



## Making Your Plants Meditate

### *Workshop*

E. M. Wolfman General Interest Small Bookstore  
410 13th St, Oakland, CA 94612  
Saturday, March 18th, 2:30-5pm

We are thrilled to host the first Making Your Plants Meditate workshop featuring live performances by Plant Meditators and Friends:



### **NEW TO PLANT MEDITATION?**

Do plants meditate? Do they want to meditate? Do they want? Plant meditation is a highly speculative field and we will begin to explore through mindfulness and experimentation.



### **OUTLINE OF THE WORKSHOP**

A condensed version of the 6-week course, this workshop aims to begin the process of creating a practice between human attendees and plants that expands definitions and liberates paradigms-- with a focus on sound and language.

Bring your plant. Surrogate plants will also be available.  
We start on time, so please arrive 10-15 minutes early.



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# MISSION STATEMENT

*From the Host Katarina Countiss:*

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Through openness,  
t i m e  
e x p e r i e n c e  
l o v e  
g e n t l e n e s s  
c a l m  
p r e s e n c e ( S )  
f r i e n d s h i p  
h a r m o n y  
p h o t o s y n t h e s i s  
c o n n e c t i o n  
may this workshop be

# SPECIAL THANKS

*From the Host Katarina Countiss:*

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Thank you to all the human collaborators on this project:  
Dani Robison, c a a s i l k, Dan Gottwald, Cassidy Barnes, and  
Elana Chavez--you have been an inspiration and a joy

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Thank you to the plant collaborators on this project:  
Basil, Philodendron, Dan Plant, Dried Flowers, Kat Plant and  
Cassidy Plant--you have been a vital part of this projecct.

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Thank you to E. M. Wolfman General Interest Small  
Bookstore for being a great place to hold workshops and sell  
books and other arts.

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Thank you to Ben Unger for Sound Engereering the event.

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Thank you to you, the audience, plant and human, for making  
Making Your Plants Meditate *workshop* a delightful experience.



# Katarina Countiss

Honolulu

Seattle

Oakland

Process

Mind maps

A timeline

Creating a layout

Drawing doodling

Premiere Pro

Binaural Mic

Contact Mikes

Unconditional Confidence

Brush pens

Pen 0.7

Handdrawn

Zine

Workshop

My Sweet Plant



# Caasilk

West Hartford

Oakland

Process

Controlled randomness

A process of searching

Flow and meaning

Fixed elements

Relearning

SUPERCOLLIDER

Programming synth language

A lot of upfront anxiety

Sometimes when you make a mistake it's the best sound

Thinking

Creating studies of the same kind of material

I just sit down and do it

Limited material

Defining materials

Space

Context

Instrumentation

You coming through that filter

Computer music

Improvisational

Synths



Dried Flowers

Farmer's market

Everyday after the market ended I would go and bring some fruit over and be like wanna trade flowers for fruit

Hung upside down with rubber bands

I've had them for 8 months now

I've never dried flowers before.



# Elana Chavez

Oakland-based poet-gardener

What are things fundamentally made of?

Touch them in the right way

Violence tender

Gardener

Process

Long piece constantly churning

Same ideas turn up

Humans indoctrinated into this old world

Words

Origins

Observation

Documentation

I'm telling you what I think

Types notes into phone

Bigger document on computer

Read it and read it

I want it to be like a crystal

onto itself

Voice

Memorization

Improvisation

Philodendron



# Dani Robison

Minneapolis

Oakland 4 years

Stained glass sculptor

Invisible Cinema

Process

Iterations

30min-1hr practice

Jazz background

Music theory

Key changes

Cycling

Melodic motifs

Anchor point

Varying degrees of permability

Playing slowly is more of a challenge

Drone box

Double Bass improvisation

Counterpoint to plant existence

Take your instrument out of the case

Uncertainty and risk

Getting comfortable with the techniques that are unpolished

Basil

Living herbs

I want to eat basil

Shock of repotting

New leaves

I had a fern that I overwatered and it died and I felt bad about that.



# Cassidy Barnes

Queer, White, he/him.

Okie, Oaklander, hairy, dementia care, witchcraft,  
expressive arts therapy.

Jennings: indoor spider plant, raised in a red coffee cup, offspring  
of Valerie's spider plant in Sonoma, watered occasionally.

“The best age is the age you are.”  
-Maggie Kuhn



# Dan Gottwald

My aloe and I met in Oakland.

I was a grad student and it came home with me from a gig I was working as a gardener for a church.

It's seen better days and so have I.

It hangs out in my bathroom because I want it to absorb all the moisture it can from steamy hot showers.

I also forget to water it a lot.

Its name is neglected aloe.

I love plants though.

I'm just busy.

I have an experimental music ensemble that I build instruments for.

Sometimes plants are inspiration.

Once in a while I light an incense stick and place it in the aloe pot.



**Relax your** roots shoots stems leaves stamen anthers ovules

fruits flowers seeds nodes stomatas veins buds axils pedicels bracts

bracteoles sepals petals perianths tepals corollas hypanthiums

nectaries androceiums gynoeciums filaments pistils stigmas pollens

styles alates bark branches bulbs cladodes corms cuticles lenticels

prickles rhizomes scandents piths stolons tendrils thorns tubers

petioles and stipules



Draw your companion plant



Draw an imaginary plant



## GROUP EXERCISE: CALMING

*Focus: thought and disassociation*

**Goals:** Through language ~ creating new thoughts ~ repetition leading to clarity

**Action:**

List seven words/phrases on the tear-offs.

Tear them off and take one of them and pass the rest to your left

Pick one from the pile you receive and pass to the left

Repeat until you have seven word/phrases

Say them out loud or silently, repeat through a specified time

duration (ex. 1 min, 5 min, 10 min).

Mix them up and find the order that resonates with you.

Share

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## EXERCISE: LISTENING AND CONSENT

*Focus: friendship*

**Goals:** By practicing patience, gentleness and consent, we become better companions. By listening through different devices, our perceptions shift, creating room for new paradigms.

**Action:**

Focus on the plant. Feel its presence. Can you receive?

Does it want to be engaged with you?

Let's practice "no"s. Pretend you received a "no" biev. That's fine.

Look down, bow, and back away slowly.

Focus on the plant. Feel its presence?

Proceed to attach a contact microphone (or some other device you would like to use).

Observe its textures and sounds.



## EXERCISE: B . E . A . T .

*Focus: Rhythm and Energy*

**Goals:** Using time intervals, we create boundaries like play pens. We are able to explore a kind of controlled carefreedom in this newfound space.

**Action:**

Listen to some tracks with beats, or no beats.

Feel time passing in these measured intervals.

Imagine using these set times again and again. What would you do?

Write out some times, perhaps use the minutes and seconds that you'll do something on piece(s) of paper.

Write out something that you'll do. Shout, whisper, speak, read, play, dance, feel.



## EXERCISE: SCALES AND SCORES

*Focus: Map to Ritual*

**Goals:** With materials and elements listed, we may dream how they fit together on a page using fresh notation systems/ text/ graphic/ etc.

**Action:**

Brainstorm some elements: mood, time, spectrum (scale, what do you want to use to create a variety of a thing?), materials, spatial exploration

Create a time duration and consider using a time grid or another way to notate time.

Plot out what you want to happen when.

Try it out. Feel free to write parts for other people in the workshop.



## EXERCISE: OBSERVATION

*Focus: memory*

**Goals:** We experience the world every day. Taking notes allows what we perceive through our senses to marinate as we experience other things. Writing is a way of seasoning how we move through memory.

**Action:**

What have you been thinking about lately? Take this ten minutes to write it out. Let yourself observe yourself without editing (you can do that later).

(Later) Review what you've written and lightly edit what seems worth thinking about some more.



## EXERCISE: CREATE YOUR OWN EXPERIMENTS

*Focus: Process*

**Goals:** Scientists use experiments to develop their understanding of change over time. Allow yourself to wonder about what if. By approaching experiments in a minimalist mindset (aka doing something boring) you might find ideas come to you in that calmness.

**Action:**

List out contexts for your practice. Consider: materials, action, proof of concept, variables, duration, theme, role models, allies, and a deadline.



*Wind Horse* is a chorus based on listening and responding in a variety of ways and using the *Wind Horse* mandala as a kind of map for organizing and creating the performance.

From the center circle marked **LISTEN** each individual performer chooses her own optional pathways, returning to the center circle at any time. The length of time spent on any circle could be as little as a comfortable breath or many breaths. The total performance time is approximate and may be pre-determined or not.

**Listen** – Include all that it is possible to hear. Be aware of the sources. Decide whether to match what is heard or differ from it.

**Pitch** – Listen for or create a tone, vocal or otherwise, that focuses on a regular vibration or frequency.

**Sound** – Listen for or create an irregular vibration or noise that is not centered on a pitch. Examples could be vocal fry, a sneeze or a rustling etc.

**Match** – Selectively tune as exactly as possible to a pitch or sound.

**Differ** – Selectively differ from what is heard. Differing from a pitch could be from a tiny interval, just enough to cause beats, to a large interval, to a sound. Response to a sound might be a different sound or a pitch.

**Metrical Rhythm** – means to apply to a **Pitch** or **Sound** a rhythm that can be measured.

**Organic Rhythm** – means to apply to a **Pitch** or **Sound** a rhythm that is a process like breath or clouds moving or wind blowing.

**Louder/Softer** – means to apply to a **Pitch** or **Sound** dynamic shapes relative to what is heard.

**Story**– tell about an experience with the wind or a dream or fantasy about the wind.

**Metaphor** – make sounds which stand for the wind either solo or with others.

**Inner** – Listen or respond to what is perceived in imagination or memory.

**Outer** – Listen or respond to what is perceived outside of oneself from others or the environment.

Remember that others are listening for you and responding to you.

