

# Ortho-Bionomy®

# NEWS

“Evolvement of the Original Concept“

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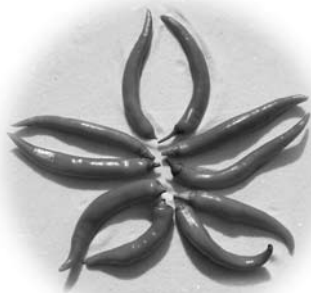
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## Conference Keynote Address: *Connecting to the Beyond*

By Brenda Sstrom

Three decades of specific work with the psoas has led Liz Koch to an understanding of somatics beyond the prevailing biomechanical model. Moving beyond a biomechanical idea of movement into a paradigm of bio-intelligence “in which the body is not designated and does not maintain a specificity of form,”<sup>1</sup> she invites us to converse with the body as a living, dynamic system and to regard it as process.

Liz Koch will come to Albuquerque in November 2008 to share with us how she works with fluids for connective tissue health. She will speak about how she refines and matures proprioception with sensation. Liz has found that by working with fluids and proprioception, she can bring about more congruency and harmony in the body’s systems. I encourage you to come to the conference and experience first-hand what she has to share. Here follows a brief written exchange between us.



Since I first came upon your work, I’ve been struck by how it dovetails with Ortho-Bionomy®, both in concept and evolvement. You are taking a shared paradigm into new places, and it’s particularly exciting to have you as Keynote Speaker for the 2008 SOBI Conference. I have some questions and would like to share your responses with our members—inviting them to attend the Conference and hear more from you!

In your early introduction from the *The Psoas Book* you relate how, growing up with scoliosis, you believed you would just have to “live with and work around” this condition and its attendant problems for the rest of your life. In your twenties, you discovered the possibilities of “experiencing [your] body differently” through movement and began a journey of exploration that ultimately led to your seminal work with the psoas and principles of Core Awareness™. Your work is imbued with the idea that, functionally, we operate with integrated being.

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# Connecting to the Beyond

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You say:

...I suggest that anyone pursuing an understanding of his or her body try to perceive and work with the body as an integrated whole, as a receiver, transformer, and transmitter of substances or energies, which functions as part of a larger universal body and which demands our attention, sensitivity, and respect.<sup>2</sup>

Can you tell us a little about how your work has evolved through your three decades of practicing and teaching and about what drives your passion today?

**LK:** Thank you for this opportunity. I deeply appreciate the Ortho-Bionomy community for propelling me towards new levels of somatic awareness.

My work with the psoas muscle first focused on release. Releasing tension in the core muscle allowed my spine to realign and for an inner integrity to be re-established. Currently my work focuses on what may be called the primitive reflexes and the basic fluid rhythms in the primal response of life.

This shift from body as object to living process is at the very core of my understanding. As a 360° organism, the core has no bias animating through diverse expressions of movement. I no longer experience the psoas as a muscle, nor do I focus on “release” but rather I understand that the psoas is a messenger from the midline and the central nervous system. I am very interested in this dynamic conversation.

Awareness is my main passion. Turning towards sensation, I am continuously informed by my own living

process. It is so thrilling! Awareness is not a linear development, rather it spirals and accumulates and suddenly there is a shift and one perceives oneself and life in an entirely new way. One never knows the moment of satiation when the organism enters a new paradigm and so life is always fresh, new and unknown.

Your article, “Dem Bones” invites us into a conversation about how we think—and talk—about our bones. You speak of how the language and images of our culture contribute to a view of our bones as “rigid structures encased in a sack of skin;”<sup>3</sup> while, in fact, bones are “wildly alive, regenerative, malleable, dynamic and responsive.”<sup>4</sup> In your discussion of the fluid system and its relationship to healthy bones, you speak of “bio-intelligent movement.”

How does this differ from “biomechanical,” and how does “bio-intelligence” inform your practice?

**LK:** I believe it is important to change our somatic language so we are free

to experience the fullness of being alive. Even Mind/Body terminology, which attempts to include a sense of wholeness, simply maintains the old mechanical and compartmentalized paradigm, which views the organism as “body” and object.

Our organism is a living process imbedded within larger and smaller biospheres. We are not separate from all other species. Shifting awareness, we may take a quantum leap from molecule to field, opening a wider and deeper experience of life.

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**Liz Koch is an exceptional healer, teacher, author, and expert on the psoas muscle. Her years of experience as a yoga teacher and bodyworker and her natural intuition about the innate intelligence of the body makes her a very informative and insightful presenter. When I met her she was quite familiar with Ortho-Bionomy. Her training changed the way I work, bringing an increased focus on the importance of the psoas muscle and the means of releasing it. Her book and articles in various professional journals continually provide possibilities of working with the entire person.**

- Barry Krost

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The intelligence of the organism informs our every moment. This means healing is inherent in our potential and I can choose to shift from “fixing a problem” to discovering what inhibits or disrupts bio-intelligent coherency.

In our initial conversation, you spoke of a paradigm shift in bodywork from the biomechanical to the bio-intelligent and said that you see Ortho-Bionomy as speaking to this shift. Would you please elaborate on that and how your work intersects with Ortho-Bionomy?

**LK:** I first heard about Ortho-Bionomy, nearly 28 years ago. A therapist suggested he could “release” my psoas tension by moving one joint in one finger. I was very curious, especially because invasive techniques were touted at that time as the only way to work with a constricted psoas muscle. I intuitively knew there was another way, but I didn’t have much experience to back up my very personal perspective or teaching method. When I felt the subtle connection between joints, fluid, and tissue, a profound awakening shifted my attention from psoas (object) to coherency (communication). It was paramount in my developing a system of working that is non-invasive and non-manipulative. That specific moment is a living memory so palatable I cannot forget the sensation of joy, recognition and acknowledgement that it awakened.

Thank you so much for your time, Ms. Koch—we look forward to having you as Keynote Speaker and seeing you in Albuquerque at the 14th Annual SOBI Conference.

An acknowledged authority on the psoas, Liz Koch is the creator of Core Awareness™, a somatic approach to deepening the experience of the human core through focusing attention on sensation as a means of maturing and developing the proprioceptive nervous system ([www.coreawareness.com](http://www.coreawareness.com)). She is an internationally recognized teacher and author whose works include *The Psoas Book*, *Core Awareness: Enhancing Yoga, Pilates, Exercise & Dance*, and *Unraveling Scoliosis* (CD). She’s also written featured articles for *Massage & Bodywork*, *Yoga Journal*, *Positive Health*, *Midwifery Today* and other health and wellness publications.



<sup>1</sup> Liz Koch. “Dem Bones,” *Massage & Bodywork*, Oct/Nov 2007: 68.

<sup>2</sup> Liz Koch, *The Psoas Book* (Felton, CA: Guinea Pig Publications. ISBN 0-9657944-0-7; 1981, updated 1997), 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> Koch, “Dem Bones,” 67.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

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