of my body and I...*

*stretch, float, bubble, flail...sometimes come close to drowning!*

*Like I said, there are those few!*

*In the water it's all about making shapes with my body.*

*In the studio it's all about making shapes with color*

*Best piece of painting advice I was ever given*

*were words from Charles Hawthorn's book on painting:*

*He said that painting is beautifully simple. All we have to do is get the color spots in right relationship.*

*And I talk a lot about these color spots in my color workshops*

*I always bring up the difficulty of painting, say, an ear*

*Everyone gets their undies so in a bundle about how to paint an ear!*

*Or how to paint a nose, a hand, a cloud, a tree...?*

*But for a painter it's all the same.*

*I tell them not to focus on how they THINK an ear should look in a painting —*

*when we do this we're measuring all the other ears we've ever seen in our brain and*

*we're thinking way too much about how to paint it "right",*

*we're thinking SO much we don't even see the living, breathing ear in front of us that is,*

*again, for a painter's purposes, just like anything else in our visual world,*

*just spots of color in right relationship.*

*Remember: "it's incredibly simple."*

*And frankly it's the same when it comes to living our daily lives.*

*We do way so much thinking!*

*Our brains are going a mile a minute!*

*Constant chatter!*

*Constant consumption of information!*

*Our brains are getting in the way of the living of our lives —*

*we think instead of feel,*

*we think instead of move.*

*We've let IQ, intellectual intelligence, dominate our conversation about human capacity.*

*Only recently have we started to acknowledge EQ, emotional intelligence.*

*KQ, kinesthetic intelligence?*

*Well that's an even newer concept.*

*We're so stuck on the idea of IQ as this pinnacle*

*that it has actually become visibly obvious how overburdened our bodies are by our brains.*

*How many of us — myself included, even though I've been working on it — walk around like this*

*(hang head out)*

*Your head weighs 10-12 pounds when it's perfectly balanced atop our spine,*

*And this is fine because your spine was designed with these beautiful, supportive curves*

*that cushion and cradle as you move.*

*However, most of us sit,*

*collapsing over our computers, our tablets, and our phones.*

*This is the information age, the age of the brain.*

*And for every inch our heads hang in front of our shoulders, they put an extra 10 pounds of stress on our necks.*

*(10, 20, 30, 40....)*

*That's right*

*Most of us are walking around with heads that weigh 30 and 40 pounds.*

*And we wonder why chronic neck and back pain are at epidemic levels,  
635 million dollars*

*More than cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and strokes combined.*

*When we're always hurting and in pain, as a result we're more depressed, more agitated, less likely to go out for a hike or to see friends, we don't sleep as well and we're way less creative.*

*Between "tech-neck" and sitting,  
which some of you may have heard "is the new smoking"*

*we must know — **we must feel it in our bodies** —  
that something isn't right.*

*One of the reasons I make the work I do **is to restore rightness***

*—to restore a right relationship with our bodies through movement,*

*— to restore our bodies' relationship with the physical world in which it moves.*

***BECAUSE IT WAS DESIGNED TO MOVE!***

*Everything about it's joints and muscles point us to movement.*

*The sub-occipital muscles are not just for infants,*

***they're for us.***

*Movement keeps us from developing blind spots, dead spots, stagnant spots.*

*Our bodies are mostly water and as with water — don't ever drink from a stagnant pool,  
moving water is health!*

*Movement is relationship, its dynamic balance and alignment.*

*Movement is living, breathing beauty.*

*And just as we can be **MOVED** by the beauty of a painting,*

*we ourselves can then move **IN** and **BY** this beauty.*

*And so my challenge to you*

*whether you consider yourself an artist or not*

*is to feel the painting that is **IN YOU**.*

*Feel **THESE** paintings in you,*

*and then feel the painting that **IS** you.*

*How?*

*Well, have you ever heard of mirror neurons?*

*Mirror neurons are the way we've learned to do just about everything*

*And you can use them now to learn.*

*As a child, when you were learning to pick up a cup, you watched your dad or your sibling pick up a cup.*

*And when you watched,*

*certain neurons fired in your brain.*

*When you yourself finally picked up that cup for the first time,*

*these very same neurons fired.*

*These were mirror neurons.*

*They mirror the actions you see being performed*

*and map them in your brain  
as if you, YOURSELF were the one acting.  
To your brain, there is no difference between seeing someone swimming —  
be it in real life, in a movie, a photo or, yes, in a painting —  
and you yourself swimming.  
TO YOUR BRAIN, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE!  
This fairly recent discovery of mirror neurons is why visualization has become such a strong tool for  
athletes  
— for anyone.  
Anyone.  
And THIS is why I make landscape paintings with people in them.  
A landscape painting with a figure, with someone just like you and me in it, will produce this mirroring  
effect,  
because mirror neurons only fire when an action is EMBODIED.  
And so although we might love our traditional, pure, pristine landscape paintings and find them beautiful  
and transcendent  
— and they are!  
and although they may move us spiritually or emotionally,  
— and they do!  
and although our head and neck muscles move to follow our gaze which is rightly captured by them,  
— I love me a beautiful landscape just like the next person!  
Still,  
these paintings without figures,  
without embodied action,  
THEY CAN NOT produce the same effect,  
**they can not educate our bodies in just a single glance.***

*As an artist, to understand that what I paint can implicate someone else in an activity,  
well, that's powerful.  
And so I feel it's desperately important at this time of misalignment  
—misalignment of spines, of body images, of the experience of nature and where we fit in creation,  
to make images that SHOW US OURSELVES —  
that show us in right relationship within our bodies  
— moving, moving in freedom and health!  
that show us in a right relationship with the natural world around us  
—in a spirit of discovery, curiosity, and play!  
and that show us in a right relationship to beauty  
—in wonder and delight!*

*I believe in beauty.  
I believe in the power of beholding and becoming.  
It is important, what we see.  
All the senses and systems of our body need food, not just our stomachs.  
Our mouths...  
Our ears...  
Our noses even...  
What are we feeding our sense of sight?  
Our eyes?  
Our vision?*



*It is important.  
Because it effects our whole body.  
It has the power to move us,  
for better or for worse.*

*Listen, I'm just like you in this world.  
I'm trying to figure out how to do the work I'm called to and be of good service,  
To matter?  
I don't know.  
I think worrying about whether I matter is letting my brain take too much control of myself.  
Joseph Campbell has this thing that he's said, that people think that what we're seeking is a meaning in  
life  
— to matter.  
But he also says he doesn't think that that's what we're really seeking.  
What we're seeking is the experience of being alive.*

*These paintings  
are my best attempt — so far —  
to communicate my experience of being alive,  
I make mistakes — there are those times,  
just like there are those paintings.  
I have a long way to go yet  
-- to be a more effective communicator with paint,  
— to be a more effective expresser through the movement I embody  
But I'm getting there...  
I feel I'm on to something...  
And I'm inviting you to come along with me.*

*My great hope, my greatest desire,  
is that my paintings extend beyond me  
like the arms of this swimmer here,  
reaching out along the surface,  
the body feeling absolutely limitless in water.  
I would love for my paintings to stir a desire in others,  
IN YOU,  
to explore movement  
and to experience life.*

*Stop overthinking it,  
get out of your brain and into your body.  
Get out of these chairs!*

*...  
Because, remember:  
it's beautifully simple, really.  
Touch these paintings with your eyes  
be moved by what you see.  
Dive in!*