

Polarity Drawing Workshops at Catwalk
A Practice of Self-Touch and Full-Body Mapping

Location: Catwalk Institute, Catskill, NY

Description

In these workshops, participants will engage in Polarity Drawing, a full-body art process that draws on principles of Polarity Therapy and body mapping. Self-touch followed by internal body-mapping with chalk and paint on a body-sized paper will promote energetic flows related to the chakras, related elements, and various psychological needs.

Time: 4-hours 9:30 am to 1:30 , 2:30 pm to 6:30pm

Capacity: 10-12 people per workshop

Objectives:

1. Participants will gain an understanding of the principles of Polarity Therapy to promote energy flow in the body.
2. Participants will be able to identify which chakra/element to focus on for a particular emotional state.
3. Participants will learn a method for connecting energy psychology with body mapping as a therapeutic technique.

Abstract:

Polarity Drawing (PD) is a full-body art process that draws on Polarity Therapy (Sills, 1989), Integral Somatic Psychology (ISP; Selvam, 2022), and Guided Drawing (GD; Elbrecht, 2018). The process involves self-touch followed by internal body-mapping with chalk and paint on a body-sized paper. The touch promotes energetic flows based on chakras, elements, and various psychological needs. PD body-mapping borrows from the GD (Elbrecht, 2018) technique

of body-scanning followed by mapping the “felt sense” (Gendlin, 1978, p. 10) onto the page with eyes closed using both hands. It differs from GD because there is no guidance given other than to sense the flow of energy generated by the self-touch or body-holding. Additionally, participants are encouraged to open their eyes when they feel the ready. In GD the eyes are kept closed except to change materials. With PD, artists can negotiate between instinctual responsive artmaking and visual/cognitive assessment.

The principle of Polarity Therapy (Sills, 1989): holding two points (or two poles) on the body through self-touch (e.g. the elbow and the wrist) - can create a flow of energy between those two points. Energy flow can include blood, oxygen, nerve impulses, lymphatic flow, and general energy flow. Polarity flows require holding different parts of the body related to the chakras and related elements. Each chakra/element has a different set of hand positions and can promote various psycho-physiological states in the body.

The body zones (Selvam & Dennison, 2015) are as follows:

- Throat chakra/Ether element – promotes spaciousness in the body
- Heart chakra/Air element – promotes movement and connection in the body
- Core chakra/Fire element – promotes power and insight in the body
- Sacral chakra/Water element – promotes emotion and fluidity in the body
- Root chakra/Earth element – promotes grounding and solidity in the body

In this workshop, participants will experience each one of these polarity flows and then map that onto a body-sized paper using paint, pastel, and chalk. After artmaking they will step back from their image and respond through movement, writing, or sound as a way to integrate the embodied insights that arise from the process with each chakra.

Polarity methods are an aspect of ISP (Selvam, 2022) which uses self-touch and body holding methods to promote greater capacity for difficult emotion in the body. The relationship between polarity methods, ISP, GD, and Somatic Experiencing (Levine, 2010) will be explained in relation to art therapy clinical practice.

References

Elbrecht, C. (2018). *Healing trauma with guided drawing: A sensorimotor art therapy approach to bilateral body mapping*. North Atlantic Books.

Gendlin, E. T. (1978). *Focusing*. Bantam Books.

Levine, P. (2010). *In an unspoken voice: How the body releases trauma and restores goodness*.

North Atlantic Books.

Selvam, R. (2022). *The practice of embodying emotions: A guide for improving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral outcomes*. North Atlantic Books.

Selvam, R. & Dennison, B. (2015). Subtle body/gross body zones of penetration for each chakra.

[Visual graphic]. www.WeCoregulate.com

Sills, F. (1989). *The polarity process: Energy as a healing art*. North Atlantic Books.

Timeline:

9:30-9:45: Opening Greeting and Orientation

9:45-10:00 Introduction to Polarity Drawing and self-touch

10:00 – 10:35: Ether Element/Throat Chakra Exercise and art making

10 mins for exercise

15 mins for artmaking

10 mins for processing

5 min break

10:40 – 11:15: Air Element/Heart Chakra and art making

10 mins for exercise

15 mins for artmaking

10 mins for processing

11:15 – 11:50 Fire Element/Core Chakra and art making

10 mins for exercise

15 mins for artmaking

15 mins for processing

5 min break

11:55-12:30 Water Element/Sacral Chakra and artmaking

10 mins for exercise

15 mins for artmaking

10 mins for processing

12:30-12:55: Earth Element/Root Chakra and art making

10 mins for exercise

25 mins for artmaking

15 mins for processing

5 min break

1:00-1:30 Settling meditation, processing and closing

Polarity Drawing – Half-Day Workshop

Catwalk Artists Residency
July 2025

Consent and Release

Please check the appropriate boxes:

_____ I agree to participate in this full-day art therapy workshop which involves self-touch and energy therapy.

_____ I agree to keep the shared conversations of the workshop and images created confidential.

_____ I acknowledge that this workshop can potentially promote the release of strong emotions and body sensations that may cause discomfort.

_____ I agree to not hold the workshop leader or Catwalk responsible for any discomfort or harm I might experience, and will inform the workshop leader if I am experiencing discomfort and understand that I may take a break or leave entirely at any time.

_____ I agree to have my photograph or a photograph of my artwork used by the art therapist for educational or publishing purposes.

_____ I agree to have my photograph used by the art therapist for educational or publishing purposes, but not my art.

_____ I agree to have my artwork used by the art therapist for educational or publishing purposes, but not my photograph.

_____ I wish for both my photograph and artwork to remain confidential.

Participant signature _____ Date _____

Workshop Leader signature _____ Date _____

List of Supplies – enough for 10-12 per group

Wall, floor, or table space for making body-sized paintings

Plastic drop cloths

Sidewalk chalk

Tempera paint in 12 colors

Chalk pastels

Masking tape for taping paper down

Push pins

Small plastic cups for paint

Larger plastic cups (yogurt pint size) for water

Paper towels

2 Sheets of 36" X 90" white drawing paper