Beginner's Guide to *Innerstice*

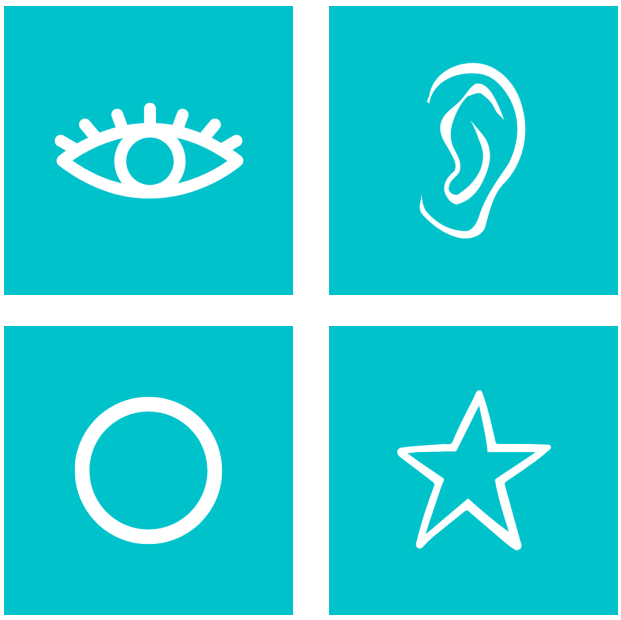
Welcome to ***Innerstice***!

Innerstice is a platform designed to get you off your device, out of your head, and into the world like never before. Inspired by cultures from around the world, the platform was designed to adopt traditional techniques and incorporate them into a modern setting. Our goal is to reconnect our experience of the outside world through tools that engage and enhance our senses.

The platform consists of four offerings. Each offering includes instruction on the specific interface, a specific code to make it work, and a philosophy that describes the background of its different uses as well as reasons why these analog practices matter today. In addition, we provide a community forum where members can share their work as well as resources for additional information and groups that may help members explore any of the offerings in different settings.

The Beginner's guide is an overview of the 4 modules with a brief background on the layout of the platform. If you are interested in learning more contact us or become a member to get started!

> "We are out of our heads. We are in the world and of it. We are patterns of active engagements with fluid boundaries and changing components."
>
> - Alva Noe



Eidos

The name *Eidos* comes from the Greek work "*eidos*" which means to look or see. In Greek, looking had a deeper meaning than just perception and was connected linguistically with the word "*idea*". This is because when we look at something familiar, for example a cup, there is more to sight than just the shape. There is a meaning to the object, a cup is something that holds our drink. We attribute this way of looking at things to Plato's *ideas* in which things in our world have an intrinsic meaning to them which shapes the way we see them.

When painting a landscape or object, we try and suspend that meaning and just see the shapes, colors, positions of the thing we are painting. This technique was famously discussed in the book *Seeing with the Right Side of the Brain*.

Painting or drawing provides a path for us to try and see the world without our concepts and names that we've accumulated since childhood. Once we get out of our normal, everyday labeling of things, we can see our world in a new light, things can appear clearer or in a new way.

What is required is the practice of looking, a practice the artist David Hockney has expressed and described in marvelous detail. Through the art of "plein air" painting, or painting outside, we practice the art of looking to refine our vision and also our idea of what we are seeing.

Interface

The interface of the *Eidos* module is the palette. The palette is both the surface that holds the paints that will be used for the painting as well as the colors themselves. The focus will be on choosing a color scheme by learning about different palettes that were used by various art schools from the Middle Ages to the Present.

Topics to cover include:

- ✦ The history of palettes including a survey of classical, Renaissance, Impressionist and modern palettes.

- Pigments, paints, and brushes - how materials changed and lead to new artistic movements
- Creating your own palette and using loose brush strokes
- Picking a place to paint and seeing space

Code

The code we will be reviewing is the color wheel as practiced by the Impressionist painters. The impressionists were the first to use tube paints which allowed them to be the first painters to paint outside. There were also new pigments that were invented durning their time, the late 19th century which influenced not only their palette but the way painted light and shadow. Topics to cover include:

- Use of Primary colors and how they incorporated warm and cool colors
- Learn the color wheel and use of complementary colors to make grays
- Value, hue, saturation

Horizon

Although the art world moved away from landscape art, we examine why its important to paint landscape as a practice in the art of seeing. The goal is to use painting as a way of life. In the process, we'll see the world better but also paint better and appreciate other paintings as well.

- Using painting as a tool to help us look deeper at the world around us.
- Understanding the impressionist practice of loose painting as a way for the the mind to interact with the painting and create the scene by filling in the gaps.

- ✦ Studying master painters as a remedy for the images of our digital world. Looking and painting provides a different spatial experience than images in a photograph and video.

We'll explore the schools of impressionism, phenomenology and neuroscience, as well as the works of some painters like Cezanne, Hokusai, David Hockney whose art was a testament to their way of living in the world.

Community

A forum to share your artwork, collaborate with others practicing the art of seeing, and find additional resources.

We will review some famous painters and also provide links for contemporary artists and ways to share your own artwork.

The goal of this platform is to give you the tools and inspiration to get out to the world and start looking at it again with fresh eyes.

Echos

In every ancient school, music was one of the core curriculums. Why? In Chapter 6 of his sayings, Epictetus states that the aim of being human is to lead a life "in contemplation and understanding, and in a scheme of life *harmonious* with nature." A life in harmony with nature is where one is in tune with the world. Music can be a tool for getting yourself in tune. Like learning to write, there is a way to learn to hear sounds that are in tune and, like reading and writing, this can have a unique effect on the mind. Learning to hear in tune is not only learning to hear the same note of a certain pitch but also the harmonies such as the third, the fifth and up to the octave. The space between these harmonious notes is called the "interval" and it is upon these intervals that the various musical scales called *modes* were built.

The best way to see these relations is the vibrating string. A length of string will produce a certain pitch, if you press the string against a surface at the half way point you will produce an octave. Pressing it a third or fifth of the way up will produce the corresponding pitch such as a "third" or "fifth". Playing these notes together is how you create a harmony which is more commonly referred to as a chord. This relationship of music to mathematic was fundamental to the Pythagorean school of ancient Greece which would influence much of later Greek thought including Platonism and the Stoicism of Epictetus. The ideas that mathematical ratios produced harmonious tones which could also be seen in nature created a beautiful order to the world and hence learning music would harmonize ourselves with nature.

In China, the ancient musical instrument that every sage learned was called the guquin, a stringed zither with no bridge or frets, merely a string over a surface where these relationships could be explored in all their purity.

Echos, the name of this module comes from the Greek word "echo" which comes from the myth of Echo. Echo was a nymph who lost her voice and could only repeat what others said. Listening requires us to stop talking, to stop listening to our own thoughts and start listening to others. Echoes also have the sense of hearing something said in the past, things echo through time. In this way, writings of great thinkers and poets can be like an echo through time with those who have ears to listen.

Interface

The interface we'll use for *Echos* is the hammered dulcimer although any instrument that can play a major scale will work. The hammered dulcimer is an ancient instrument that is believed to have originated in Persia. It became popular during the middle ages and spread across the eurasian continent, from India to Ireland. In Europe, it was the precursor to the harpsichord and later piano that developed during the beginning of the Enlightenment period.

Music during the Enlightenment is called Classical music and with the invention of new instruments the musical vocabulary changed with a focus on major and minor scales. Subsequently the importance of modes to music was lost in the West during this period although it deserve in certain types of folk music which we'll explore in this module.

The hammered dulcimer was designed for modes, we call it a "modal machine" and is optimized for learning and playing the different modes whereas most modern instruments, like the piano are optimized to play chromatically. We'll explore the difference in this course and why learning this ancient instrument is a window in the mind of the middle age and Renaissance thinkers.

Code

The code that will be explored are the seven musical modes of antiquity. We'll discuss how they are built from arrangements of different intervals, the whole and half notes, which are all mathematical ratios. In the process we'll examine the 7 notes and how they fit in to each mode. The offering will include:

- How to play each mode
- In depth look at modes in Ancient Greek, Renaissance, Celtic, Bluegrass, and modern improvisational music
- Explore the Indian Raga system and its connection to modes

Horizon

Why think about modes? Modes aren't only great ways to express music, they are also like learning a new palette of colors.

In the course of this section we will learn the system of modes as formed during the Renaissance and learn their connection to Planets, health, plants, colors and moods.

We'll explore how modes provided the bridge of music to astronomy, the "music of the spheres".

We'll discuss why modes are still important today. How the classical music period made them unpopular and examples of how they have become revived today.

Community

Learn popular songs that use specific modes. Provide resources on playing in local Celtic and Bluegrass groups as well as a forum to share your songs, insights and collaborate.

Centros

Centros is an offering to guide you to your center by constructing a circle. Every circle has not only the outer circumference but also the inner central point which is usually invisible but always present. When we feel grounded we usually feel balanced internally but that inner resolve tends impact the world around us, our friends and family, our home, our job, our environment. Working with the circle can be a tool to help find that grounding by helping us focus our attention, activating our imagination, enacting all our senses, and connecting with our environment. Practicing Centros can show an ancient path that opens an entrance into the space of your mind that can result into an opening up to others.

Interface

The interface for *Centros* will be the construction of a two dimensional circle. In the process, we will see the circle as a type of mind map. This map can be created in many different ways but we will begin with the use of the geometric construction using compass and straight edge in the tradition of ancient Greece. This will lay the foundation for other expressions of the circle. In the course of constructing the circle we will also explore the classic geometric shapes - the triangle, square, pentagon, hexagon, octagon. In the process we will also develop the relationship of geometry to music and the color wheel. In this way, the *Echos* and *Eidos* modules will be helpful resources to understanding the geometric shapes and their relationship to the circle..

Code

Geometry is the code underlying the use and understanding of space. Starting with the universal symbol of the circle will help unlock diverse applications that have been practiced from across the globe.

This can be done in many different ways such as with pencil and paper, with flower petals and plants on a table, with sand, or completely in the imagination. The key to the construction is Geometry. We'll look at some of the traditional ways these were

used for things like memory, connecting with the senses, and meditation. These will include:

- The method of compass and straight edge from Greek Geometry to create the regular Geometric shapes with a focus on the circle and square
- The Architecture of Tibetan Mandalas
- The structure and use of Memory Maps
- The spatial language of Mayan Hieroglyphs
- Rudiments of the ancient Chinese game Go
- Creating maps that engage the five traditional elements through the five senses

Horizon

Placing each practice within its cultural context will provide inisghts into the different applications of circles around the world. From memory maps to earth art, what the circle has in common is a relationship to space, both inner and outer. *Centros* will focus on the following applications and discuss their background and provide additional resources for each.

Greek Geometry

The school of Pythagoras and its lasting influence

Meditation Maps

The *Secret of the Golden Flowe*r and C. G. Jung (A Chinese Book of Life)
Tibetan mandalas and Yantras from India

Memory maps

Greek and Roman usage

Renaissance Period - An internal reflection of the entire universe
Aboriginal memory objects

Spatial Language

The Mayan hieroglyphs
The Chinese game of Go

Earth Art

Look at Indigenous art as a way to connect communities to their locality.
Explore the work of Andy Goldsworthy

Community

A forum to share ideas of centering practices and mandala artwork. Additional resources on creating a circle as a mental map and earth art such as Lynne Kelly, Andy Goldsworthy, and John Skillet.

Astros

The night sky has fascinated civilizations and tribes since the dawn of time. Whole cities have been created around the cycles of the stars for purposes of observation. Like music, astronomy was a discipline that was taught in most ancient schools and a central importance to the lives of everyone in the community.

While we are still fascinated with the stars and our knowledge of the universe has expanded exponentially, we have partially lost our deep connection with the stars as a daily lived experience. This is partly due to the light pollution from cities that blocks the night sky. It only takes one trip into the wilderness at night to realize why the night sky played such a formative role on the imaginations of our ancestors.

Although we no longer have this same relationship to the stars we can still learn the patterns that outline the year and track the movements of the constellations. The purpose of the *Astros module* is to reconnect us to the stars by relearning the cycles of the precessions and learning to track them with the help of an app. In addition, the frame drum will serve as a cosmic model to help us embody the rhythms of the stars and the times of the year.

Interface

The interface for *Astros* will be the Frame Drum to map out rhythms and the Stellarium app to map the position of the stars and planets throughout the year. If we look at the few surviving drums from the arctic peoples in Norway known as the Sami, we can see how the drum was likely understood as a star map with animals marking the surface a mirror of the stars in the sky. Both inner and outer worlds reflected on the surface which would lead to other worlds. This idea was also present in Greece where the movements of the constellations and planets were known as “the music of the spheres”. Geometry, music, and stars, all interconnected reflecting a deeper code running through life. For the Mayans, and all of mesoamerica, there was a 260 day calendar based on the 13 and 20 day rhythms and human gestation that was encoded in the year.

Code

Rhythm is the underlying code of time. Like time, rhythm requires two basic things, a pattern and then finding a way to record that pattern, either with written marks or in an oral tradition. This offering will touch on some of the past cultures that tracked the timing of stars looking for repeating patterns and how they used markers to designate key moments in time. In the process, it will provide tools to track the current movement of stars and ways to connect with those cycles today. The offering will include the following tools:

- ✦ Ways to map and record the precession of equinox and solstice.
- ✦ Understanding constellations and animal symbolism by looking at recent discovery of a code that dates back to prehistoric times.
- ✦ Breakdown the 260 Day cycle of Mesoamerica and understand its connection to astronomy, agriculture, and gestation.
- ✦ Interact with time by keeping rhythm with the drum.

Horizon

Why look at the stars? Why have so many cultures built temples, pyramids and cities to track the movement of the stars? Is there anything we can benefit today from looking up at the stars and following their progress throughout the year?

To address these questions we'll take a deep dive into the background of the precession of equinox and solstices. By learning the prehistoric code of the constellations through studies in archaeology most notably uncovered by the scientist Martin Sweatman, we'll approach the sky as observed and tracked for thousands of years.

Using this prehistoric code, we'll map it on to our current skies using the Stellarium app as our star guide. With the timings and symbolism of the constellations in place we'll then turn to the frame drum.

As part of this module, you'll have access to the book *The Nomads' Labyrinth*, a 600 page book that explores the shamanic drum as an ancient tool for knowledge.

Lastly we will turn to Mesoamerica to learn about the mechanics of their 260 day calendar to understand their system that interlocked the movement of planets with the cycles of agriculture and the 9 month gestation period. As part of this module, you will also have access to the *Mayan Odyssey* a musical album based on these patterns.

Community

A forum to discuss stars gazing, planets and sky cultures as well share drumming experience and insights. Members will receive the audio album Mayan Odyssey and a listening guide that applies the Mayan 260 day calendar to music. Additional resources on astronomy and rhythm will be provided.