

THE JOURNAL OF Creative Aging

SAGE-ING

with Creative Spirit, Grace & Gratitude



A PUBLICATION OF
THE OKANAGAN INSTITUTE
NUMBER 22, WINTER 2017
EDITED BY KAREN CLOSE

KNOW YOURSELF. BE YOURSELF.
LOVE YOURSELF. SHARE YOURSELF.
AVAILABLE ONLINE AT
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The Voices of Creative Aging

CREATIVE AGING is a powerful new social and cultural movement that is stirring the imaginations of communities and people everywhere.

This is the first book to document the movement.

Often called Sage-ing, Creative Aging takes many forms: academic, social and personal. It includes festivals, conferences, classes, group sessions and individual creative pursuits. The Journal Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude was founded by the Okanagan Institute in 2011 to honour the transformational power of creativity. Intended as an initiative for collaboration and sharing, the Journal presents the opportunity for the free exchange of wisdom gleaned from creative engagement.

Sage-ing is about seeking – satisfying inner gnawing and transforming it to knowing and action. Aging can be alchemy when one allows the realisation that to Know Thyself and contribute that

knowing to our culture is indeed one of life's highest purposes. That knowing brings the gratitude, grace and integrity that a life deserves. The creative journey into self is a strong aid to health and wellbeing

for the individual and to our culture. Creative Aging brings together more than 50 essays and galleries of images that showcase the power of the imagination expressed and enjoyed.

CREATIVE AGING

STORIES FROM THE PAGES OF THE JOURNAL
SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE
SPIRIT, GRACE AND GRATITUDE
EDITED BY
Karen Close and Carolyn Cowan



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Okanagan Institute

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FROM THE EDITOR

I have just completed my final edit of this 22nd issue of the Journal. I look outside and feel the quiet following the accumulation from our first snow. I hear my creative self shout, "This is a gift." My aging self laments the challenges of the cold and of snowy roads. I let my imagination in, and relax into metaphor. I smile and breathe deeply. I see the falling snowflakes dancing; they are like newborns. I remember making snow angels in the freshness of the first soft pillow of flakes building up. A first snow is a cleansing that brings a quiet harmony, a renewed peace. Even the simplest objects are changed by their snow covering and take on a new presence. Every snowflake is unique and adds just a little something as it falls transforming what it touches. A wise man once said to me, "We're all just like snowflakes when we arrive on this earth." I like to think about that. As we

head indoors, winter is the season with more time for creative reflection.

The *Sage-ing Journal* goes online with the change of seasons, around the solstices and equinoxes. In this winter issue, I hear a union of voices each sharing their experiences of an enriched sense of self through creative engagement. Relaxing into creativity brings a redefinition of being, 'a quiet harmony', 'renewed peace', just like a snowfall.

A look back at art history confirms how humankind, since the earliest cave dwellers right up to the turn of this last century, has shaped their evolution and advancement led by creative expression. Cultures worked collectively to paint cave walls, built pyramids, forums, cathedrals, and tell their stories through sculptures, mosaics, stained glass. The twentieth century brought a surge of individuals exploring personal expression. Some

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became intimidated by the idea that creativity was for those with 'special' talents rather than each of us with unique talents. I hope the twenty-first century will change that. To evolve, our culture needs each of our unique voices, young and old, creatively supporting each other and sharing.

Another echo I hear in this Journal is how many of our contributors credit parents or grandparents for first encouraging them to find their creative voices. Since the first issue, the Journal has been a voice for creative mentoring between generations. That was the message of the sages. As Aristotle walked about with his students he urged them to "*Know yourself. Be yourself. Love yourself. Share yourself.*" That is our message.

Be a snowflake. Each flake adds to a winter wonderland of human creation.

Karen Close

SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE TO SAGE-ING

• **Article is to be related to aging and creativity, in any of its many forms, as a path to gaining wisdom and self awareness and/or the act of harvesting life's wisdom as a legacy for future generations.**

- Article to be attached as a document in .rtf format;
- 500 to a 1500 word maximum;
- Photos: Please attach each photo separately including: the writer's headshot photo and four or five photos, related to article . All photos should be attached in high resolution jpg format with a caption;
- Insert the word "**photo**" with its caption within the article where you would like each image placed (we'll try to honour this request as layout permits).
- Please include brief bio information (one or two short paragraphs) placed at the end of your article; this is meant to give the reader an idea of who you are, your passions and/or what you do and have done with your life that feels relevant to the article. Include contact info: email, website, blog address – whatever you want to include. For each journal, due date is the 10th of the month preceding release date. We release around the equinoxes and solstices. **For next issue due date is February 10, 2017**
- Email the article and photographs to karensageing@gmail.com

Antiquity identified a sage as a wise person ... wisdom is a form of goodness, and is not scientific knowledge but another kind of cognition.

– Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 1246b

AGING WITH ART



Karen Close

On October 1st, 2016, in the middle of Canada's annual 3 day *Culture Days* celebration our country lost cultural icon Daphne Odjig at age 97. I lost a friend and mentor. Culture Days presents opportunities for Canadians to "discover their cultural spirit and passion." Immediately the media responded with tributes to Odjig's large body of work and the recognition her career had brought to First Nations art. That is the icon. I will remember a determined self directed woman, who never stopped challenging the artist within and encouraging others to follow their own art. Her life was guided by 'cultural spirit and passion'.

"every one of us is a fusion of the eternal, of ancestral wisdom or caution as well, a seer of the future - but some part of us always remains capable of responding to here and now with originality." Daphne Odjig from *A Paint Brush In My Hand* (1992)

In the spring of 2013, when I heard Daphne had moved to a Kelowna care facility, I began to visit regularly so that I could share her story. She was gentle but firm, and referred me to the books that had been written about her.

"It's hard for me to talk about what's in my paintings because many people don't understand.

How do you express in words, feelings that you feel inside? I express my feelings in my paintings, but not in words."

Indeed a profile emerged that I shared in the 9th issue of the Journal, but more importantly we became friends who shared a deep commitment to creative spirit.

Over the next three years we talked about life and our feelings. We developed routines that brought her comfort, and I got the rich treasure of watching the renaissance of her drawing skills adapting to a new stage: 'a pencil in my arthritic hand'.

In the winter of 2014, motivated by her rich internal life, she returned to drawing and she continually trained her arthritic hands to respond. "My soul has to speak," she explained. She was consumed by her practice and I watched the loyalty of creative spirit when it has been given respect. Always Daphne would refer back to the earliest teachings she had received from her grandfather, Jonas, and the lesson of being the voice of your own cultural spirit as you create your life. Although Daphne's mother was from England she moved, with Daphne in her womb, to join her husband on the unceded Wikwemikong Reserve on Manitoulin Island in northern Ontario. That was the culture in which Daphne

Summer 2016





Left to right:

- Her first return to drawing
- She loved dancing
- A more recent drawing

My hope is that her encouragement to have every child, indeed every person, know the joy of a brush or a pencil in one's hand will be her final legacy. Daphne's story is a Canadian art history tale that engages and should be taught to all youth.

birthed her artistic skill and she remained loyal to that start.

During these past few years I have been very vocal about the elder and sage I came to love and the soul of her art. I am grateful to friends like poet Derry Yeomans who felt with me the discovery of Daphne's wisdom for all. In her young teenage years, still at home on the Wikwemikong Reserve and forced to leave school because of a bout of rheumatic fever, Daphne was compelled to share her understanding of art with the other children. She would hold classes in the chicken coop behind her house. To be a teacher was her first ambition, but life had different plans. That life created many honours for her. My hope is that her encouragement to have every child, indeed every person, know the joy of a brush or a pencil in one's hand will be her final legacy. Daphne's story is a Canadian art history tale that engages and should be taught to all youth. It is a story that teaches how one's own cultural, creative, spirit can guide you to create a 'self honouring life. Every child, and person deserves that knowing. My gift of the last three years has been to watch Daphne embody the joy of creativity. After the January 2014 decision to to pick up her pencil and train her arthritic hands to draw again, Daphne filled her waking hours listening to her creative spirit and responding with originality, humour and love.

I began to jokingly call these works Daphne Doodles and she enjoyed the name. Some were cultural, some reflective and others just humorous responses to going with mistakes and letting the pencil guide. Most importantly, as her hearing declined and conversation became more difficult she never felt alone; she communed with creative spirit. That is aging with art.

For her last year and a half Daphne, took great pleasure in having a single room with a large window overlooking the front entrance to the facility. There was a planted urn at the perfect height outside her window and an active bird house. Feeling a bit of nature, watching birds and people

TRIBUTE TO DAPHNE ODJIG

Derryn Yeomans

"I made a fabulous mistake today,"
Uttered the artist-elder....
And with those words, revealed
the soul-source of her life success.

Her energy was always directed
to her work, to her passion.
Not to the fears, fallacies, fantasies
Of possible accolades,
Of potential failures.

She did what she did...
And it satisfied her.

She became a voice for
her community, stayed true
to lessons learned
from her grandfather, Jonas.
As the lines flowed and circled,
As the paint became more and more
colorful and true,
She told the stories of her people
In vibrant depictions.

To her, a mistake was not a barrier,
But an invitation, an opportunity,
A creative gift.

As we seek to explore, discover,
nurture our creativity.

As we seek to explore, discover,
nurture our aging.

She must be our role model.
So one day, it can be said of us,

"She did what she did...
And it satisfied her."

[http://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/
daphne-odjig-dead-1.3788123](http://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/daphne-odjig-dead-1.3788123)



Abby's Birthday Rooster

she recovered from illness. I smile when I remember my first visit with Daphne in her new care facility. She gave me an intense look and said, "I know how to make this work. I'll do what I've always done." And that is what she did. Proteges who felt influenced by her example gathered with me at The Kelowna Art Gallery in the fall of 1995. *Daphne Odjig at 95: The Art of Self Actualizing* celebrates the impact of Daphne's cultural spirit and passion.

LEGACY PROJECT

When opportunity permitted I would take my grandchildren to visit with Daphne. Like her grandfather, I feel passionate about nurturing cultural creative spirit. Daphne loved to watch my 3 year old grandson Jax dance and nicknamed him 'Jumpin Jax'. At age 4 my granddaughter Abby nicknamed Daphne 'Crinkles' and we'd all laugh merrily. Just before her 5th birthday Daphne asked Abby what she should draw for her. Abby said, "A rooster." Daphne replied, "Oh, I did that this morning and gave it to Abby.

"How did she know?" Abby asked. "Creative spirit is magical," I responded.

When Daphne passed, it was 6 year old Abby's first experience of death. She was very thoughtful as she watched the news on video. The next day as she and I walked in the woods there was an early snowfall. It was beautiful.

"I think Daphne is in these woods?" Abby said, and I knew she understood. Abby's experience of the creative spirit that was Daphne will live with my granddaughter, and I am very grateful.

In tribute to Daphne Odjig and her grandfather Jonas, Okanagan artist Lee Claremont – www.leeclaremont.com – and I are working to create a kit for schools, and for grandparents, to use in guiding young children to understand the story of the determined young Daphne Odjig and the magic of creative imagination.

I invite anyone interested in contributing to this project, in any way they might consider, to contact me karensageing@gmail.com.

coming and going kept her alert and curious, but it was her drawing pad that engaged her. Almost exclusively, except for meals, Daphne chose her own company with time to draw. She sang continuously to herself - old war songs she'd learned from her father, and although she did not speak her native language, she would sing its songs from memory as she drew. She helped me realise how one needs to program the mind's internal resources before other faculties are weakened and you're alone with your soul. That was the gift her grandfather Jonas gave his lonely young granddaughter as

ORCHARD VALLEY QUILTERS GUILD

REACHING OUT TO LOCAL STUDENTS

Joan Lailey

The Orchard Valley Quilters Guild celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2012. The organizing committee of the Anniversary Quilt Show decided to do something we felt was perhaps daring and launched the Outreach Project to High Schools. Not only did we want to look to our past of thirty years, but we wanted to look to our future - the next generation of sewers. Our goal was to inspire youth to discover the joys of quilting while giving to the community.

Each year the OVQG gives hundreds of quilts to various organizations and groups within our city of Kelowna, BC. We felt the premie quilts which we donate to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of our local regional hospital would be a perfect match for the students as the quilts are small and adaptable to simple patterns. We also believed that quilts for premature babies would appeal to the students.

Upon consultation with the school teachers, simple patterns were picked that required no matching of seams for the beginners and more advanced patterns for the seniors. Lesson plans, instructions and quilt assembly diagrams were emailed for photocopying by the school. Then the guild formed quilt cutting bees where members cut and packaged the kits into Ziploc bags

for the students to work with.

The teachers were very excited about the program and looked forward to the help and expertise of our guild members. There was a good mix of girls and boys in the classes with the boys surprising everyone with their work. Our High School Project became a true reach out and opportunity for intergenerational sharing. Two guild volunteers were required for each course for a proposed 8 hours of classroom instruction. We also gave two small trunk shows: one at the beginning to whet the students' appetites and one at the end to inspire them to greater things.

Since our first initiative in 2012, feedback from the students, the school

Our Quilts





Top: We did it

Above: Look what this machine and I can do

Every guild member who has participated in the passing down of their skills has remarked how it brought so much joy to their lives and a renewed hope in the future of the next generations.

teachers and our guild teachers indicate that the program was a success. Kudos go to the students and the teachers for supporting this project and a standing ovation goes to our members who taught them. We heard stories from the teachers about how some students have now chosen to make another quilt as their senior project for the year and others from different classes were heard saying they want to do a baby quilt too! One pastor from the Christian School brought the quilt his son received and pictures of his baby in the NICU. He told the students how his family takes this quilt everywhere with them and how much it means to each of them. His speech had a real impact on the class and made them appreciate how they could impact others with their efforts. When two groups of boys were working side by side, one was heard saying: "When my baby grows up and sees it was me who made the quilt, I bet they will try to contact me!". Hearing this remark, our member guild member smiled proudly. Another group of boys was heard discussing the merits of exchanging their backing fabric "because your colours go better with mine." These boys were thinking aesthetically.

Every guild member who has participated in the passing down of their skills has remarked how it brought so much joy to their lives and a renewed hope in the future of the next generations.

The one student who stood out from the rest was 17 year old Keegan who has deaf blindness. Although he worked with a learning assistant, Keegan took the strip set scraps and made a split rail fence quilt which he sewed mostly by himself. With his quilt was the following inscription:

"This quilt was made by a grade 11 student at Rutland Senior. Keegan is a student with deaf blindness. He spent the first 3 years of his life in hospital and has had many surgeries and medical interventions over his school years. This young man has overcome many obstacles in his life and has many achievements to be proud of. May this quilt symbolize hope and encouragement to whomever is the recipient."

Our Outreach Project to High Schools continues and to date, hundreds of quilts have been donated to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit by the students. Each year sees more young people learn the joys of creating with fabric while our guild members share their lifetimes of experience.

Our Guild is pleased to have sponsored this Outreach Program and we encourage other guilds to teach the students in their communities. They say it takes a village to raise a child and our guild can be proud of its work.

Orchard Valley Quilters Guild www.kelownaquilts.com

For lovers of fabric, fibre and friendship...

Our meetings provide members with friendship, support, inspiration and encouragement. We welcome quilters and fabric artists of all levels of expertise. Our members practice traditional, modern, hand, machine, and art quilting. Meetings are a great place to learn, socialize and exchange ideas.

THE GIFT OF VOLUNTEERING IN THE ARTS



Elvia Picco

My interest in opera and my enthusiasm to learn more about it started four years ago, when I attended a book launch event. At the reception, I had a chance conversation with Alexandra Babel, Artistic Director of Opera Kelowna.

That evening, Alexandra performed opera pieces, commemorating family stories to reflect the theme of the event. As an audience member, I was moved by the music of her voice and the sense of intimacy that the music created. While driving home, I reflected on our impromptu conversation. It affirmed that the power of the human voice combined with music; community connection impacts human emotions.

The following morning, while running errands downtown, I ran into Alexandra again at the grocery store. We were both surprised by our chance meeting. She extended an invitation to learn more about Opera Kelowna and asked about my interest in volunteer work. This is where my desires to learn more about opera, the opera movement in Kelowna and potential volunteer opportunities coincided.

Since then, I have volunteered at several Opera Kelowna fundraising and community outreach events at different venues in Kelowna and surrounding communities within the Okanagan. (photos by Elvia Picco)

These experiences have broadened the scope of my knowledge about the array of operatic performance offerings that are available. Volunteering with Opera Kelowna has provided opportunities to meet like-minded people who share a passion for opera and the arts. Through my involvement, I have become immersed in a self-guided study about opera which includes online research, library visits and attending operatic and musical events in Kelowna. When travelling to other cities, I buy tickets and attend other operas and cultural events. I seek out articles about opera performances and venues around the world. My life has been enriched.

In July 2014, I traveled to Venice, Italy and had the amazing opportunity to attend an orchestral concert event at Teatro La Fenice (Fenice Opera House). This opera house is one of the most famous and renowned landmarks in the history of Italian theatre and in the history of opera. Following that concert, my passion for opera, as well as Italian culture and language was ignited and renewed. I was in awe of the performance venue. At the event, I met some great people who were also travelling, and it was fun to compare our experiences of the performance afterwards.

I can still visualize myself rehearsing at home over and over again, and dreaming at night about the upcoming performance.



Top: Opera singers – Opera in the Park – Heritage Park, Peachland

Above: Opera crew having fun – Heritage Park - Peachland

In August 2016, I had the opportunity to join Opera Kelowna women’s chorus group for Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*. (behind the scenes photos by Elvia Picco)

I have not sung or been on a stage since Grade 6 – some 45 years ago! When I embraced the opportunity to sing, it stretched me and my abilities beyond anything I thought possible. The opera was sung in German, and we were all responsible for learning and memorizing the lyrics and music. I can still visualize myself rehearsing at home over and over again, and dreaming at night about the upcoming performance.

There was tremendous support and leadership at our group rehearsals for *The Magic Flute* from conductor Bernard McDonald and from répétiteur and diction coach Kinza Tyrrell. We were all encouraged to sing together as a team, to own our parts, and the chorus group would be successful.

“The conductor, chorus master, and répétiteur (rehearsal pianist and vocal coach) provide leadership to the group of people who have been engaged to make music together. In my view, that means exacting very high technical and artistic standards from a diverse range of personalities. The range is wide, but with the right instruction everyone should be empowered to do their best, *together*. When that kind of artistic teamwork goes

well, it is a wonderful experience for all, and the technical and artistic prowess that the group has developed together will have a tangible impact on the audience.” says Bernard McDonald, Conductor, and Larsen Chair of Opera, Simpson College.

“Find your voice, build your voice and enjoy performing,” says Alexandra Babel. “Singing is an opportunity to discover, express and release human energy while being creative and happy with others.”

After my chorus singing experience, I was invited to participate as a choir member in Opera Kelowna’s “Bohemian Christmas” concert at the Cathedral of St. Michael and All Angels. Our weekly rehearsals, alongside singing at services, has taught me a great deal about singing and reading music. More importantly, and for me the greatest treasure, is the new friendships and the collegial environment created by supportive fellow choral singers. To expose ourselves and our talents takes courage and that risk taking builds empathy for each other.

“I think everyone has the ability to sing and choirs are a fantastic environment to learn how to read music and become immersed in a welcoming music community,” says Matt Hill, Director of Music at the Cathedral of St. Michael and All Angels.

In December, Opera Kelowna celebrated the holiday season by performing A Bohemian Christmas weekend concert. It was an exciting start to a big



season for Opera Kelowna. The guest singers from Vancouver, tenor Sunny Shams and soprano Shadan Saul, delivered unforgettable performances. It was a full house both nights and many members of our audience were interested in becoming involved with our community choir and with the opera more generally.

Opera Kelowna has made a rich contribution to our community and to me. I encourage you to find out about Opera in your community. Volunteering is a wonderful and fulfilling way to spend time together and to invest in many new musical and arts experiences. Opera has a place for everyone's talents to grow because creating a performance calls upon so many varied creative expressions

Here are a few websites to nourish your interest in opera:

- www.theopera101.com – Opera for Everyone
- www.opera.ca – The Voice of Opera in Canada
- www.operakelowna.com – Opera Kelowna Society

It's an easy first step to whet your appetite: create an opera date or get a group together to experience the Metropolitan Opera live in High Definition (HD) at Cineplex Odeon's theatres

- www.cineplex.com/Events/MetOpera

I'm happy to be living in Kelowna and can start planning my musical agenda for 2017. These are two upcoming Opera Kelowna events I'll attend.

Left top: Woman's Chorus Group - The Magic Flute

Left Middle: Men's Chorus Group

Left bottom: Costume Designer – Keren Huyter

Right top: The Magic Flute (photo by Glenna Turnbull)

Right bottom: It was a grand performance (photo by Glenna Turnbull)



• Saturday, May 13, 2017: A Bohemian Masquerade, a fashion fundraiser event for Opera Kelowna's main-stage performance.

• Friday, August 18 and Saturday August 19, 2017 : Puccini's La Bohème.

To find out more about getting involved, or to become an Opera Kelowna donor or corporate sponsor, please visit the Opera Kelowna website at: www.operakelowna.ca

Lastly, let me share 5 Interesting Facts about Opera that will maybe intrigue you.

1. The term "opera" comes from the Latin opus, or "work." The term "soap opera" was first recorded in 1939 as a derogatory term for daytime radio shows that were sponsored by soap manufacturers.

2. Opera's origins are typically traced to the dramas of ancient Greece, though the Egyptians had been performing the Heb-Sed (or Feast of the Tail) for 2,000 years previously. The Heb-Sed evolved into Passion Plays in which the Egyptians acted out stories from Egypt's glorious past set to music and singing.^h

3. Opera composers would sometimes hire a group of people to cheer their works or boo the works of their rivals. This group was called a *claque* (clapping) and was common at European opera performances.

4. The La Scala Opera House (inaugurated in 1778) in Milan, Italy, is famous for having the hardest-to-please audience in opera. The audience has been known to make a performer keep singing until he or she "gets it right."

5. Opera was the fruit of the Italian Renaissance. In the final decade of the sixteenth century, a group of artists, musicians, and poets who called themselves the Florentine Camerata met there to revive Greek drama and developed an opera in musica: a work in music. Galileo's father, Vincenzo Galilei was reportedly a member.^k

Source: <http://facts.randomhistory.com/interesting-facts-about-opera.html>



Top: Culture Days (photo by Glenna Turnbull)

Middle: Matt with choir and audience (photo by Joy Caravello)

Bottom: Sunny and Shadan (photo by Joy Caravello)

Elvia Picco is a freelance writer and photographer who enjoys expanding her knowledge in singing, music and the arts. She has an extensive background in community investments, event management and fund development. She is an active volunteer in the community mentoring business students and participates in a variety of non-profit events.

MY ART IS MY EXERCISE

Fay Wolfenden



With my first piece

One of my favorite quotes is “Creation is the artist’s true function; where there is no creation there is no art.” Henri Matisse (1869 – 1954)

My creative journey began when my mother taught me how to sew. I loved sitting at the sewing machine making unique pieces of clothing; first for my dolls and then for myself. I tried candle making, ceramics and fibre arts before I found my passion working with stained glass. I love all aspects of glass, from making stained glass art panels, to fused glass and glass bead making (lamp work). Making jewellery is an outcome of my glass bead making.

I always thought that at a ‘certain’ age (whatever that is) I would give up making my art, my creative ideas, and donate all my supplies to a worthy organization. Then I met Janice Fingado a silversmith who at the age of 85 was making jewellery, teaching in her studio at the Rotary Centre for the Arts in Kelowna BC and selling her jewellery on line. I realized then that I would keep on doing what I loved and not give it up just because I was at a ‘certain’ age. Janice has since moved to San Diego to be near her family. And yes, she is still teaching (at age 91), making jewellery, selling online, and has just moved to a larger house to include a bigger teaching studio in her garage. She is an inspiration to be sure.

I have come to learn that the brain needs exercise, constant challenge and regular use to repair, grow and function properly. My brain exercise is creating new designs, putting together the colour schemes for my art glass panels, and figuring out the best way to incorporate the copper wire, glass nuggets and found objects that I include in my panels. Other brain exercise is ordering supplies, navigating the internet, writing descriptions for new classes, setting up class schedules, teaching workshops, keeping up with current trends, and the least of all my favorites things: – math. Having to figure out how many square feet of glass I will need for a project, and then calculating the total cost of all the material I actually used must be considered to find the final price on a piece. Putting together a jewellery design is another brain challenge. The proper balance of pieces, size of pieces, the right colours, the right number of charms to make the piece pleasing to the eye must all be considered.

It has also been said that we should make use of our non-dominant hand each day – this increases the brain challenge. When I am making glass beads I have to use both hands in a synchronized motion to make the bead round.

Physical activity in older adults has been shown to reduce falls, reduce blood pressure, reduce risk of heart disease, reduce depression risk, help your balance and maintain or improve cognitive function, daily function, quality of life and sleep - just to name a few, and each improves my quality of life.

Turquoise Steps – glass art panel





Top left: Hammered Copper Penny with Lampwork Flower

Top right: Lampwork Beads

Above: Stairway To Purple - glass art panel

Although I walk regularly each week with a ladies walking group, I get additional physical exercise just by 'doing' my art. Several aspects require my strength. Cutting glass is physically demanding; I add recycled copper wire to my pieces stripping and the plastic covering over the wire must be pulled off. As well, lifting heavy glass, and sawing through metal for the edging of my pieces require muscle strength. I use a 5 pound hammer to flatten the pennies and to fold form the copper sheet to be used in my jewellery. Finally, I must load the car up with all my gear and work for shows. It has been said that sitting is the new cancer. I do most of my glass work standing up, and I am constantly walking around my work bench, with lots of bending and stretching involved.

Another benefit that I receive from my art is the positive socializing with all of my students, from children (workshops at the RCA and schools) to seniors at the Assisted Living facility where I do art glass workshops. Successful aging is all about quality of life and being happy with what we do. My glass work makes me happy, and I am satisfied when I finish a piece whether it be a completed glass art panel, piece of jewellery or a student workshop where I can see the expressions on the students' faces when they complete their projects.

I began my glass art journey 35 years ago and it has taken me on a fantastic trip. I have met many fabulous people along the way, taken many courses, and met great teachers who were all willing to share their knowledge. I love to share my knowledge through my workshops and pay forward all that I have learned. I want to pass on my passion for my love of all things glass.

To quote Matisse again, "Without passion there is no art." Matisse knew the importance of art to his life. Even once he was bedridden, he continued to make very physical drawings.

Fay Wolfenden is a glass and metal artist who grew up in North Vancouver and has lived in Calgary, Montreal and Toronto. Her love of teaching began in Toronto teaching stained glass adult education classes. She now lives in the Mission part of Kelowna with her husband, and shares Studio 113 at the RCA with 2 other artists. Fay is inspired by the beauty of the Okanagan, her love of colour and her many travels. She enjoys sharing her knowledge and techniques by teaching workshops.

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IN REFLECTION



Renata Kerr

As an artist, I've had the unique opportunity to collaborate on a number of art pieces over these last few years, each of them slightly different in nature from each other. There have been collaborations where the public was invited to contribute to the work, others where I started a painting and another artist finished it, and then there have been those where several artists worked together to create a painting.

Collaboration is, by its very nature, a sharing experience. It involves community, and is a meeting of creative minds. It demands that the participants give up at least partial control of their vision for the piece they are working on. This, I would say, is the toughest thing about it.

One of my first opportunities to be involved in an art collaboration was during the inaugural Creative Aging Day in Kelowna, BC. A large canvas was set up in front of the ARTE Funktional Gallery, and the public was encouraged to try their hand at a large group painting. Participants ranged from those who knew nothing about art, to established artists eager to partake in the fun. As facilitator, I began the process, providing a starting point and getting rid of the intimidating blank canvas. With some friendly encouragement, curious on-lookers added to the painting. Feeling safe in the supportive environment, they opened up and expressed their creativity. Some made tiny, tentative marks, while others made bold, confident strokes with their brushes. Each contributed in their own way. From time to time, during a lull in the proceedings, I would stand back and assess the painting. I would add some paint strokes of my own, pulling elements together, trying to bring cohesion to disparate elements. I tried to balance the composition and generally fine-tune the painting. I was careful, though, not to totally obliterate anyone's efforts. It was important to respect everyone's contribution. In the end, the result was a quirky, riotous explosion of colour, with touches of many people's personalities on it. The painting was eventually raffled off in a fundraiser for the organization heArt Fit. (HeArt Fit is a painting group that meets weekly at the Rotary Centre for the Arts, for those seeking a creative lifestyle and improved health through creativity.) The new owner of the painting, in her words "ecstatic" at having won it, has hung it in a place of honour in her home, where it brings a wonderful energy to an already beautiful room.

Another form of collaboration was the art done for the Intergenerational Exhibition at Lake Country Art Gallery. This exhibition showcased artwork involving two artists from two different generations. I worked on three separate paintings: one with Keith Routley, an older painter, and two with Stacey Smith, a younger artist. In both cases, the paintings were worked on independently.

Keith started our painting, after which time he gave it to me and I completed it in my own studio. When handed a half-finished painting, you are faced with

Collaborative Painting from Creative Aging Day





Top: Stardom
Middle: Tenacity
Above: Bin 151

an image and colour palette that you probably wouldn't have chosen had it been your own painting. You have to find a way to work with those elements, honouring the other artist's creative process. You then decide the track you want to follow, and the resulting painting ends up being a combination of both your styles. Fortunately, both Keith and I are very adventurous with our colour palettes, and neither of us is afraid to experiment. What I appreciate about working on one of Keith's canvases is his exuberance and his fearlessness. If he thinks it, he will act on it; he follows his instincts. He paints with abandon, reminding me that all art doesn't have to be "serious".

Stacey and I, being artists, are used to following our own vision, so this exercise presented quite a challenge for both of us. We worked on two pieces and exchanged them partway through. In the case of *Tenacity*, Stacey worked on the piece first, creating the initial layers. I then added to it, before handing it back to her for completion. We work very differently, using different colour palettes, so it was interesting to try blending the two styles together. Stacey uses soft transparent layers to build up her work, and incorporates elements of collage. I tend to apply paint thickly, using bolder strokes, and employing darker colours. It was hard for me to paint over sections of Stacey's work, but it did give me a chance to build on her ideas, and pursue a direction that I might not have otherwise explored. It is a strange feeling, giving a partially-finished painting to someone else to complete. You wonder what will happen to it and how it will change. You must be willing to practise non-attachment, because you know that no matter how much you like what you did, it will look very different the next time you see it. You never know in which direction another artist will take your initial ideas. I found this type of collaboration quite liberating in the end, as it reinforced the principle of "letting go".

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of being part of a three-woman art exhibition. To promote our event, Carmen Venturi, Maureen Lejbak and I created a collaborative painting, entitled *Bin 151* (being the sum of our birth years), that was used on all of our promotional material. We got together one afternoon, with no preconceived ideas and without knowing what the outcome of the painting would be. We started making marks on the canvas and just carried on from there. It flowed so easily; it was like a dance. There was a continuous give and take, with each of us putting our particular stamp on the painting. It was a beautiful thing to be a part of. Because we respect each other as artists, we trusted that whatever each of us did on the canvas would work out in the end. We were able to let go of our egos in pursuit of a common goal. Although we each might have done a few things differently based on our own aesthetic, we love the end result. It is a part of all three of us, and we treasure it.



DiscARTed

My latest collaborative work involved the same three artists; Carmen, Maureen and myself. We recently completed a large 8' x 8' mural for the front wall of Lake Country Art Gallery, in Lake Country, BC, which will stay up until March, 2017. For this installation, we welcomed the chance to be able to “say” something with our piece; to push the boundaries of what art can or should be. The purpose of the work was not to create a beautiful work of art; rather, it was an opportunity to have people stop and think about what they were looking at.

All three of us are concerned about the massive waste in our society, and how things are discarded so easily and without a second thought. Things were meant to be held for years and repaired when they stopped working. Unfortunately, in this throw-away culture, if something breaks down, it is tossed and replaced by a new thing. Obsolescence is planned and built into the devices we use on a daily basis. Landfill sites are overflowing with items that no longer serve anyone’s purpose. But to us, there is beauty in age and decay, even in the banal. We wanted to communicate that in this piece of art. By rearranging and reassembling found objects, we attempted to make something beautiful – or at least interesting – out of the discarded, unwanted and unused.

The name we chose for the installation was *discARTed*; a play on the theme of “the discarded as art”. In keeping with the spirit of the work, we scavenged for materials. We didn’t purchase anything, unless we could find it used. The mural was created over four days (not including the preparation beforehand), and involved affixing various found objects and textures to the background, priming, and finally doing what we do best, painting. We worked intuitively and let the texture guide us. Because we weren’t concerned about making a “pretty” picture, we felt free to be adventurous and to experiment with new techniques. We had fun working together on this project, and I think it shows in the final piece.

To conclude, all of the collaborations I have worked on ended up being valuable learning experiences. I have benefitted from my association with each of my fellow collaborators. A group effort involves a different mindset from working in solitude. You must be willing to let go of the notion that there is only one way to do things and only one path that a painting can take. There is a wonderful spontaneity that occurs when working with others. You find yourself veering off in directions you wouldn’t normally go, based on someone else’s input. There are many happy surprises along the way! I would encourage everyone to try this form of expressive collective endeavour. Moving out of one’s comfort zone is an opportunity for personal growth, and the collaboration with others celebrates the important act of sharing knowledge, community and creative spirit.

Renata Kerr graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) in the 1980s and worked as a graphic designer in Canada and Europe for over 25 years. After retiring from the business world, she rediscovered her love of painting. She is an Active member of the Federation of Canadian Artists (FCA) and has had her work displayed in numerous group exhibitions. Her work can be viewed on her website www.renatakerr.com

FEISTY AGING

Cathryn Wellner



The huge pile of dog poop atop a Montréal bus stop caught my eye. I was laughing at the city's clever campaign to persuade people to clean up after their dogs when I tripped over a small ledge.

Montreal looks different from the level of a sidewalk. Two kindly police officers insisted I go to emergency to have my injuries checked out. I insisted I could survive a sprained ankle and a banged knee without intervention. I won.

Just another day in the life of a feisty ager. But my feistiness is tame by comparison with the people I wrote about in *Feisty Aging*. They dance, sing, climb mountains, sail oceans, and spit in the face of naysayers.

My family is not known for longevity. I wanted some role models for zesty living beyond my 70th birthday. While writing a blog called "This Gives Me Hope", I found plenty of them.

On Vancouver Island a group of Boomers were having conversations about the potentially harrowing journey through their last years. Initial talks led to what is now a senior co-housing complex called Harbourside. A lot of people talk about options for aging independently and in good company, but few carry through with such determination.

- <http://thisgivesmehope.com/2015/11/11/aging-together-in-a-chosen-community>

Priscilla Sitienei was in her 90s when the Kenyan woman decided to do something normally reserved for the young. She enrolled in the same elementary school six of her great-great-grandchildren were attending. She had been delivering babies for 65 years. Now it was time for her to inspire some of the youngsters she had brought into the world. She believed if she got an education, many reluctant scholars would understand its value and stay in school.

- <http://thisgivesmehope.com/2015/03/23/the-90-year-old-primary-school-student/>

A comedian from my home town of Twin Falls, Idaho, had already led a deliberately happy life when Jay Leno discovered her. He invited the centenarian to appear on his late-night show, and she skyrocketed to celebrity status. By then (2011) she had been a performer for over ninety years. Fame may have been late in coming, but joy didn't wait for a spot in the limelight.

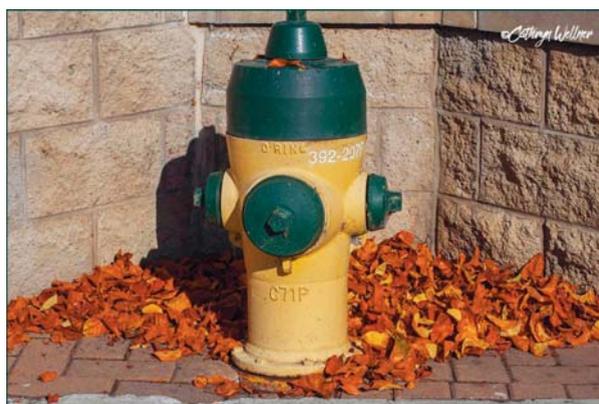
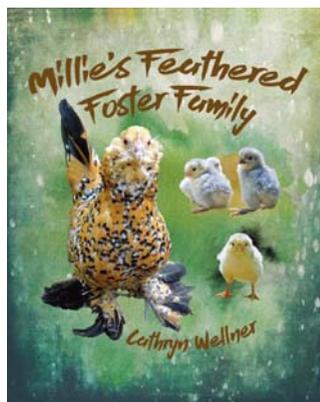
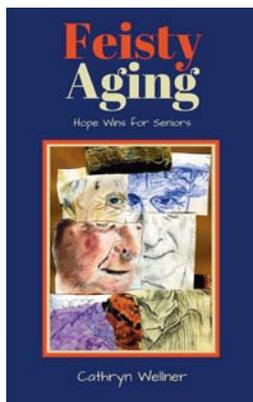
- <http://thisgivesmehope.com/2011/10/07/152-dorothy-custer-turns-100-and-wows-jay-leno/>

Then there was Olga Kotelko, Saskatchewan-raised athlete who, at 93, could boast 23 world records in track and field. Social science writer Bruce Grierson credited her healthy aging to a positive attitude. She was still competing a month before she died, shortly after her 95th birthday.

- <http://thisgivesmehope.com/2014/02/24/953-record-breaking-track-star-at-95/>

Since my twin interests are writing and photography, I was particularly keen to learn more about people who pursued a passion for the arts during what I used

They dance, sing, climb mountains, sail oceans, and spit in the face of naysayers.



Hydrant was bursting with stories. All summer long he practiced them, knowing the time would come when winds would surround him with dying leaves. They would welcome the solace of magical tales as they said farewell to their brief, beautiful lives.



Top left: Cover of Feisty Aging;
Top right: Cover of 1st children's book
Middle: Example of a micro tale:
Above: Digital artistry sample: Be A Weed

to consider their “dotage”. When I came across Toyo Shibata, I was inspired. At 92 she finally had to give up classical dancing. Her son suggested she try poetry. After a newspaper published one of her first efforts, she was unstoppable. She kept writing, and her first anthology sold 1.5 million copies.

- <http://thisgivesmehope.com/2011/06/15/67-poet-becomes-best-selling-author-at-9/>

One of my favourite childhood authors, Laura Ingalls Wilder, did not start writing her best sellers until she was 65. Nudged to write her personal stories by her daughter, Rose, Wilder was a critical failure when she first submitted her writing. She was smart, though. She paid attention to the criticisms from potential publishers. Instead of writing memoirs, she turned to fiction. The stories she wrote are still popular more than 80 years after her first success.

- <http://thisgivesmehope.com/2011/06/15/67-poet-becomes-best-selling-author-at-9/>

And then there’s Jamil Ahmad of Pakistan. A first-time novelist at 78, he was showered with awards for his stunning novel, *The Wandering Falcon*. Ahmad was a civil servant. He might never have submitted his manuscript had his younger brother not urged him to send it to a competition for Pakistani authors. We all need encouragement. His came from a family member.

- <http://thisgivesmehope.com/2011/11/30/204-never-too-old-to-create-something-stunning/>

If they could do it, so can I. So I face the start of my eighth decade on the planet with only one wish: enough years of energy to complete all the projects on my dream list.

They occupy most of my waking hours. In the last two years I published *Feisty Aging* and another, *Hope Wins*, that makes a strong case for believing in the power of hope.

I completed two books in a three-part series for children and am in the process of illustrating the third.

I published the first in a planned series of micro tales inspired by my photographs and am just polishing up a second book on the city I love, Kelowna.

High priorities for the coming year are a memoir of my years as a storyteller, another book or two of micro tales, and sharpening my skills with digital artistry. I have become fierce about guarding the time I need to work but am also grateful to live in a community of understanding friends.

My own feistiness is pretty tame by comparison with many of the people I wrote about, but I burn with eagerness to learn new software, master photographic art, and write my way through an ever-growing list of projects. I will not let age’s inroads on my body and energy stand in the way.

GONE TO BE WITH THE ANCESTORS

WORKS OF GRIEF & CEREMONY



Johanna M. Beyers

First Snow

By the Old Ones' calendar these are the Elder days of the year, shortest month, end of October, a portal wavering between the worlds, between one year and the next. On Blue Grouse Mountain the clouds lift as the day brightens, leaving a trace of snow that will soon melt.

My third birthday since without you. The silence in the apartment. I waste hours. "You'll be all right," you said that night after the care team had left & I could not could not keep

keep back my tears.

The thought of this silence, how it would arrange itself around me, the way it saturates the air as if it has cells & pores that breathe in and out with me, never occurred to you. I listen as it falls over itself, cell over cell, pore against pore, emptied and mute and flat.

I hold out with voices from radio & TV. Afternoon coffee shared with a friend, tea

at the Pulp Fiction, the forced busyness of school. It's not that sort of counsel I want. I want to feel how I am here, you there. As like the stillness of the land, the imagined quietude of Douglas Fir huddled in the eastern hills, sending signals to each other by pheromone

& it crept into me, and their silence said something about being. Like the feel of the Paleolithic cave at Chauvet, its tender secret paintings revealed once to human view & hidden again, sealed from memory forever, the horses, lions, mammoths folded in once more upon themselves, hushed into the voiceless dark of Earth, as if being herded into their own light, quieter than space. Quieter than time.

I saw you in a dream playing frisbee or, more likely, baseball with an invisible pal. You were on the far shore of a shallow river interspersed with gravel islets. A worn Viking barge shifted lightly back & forth against the nearest bank, and food & drink were served the waiting.

Johanna Beyers is a psychotherapist, currently finishing a Masters of Social Work. She is inspired by the psyche and nature. She is the author of the volume of poems, *Sandbar Islands*, and a nonfiction book on a life with dreams, *Wearing My Feathered Hat: Engaging Change Through Seven Dreams*. After many years in Toronto, she now lives in Kelowna.

Left: *The Rocking Chair* (*Connecting With Peace & Grace*)

Mixed media on paper. Acrylics, fabric, papers, watercolours, oil pastels. 11" x 14"

Right: *Bicycles* Mixed media on canvas board. Papers, stencils, monotype. 9" x 12"

Bottom: *Gone to Be With the Ancestors*

Mixed media on paperboard. Acrylics, fabrics, papers, monotype, watercolours, natural materials, beads. 15" x 19"



TAKING THE TIME FOR ART IN THE OKANAGAN

Suzanne Chavarie

“In all things of nature, there is something of the marvelous.” – Aristotle

“Creating art has become my form of meditation and every moment soothes my soul and brings peace.” – Nancy Vince, Meet Nancy Vince



I was visiting the *Lake Country Art Gallery*, located at 10356 A Bottom Wood Lake Road in Lake Country, and decided to peek into the art gallery and art shop, which is run separately from the gallery; volunteer Nancy Vince was running the gallery gift shop that afternoon. Through conversation I learned how art had saved her two years ago after a health scare. Her story quickly absorbed my attention.

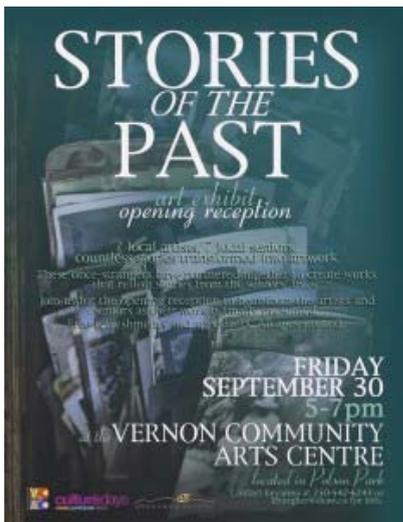
While still living in Maple Ridge she had created an award winning garden that was featured in the *Vancouver Sun*, on the *Home and Garden Channel*, and in the magazines *Garden West* and *Canadian Gardening*. After she and her husband decided to retire to the Okanagan, she was excited to focus on her dream of learning to draw and paint. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons her dream was put on hold at first, and her art supplies moved to the back of the closet. Then, in 2012, she attended a drop in art class at *Nadine’s Fine Arts* in Vernon, and was thrilled with the results, but she was slow to continue her practice until a health scare last year made her seek out a whole new world of meditative art. Through *Zen Doodling* she has been flourishing and finding deep enjoyment.

In April of this year Nancy signed up to work on a project called *Stories of the Past*. She was teamed up with a senior from a retirement home in Vernon along with six other artist and seniors. Her senior was “Lucy”, who turned 91 this summer. Lucy had had some great Vernon historical connections and she was very excited to share her story. The art exhibit *Stories of the Past* held an opening reception this fall at the *Vernon Community Arts Centre*.

The show had a great opening night. Both Nancy and Lucy attended and were exceedingly proud of what their communion had created. Nancy had responded to some of Lucy’s stories with paintings.

Nancy has made a creative and loving response to Lucy’s reminiscences. She shared her prints of these ‘Lucy’ images with me and showed me the book she has published on Lucy what Lucy shared with her, *Stories of The Past*. The book was the Vernon London Drugs photo book of the month in October 2016. Nancy also has created some of her own work in magical

Flyer for the exhibit





Left column, top to bottom:

- *Happy Hats Shows* a hat shop with the hats Lucy loves to wear
- *Birch-Bay- Summer* is Nancy's interpretation of the trailer where Lucy and her family spent their summers at in Birch Bay in West Kelowna
- *Quilts-of -Many-Colors* shows Lucy's quilt work
- Nancy and Suzanne

Right, top: Wilbur

Right, bottom: *Winter Magic* prints



Winter Magic prints that are perfect for this time of year.

I asked Nancy if I could share her story and she agreed. You can find more about her at nancyvince.com or contact her at navince@shaw.ca. I certainly enjoyed our conversation and hearing all about her "Happy Art", as she calls it.

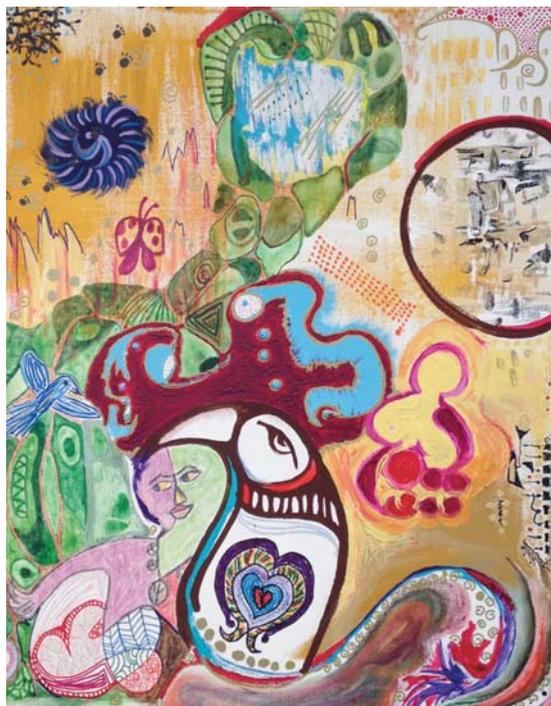
Another Encounter

The first *Creative Holiday ART Party* was held November 29th at *Wine & Art Kelowna* located 315 Lawrence Avenue in the heart of the Kelowna

downtown district. Hosted was by *The Central Okanagan Arts Community*, visual artists, musicians, performers and cultural workers invited the community to join together for a mix and mingle. It was a lovely event and a wonderful opportunity for the arts community. Hats off to the organizers.

While mingling, I met Wilbur Turner the owner of the hosting establishment. He shared that he had worked in the IT Business for 13 years as an executive and felt a need to change his profession. When he came across a downtown Kelowna location for sale he felt the timing was perfect and envisioned a fantastic venue for his creative energy.

I'm sure anyone meeting Wilbur for the first time would sense his creative flair; he carries it naturally as he moves around his space greeting customers with his colorful shirt and bow tie. He shared how he's proud he purchased new bar stools and tables locally. And that he's proud to be



involved in the community

This wine bar in a beautiful art gallery setting is full of local art work - Jolene Mackie, Fiona Neal to name a few. There's a local wine list and tasteful tapas - my favorite was the spicy popcorn!

You can find art in lots of places throughout the Okanagan, each with unique twists, but this gem nestled in the downtown core of Kelowna has a happening pulse with an amazing atmosphere.

Top left: We were very proud to have our canvas hanging at the Kelowna Art Gallery in November during Arts & Health month across Canada and around the world
Above: we each painted

Top right: 'Uniqueness Speaking: a tribute to Daphne Odjig' is the collaborative work by

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Suzanne Chavarie | Teresa Dohm |
| Karen Close | Ann Shearing |
| Kellie Schonfeld | Faith Ferguson |
| Keith Routley | Jen Pound |
| Mary Broadland | Wilma Arsenault |
| Shelley McGee | Marg Meyle |
| Raeleen Tebbutt | Denise Cesselli |

The Art of Friendship

"I paint what comes from my heart – what I feel and what I've experienced through life," ~ Daphne Odjig Sept 11, 1919 – October 1, 2016

heART Fit Founder Karen Close was a dear friend of Daphne's. They spent many hours talking about art and later, at heART Fit, Karen would share stories of what she called "Daphne Doodles" and the joy these brought to Daphne as she created in her final days. When Daphne Odjig passed, I asked heART Fit to make a collaborative piece as a tribute to Daphne Odjig and her process of heart.

All photos in this article are by **Suzanne Chavarie** and her roving eye. Paying attention, savouring all she encounters and sharing her special finds with others is Suzanne's generous talent. Filling with enthusiasm for every day and the art filled encounters she anticipates is her creative expression.

BEING ART LOYAL

OVERCOMING DISTRACTIONS TO YOUR CREATIVE PRACTICE



Lisa Lipsett

“The most regretful people on earth are those who felt the call to creative work, who felt their own creative power restive and uprising, and gave to it neither power nor time.” - poet Mary Oliver in *Upstream* a movement to create a healthy society through evidence-based, people-centred ideas.

Everyone experiences interruptions and diversions to their creative practice. Whether it is children, pets, work schedules, caring for others or internal struggles. Everyone has these. Commitment is compromised daily when we feel overwhelmed by distractions. This article is an attempt to better understand what it takes to be loyal to a creative practice, nevertheless.

Technological and Societal Distraction: Making art in troubled times

Technology can be a huge distraction. Even a mere five years ago texting, iPhones, iPads, videos, emails, endless Google searches didn't exist in my life. Now I feel like I am part of some grand social experiment. Especially after reading Daniel J. Levitin's *Guardian* article about the addictive effect of digital media on the pleasure centers of the brain. He states that “each time we check a Twitter feed or Facebook update, we encounter something novel and feel more connected socially (in a kind of weird, impersonal cyber way) and get another dollop of reward hormones”. I wonder what kind of improvement in attention and presence I could realize if I could just get off my iPad more often.

I also have serious concerns about the future of humanity. I check the online news multiple times a day to keep abreast of the ways the world is going wrong. This is a new form of addictive, Google search assisted distraction. I struggle with the balance of being informed and being overwhelmed. Sometimes I wonder how art making can be a responsible solution when there are such big problems in the world.

Other artists think about this too. Here is writer Toni Morrison on the artist's task in troubled times.

“This is precisely the time when artists go to work. There is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal. I know the world is bruised and bleeding. Though it is important not to ignore its pain, it is also critical to refuse to succumb to its malevolence. Like failure, chaos contains information that can lead to knowledge — even wisdom. Like art.”

Artists are experts in the natural dance of destruction and creation in art practice. We are made for these times.

We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal. I know the world is bruised and bleeding.

I struggle with the internal dialogue of expectation and shame. Recently I realized that the habit of tuning in to what is happening around me robs energy for staying in tune with myself.

My art 1



Relationship Distractions

Sometimes I wonder if interruption and distraction is particularly a woman's plight. This fall I have struggled to stay focused on my painting practice. It is the pull of projects with other people against the push of a solo art practice. I am also preoccupied with the nagging details of life. I am one of those modern people who urban legend predicts has upwards of 40,000 to 70,000 separate thoughts in a day!

I also have kittens. Two of them. And a "Velcro" dog named Harriet. I love these beings. Yet at times I can't focus for even a minute. Harriet barks at the cats to get off the counter and someone always needs to be let out. When I am struggling to find my creative rhythm, they snatch coveted quiet attention.

I sometimes feel I am responsible for making sure everything and everyone is fine. I make lists, make plans, co-ordinate details and hold pieces together. My husband lives happily unfettered in his own world (he doesn't even know the name of the neighbouring street around the corner). I seem to be OK with that for him, but not for myself.

I've also noticed that I am often on alert. I listen in on my family as though everything will fall into disarray if I don't hold watch. I get in a vigilant listening mode, ready to pop up into service. The normalcy of vigilance and distraction was part of my early programming. Growing up, it was rude to not listen in to keep track of a conversation happening in the same room. It was rude to remain quiet while in the same room as others, even while reading. Headphones didn't exist in the 60's. Television filled hours after school and on weekends. So I would retreat to write and draw quietly in my bed and I still do this.

In her novel *Intrusions*, author Ursula Hegi interweaves fiction with real life encounters with her young children. They hover in her office doorway whining for snacks and cuddles as she attempts to write. I am struck by the familiar precariousness of her writer's life tossed about in a sea of constant

interruption. Though distractions are often external, there are also internal struggles.

Internal Distractions: The Intimate Interrupter

I struggle with the internal dialogue of expectation and shame. Recently I realized that the habit of tuning in to what is happening around me robs energy for staying in tune with myself. Then I feel lost and disoriented when I do have time to dive into my creative practice.

Poet Mary Oliver describes an inner power struggle between art and practicality that I know all too well. She outlines three selves that fuel inner conflict. The childhood self is playful, willful and free. The social self is fettered with a thousand notions of obligation. The eternal creative self has a



My art 2
My art 3

kind of otherworldly awareness with a radically different purpose and set of priorities.

To demonstrate the fundamental tension between the practical and creative, Oliver says we want an airline pilot to stick to the flight plan with predictable constancy. In contrast, artists are not helping to make the world function efficiently and safely, but rather are helping it to move forward.

Author and creativity expert Elizabeth Gilbert says the tension between “art matters” and “art doesn’t matter” must be navigated. “My creative expression must be the most important thing in the world to me (if I am to live artistically) and it also must not matter at all (if I am to live sanely)”. According to Elizabeth Gilbert this central paradox is why loyalty to art making takes particular courage, resolve and commitment. Added to this burden is the inner critic and the challenge it poses when assessing the quality of our art work.

Being Art Loyal

“No matter what your age or your life path, whether making art is your career or your hobby or your dream, it is not too late, too egotistical, too selfish or too silly to work on your creativity”. - Julia Cameron, *The Artist’s Way*

According to Mary Oliver creativity requires a loyalty like the loyalty of gravity to water. One must be in service to four things: the higher purpose of art in society, the creative process, the creative self and the art we make.

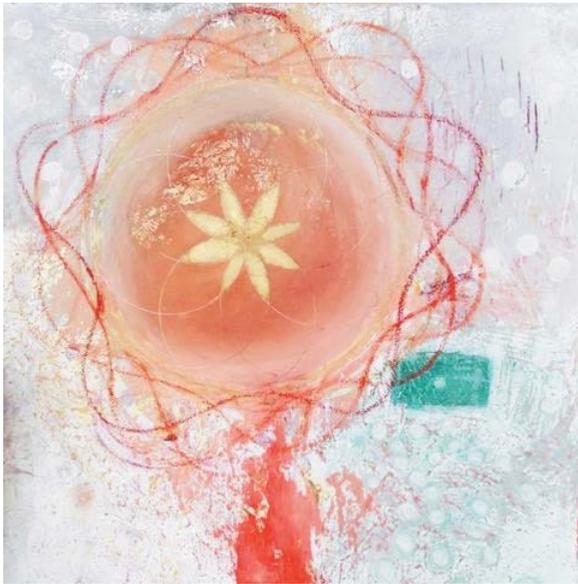
Community Service

We can put art to work for community causes. Recently I decided to head up an artist owned gallery on Salt Spring Island. To some this may seem like just another distraction from creative work. However, I am energized and happy to welcome new artists to the community, to give them a showcase space, give them gallery skills and a good launch pad into the local art scene. We will soon be a non-profit and I envision putting art to work for the local community by funneling money into various local environmental projects.

There are many ways we can put art to work on behalf of societal and environmental need. Aware that we are currently living in an *age of anxiety*, the curator for the 57th Venice Biennale which opens in May 2017 is committed to emphasizing the important role artists play in inventing their own universes and injecting generous vitality into the world we live in.

The Creative Process

The artist’s job is to make form out of the formlessness. Artists need to make friends with the unknown and uncertainty. Continually revising, reworking,



My art 4

Lisa Lipsett is a Salt Spring, BC artist and founder of Creative by Nature Art, Quiet Mind Art with Earth & Heart. Her world burst open the day she painted the way a tulip feels instead of the way it looks. Lisa offers creative mentoring, creative nature connection programs in schools and personal transformation through art. Her passion is to free people from art anxiety so they may strengthen their creative nature for joy, connection and self-change. To learn more about Lisa visit www.creativebynature.org/about/ Quiet Mind Art with Earth & Heart www.creativebynature.org

re-engaging is what we do. An artist's concern is the edge between the worlds of daily life and creative imagination. That space needs to be the focus. One must refuse interruption and be fully serious about, and responsible to, the work. Both creative and destructive processes have their place. Holding our artwork as sacred then throwing it away puts us in service to forward evolution.

The Creative Self

An artist's life cannot be separated from an artist's whole life, nor can this wholeness be broken down into mechanical bits and pieces of specific actions and habits. We must support ourselves with routines that counterbalance the messiness and uncertainty of creative practice. Habit gives shape to our practice though it must not control our creativity or our inner lives. When we develop daily routines that support physical and emotional wellness, and take holidays from technology and media, we treat both our art and our studio as a sacred place for creativity, silence and reflection. The trick is to strike a balance. Here is an engaging video from painter Susan Rothenberg who describes what showing up for her art looks like for her <http://bit.ly/2gj8QG3>.

The Art We Make

Art in whatever form: images, words, movements, sculptures will show us what is needed and where we have blind spots. Our creations will propel us forward over the long haul if we let them. Right now there is a sharp focal point in my paintings. Like an aid to meditation or a visual balm to soothe and gather the wayward fragments of my mind, my art has a strong, golden focus. My paintings highlight the focus I crave and act as inspirational reminders; they are meditation aids and offer much needed support when I am with them. It is my hope that they offer this to other viewers as well.

We let art lead when we open to what our art is trying to say. We are rewarded with trust, joy, resilience and a powerful way to know. It will be as loyal to us as we are to it. Distraction is a constant companion for artists so as Benjamin Franklin writes, "if you fail to plan you are planning to fail!"

RESOURCES

Julia Cameron, *Walking in this World: The Practical Art of Creativity*. Tarcher Books

Elizabeth Gilbert, *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*. Penguin Books

Ursula Hegi, *Intrusions*. Simon and Schuster

Daniel J Levitin, *Why the Modern World is Bad for your Brain*. The Guardian Sunday 18 January, 2015 <http://bit.ly/1UriXpS>

Maria Popova, *No Place for Self-Pity, No Room for Fear: Toni Morrison on the Artist's Task in Troubled times*. Brain Pickings <http://bit.ly/2guR1ov>

CATCH A WAVE

Catherine Acutt



I think people need to know more about brainwave states and how they affect our health and mental states. We have the ability to change our lives just by the way we think and feel.

My Dad always amazed me. He was with us for 96 years; as a child I only remember him being sick once. However, twice he was diagnosed with cancer, once in his fifties and again in his seventies. Both times he cured himself. He maintained that having a fulfilling and healthy life is dependent on the way you live your life, and how you use your mind. He was always doing things he loved, not only just doing, but trying to figure out new ways or systems; he was never satisfied with the norm. At the time I thought he made his life so complicated inventing, building, studying wildlife in the bush, gardening, reading everything he could find on helping humanity, and on self improvement. He loved gardening. After he retired it was not just regular gardening that attracted him. He began grafting different fruits trees, raising different kinds of bees to pollinate the garden, building watering cans with various types of sprouts to see which were easier to use, or creating some new gadget to dig with. He even built a house; other than the roof and the kitchen cupboards, everything else he used was something that was recycled. Next he devised some kind of geothermal heating for that house. We siblings just shook our heads, “What will Dad be up to next?” It was not until I learned about the different brain waves that I began to understand my father. He was surfing his own brainwaves.

I believe it is important to understand that our brain waves and the subconscious mind play a big part in our health, happiness and fulfillment. I have learned how wave frequencies affect us. This knowledge has made me realise how we can do things to put ourselves into more beneficial states of mind.

For many years I have identified myself as a creative sewer. As I reflect, I see in many ways I explored the world of fabrics as my father explored his garden. Being creative was my lifesaver as I was growing up. It provided a time when I would be totally removed from the mundane into a state of peace, a state of bliss. We lived miles from any city. I was one of six children. Fortunately, I did have lots of playmates and as a collaborative, we were very good at creating games and other entertaining activities. We had paper dolls with clothes cut from the Sears and Eatons catalogues. I am sure this is where I got my first training regarding fashion. My mother had taught us how to sew at an early age, how to hook and braid rugs, plus do hand embroidery. These activities kept us busy, gave us satisfaction and a feeling of purpose. Looking back I realize how important these activities were to my well being. They still are. Bringing creative expression into my life is one of the best gifts I have

It was not until I learned about the different brain waves that I began to understand my father. He was surfing his own brainwaves.



given myself.

While in the creative state a person can become so involved that they are oblivious to surroundings, even sound. I often hear this. One of my customers said that years ago while raising a family on a farm in Saskatchewan sewing was what kept her sane. The quilting bees held years ago were social functions where women gathered and discussed many issues; young mothers would get advice from the older, wiser ladies. I realized when I taught sewing classes that sewing itself was filling a need for my students. I saw that if I handed out filing cards and got everyone to write down the main reason they were taking the class, I could focus on the specific things people wanted to learn. I quickly understood that it was a social, not a learning session, many women were coming for.



Even though I think it is important for people to have a place to learn new things, to paint, to sew, to cook, and exercise, these creative activities encourage their own kind of social networking and brain function.

Brain waves are made up of different frequencies which are measured in cycles per second. By learning about the different states of consciousness one can also learn to use their subconscious mind to create their reality with will and with precision. Each brainwave state has its own characteristics representing specific levels of brain activity and a specific consciousness. Creative activities can put us in a meditative state.



Beta is the brain wave associated with normal waking, a heightened state of awareness, logic and critical reasoning. It is the state that most adults function at in today's world. Unfortunately, this is the state from which one can easily transition into stress, anxiety, fear and restlessness, states that get stronger as the brain state moves from lower to higher cycles per second.

Top: garden vest
Middle: flower vest
Bottom: Feel the sun

We all know what a racing brain feels like. This stress is one of the top two things that cause illness. To stay healthy one needs to spend more time in a lower brainwave frequency. One of the easiest way is to engage in the arts either as an appreciator or a participant.

Alpha is the brain wave associated with a state of deep relaxation. It is the

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state of automatically doing something, being in light meditation, or day-dreaming. It is the state where one starts to be truly creative and follow their own impulses.

Theta is the brain wave state we experience during deep meditation and light sleeping. It is the state that one is in when being authentically creative. In this state people experience great inspiration, visualizations and profound creativity. It is the mental state where you consciously create your reality, and your body is in deep relaxation; it is a state of bliss.

As people get older it is important for them to have access to activities that are creative and bring contentment. My dad lived on a farm in the country, and had limitless space and areas to roam. Getting to know the land he loved, on even deeper levels, enriched his senior years and kept him curious and healthy. He was very fortunate that he had prepared and kept his mind active. In his latter years he found pleasure by delving deeper into the experience of the life he had created. My Dad won an award for conservation, when conservation was not yet the norm, and was interviewed for profiles in two books. Every life accumulates wisdom that can be passed on to younger people. I highly recommend the pleasure waiting when you become aware of how you use your mind and how to surf your own brainwaves.

An elderly lady once said to me if there were no artists there would be no cups and what would we drink our tea out of. I would like to augment her statement. If there were no creative people there would be no cups to drink our tea out of, no wheels, no cars, no buildings, no schools (although some young ones might like that), no libraries, no books, no computers and the list goes on. Stop and take a moment to visualize what your life would look like today if there were no artists. Stop and decide to catch a relaxing brainwave through creative engagement.

Catherine Acutt called herself a fibre artist at a time when the art world was reluctant to call anything other than fine art paintings and sculpture art. She was told by one of her professors in college that what she did was craft and that she did not belong in a fine arts program. Fortunately, she had another instructor who was more innovative. With some persuasion she was allowed to take her sewing machine to class and stitch her artwork. For Catherine creativity is a form of meditation. She transcends to an altered state of mind, a state of total relaxation, where inspiration flows. She believes that as long as one's creative urges are being met regularly, they will feel content, relaxed and good about themselves.

GROWING INTO ART



Victor Snarski

Although I haven't fully begun my creative journey into self, I've been positioned in the front row witnessing my father's journey since I was a young child. His has been a lifelong journey, one of constant searching for a deeper underlying purpose. He's done so through two means - art and spirituality. I will be focusing on the influence of art, and how it's impacted his life.

He is a man with an insatiable hunger when it comes to learning and growing, and never being afraid to admit to a mistake, correct it, and move on. Then there's me, arrogant, brash, and never in the wrong. Since I was very young age my father has always insisted that the arts play a role in my siblings and my growth and development. He had my brother play the violin, while my sister and I were taught the piano. For me, learning to play the piano was an absolute chore. I loathed my weekly lessons and would have much rather been out and about with my friends. It was my opinion that it was a waste of time, and there were much better ways that I could fill my time. I continued with that naivety past high school and into university, thinking that I knew best. I was never silent in my discontent when it came to being forced to embrace the arts. I trudged through the monotony of everyday life, deluding myself into thinking I was happy and fulfilled.

It's not until we are forced to grow up very quickly that we realize just how good we had it as children. What sparked a change in me was my mother getting sick. This called into question everything I thought I knew. My whole life until that point, had seemed so picturesque; we were spoiled with good health, financial stability, and zero hardship. The following years were hard on my family and me with each of us handling the situation in our own ways. Things would eventually go on to improve and have been well ever since, for which I am thankful every day.

However, this was in many ways a jumping off point for me. It had become quite clear that life wasn't going to be full of sunshine and rainbows, and more importantly that happiness wasn't something that was going to be handed to me; I had to seek it. Through introspection I quickly realized that I had no idea what I truly was - completely and utterly clueless. I had to look to my sources of inspiration for guidance. To this day no one inspires me like my parents, both of whom do so in different ways, but for the purpose of this article I'll focus on my dad.

My dad has lived a life fraught with hardships. He was born into a world in which it was nearly impossible to get ahead. He grew up in a communist

It appeared abundantly clear to me that Kelowna needed a place where they could go to soak in culture and feel how the arts can enrich everyday life. I'd seen the positive influence that the arts have had in the growth and development of my father as a person, and how much his love for the arts has done for him. Something clicked in my head.



society knowing that no matter how hard he tried, he'd be left scraping by. Boldly, he took the initiative to flee the country, hoping to go somewhere that he could make money to support his parents back home. It was in this new country that his growth and development through the arts began. Through music, he was able to provide enough money for his family back home, and eventually have them join him.



Flash forward to him immigrating to Canada with the intent of providing my mother and brother with the best of opportunities. Before immigrating, my father had become a recognized musician and played in symphonies of the highest order all over the world. However, when he moved to Kelowna in 1988, he quickly learned that being a classical musician in this city wasn't going to cut it in terms of providing for his family. He quickly adapted, learned a new trade, and created his own business manufacturing and selling hardwood flooring. Fortunately for us all, what set his floors apart from anyone else's in town was the influence of the arts in his product. He was never satisfied with the status quo, and wanted each floor to be unique. As such he would treat each floor as a canvas, and each project as a work of art. His passion for creativity is what led to his success, and in turn provided our family with the incredible life that we have enjoyed. It was through this prosperity that his newest project, 'Kelowna Forum', came to be, and where



Top: An Italian inspired café for people to congregate and engage in conversation welcomes people when they enter.

Middle: The beautiful auditorium, with a big stage is perfect for intimate concerts.

Bottom: I want everyone to feel the light that fills this renovated space

I come in.

In 2015 my father purchased an abandoned church. The church had originally been built in the 1970s; as such it was full of red shag carpeting and glazed wood panel walls. It was a true testament to the swinging seventies. Through growing his business, my father had learned much about what goes into renovating a space, so he took advantage of what he had learned and we gutted the building, giving it a whole new look.



Victor and his father

I hope that *Kelowna Forum* will truly blossom, and that through the events that take place within its walls, we can all grow together in meaningfully enriched community.

We had a bit of a soft opening, when my father brought in a European jazz quartet. This group had been friends of my father's when he performed in Europe but it was a new type of music for Kelowna. It was good to see people seemed to respond positively.

Making this event happen had been a lot of work, but the positive reaction really left its mark on me. Unfortunately, issues arose with the flooring business and energy needed to be shifted elsewhere. The building stood empty for months, gathering dust. People would come into our flooring company on a daily basis inquiring when our next concert would be, but we would write it off as our priorities had been shifted. People persisted, and I took notice.

It appeared abundantly clear to me that Kelowna needed a place where they could go to soak in culture and feel how the arts can enrich everyday life. I'd seen the positive influence that the arts have had in the growth and development of my father as a person, and how much his love for the arts has done for him. Something clicked in my head.

I will work to translate that feeling of joy and excitement that the first concert brought to me, and so many others, into a career path. My plan would be work to develop *Kelowna Forum* into a place for likeminded people to come together and embrace art, to create discussion, and to become the forum for new cultural directions.

Running a business is a very new concept to me, but with my father's guidance, I'm learning something more each day. I'm now talking to different musicians, poets, actors, and speakers on a daily basis, and constantly absorbing new information. The world is opening to me. Recently, Kelowna Forum hosted the Arthur Dutkiewicz Jazz Trio. These men were also my father's friends in Europe and agreed to add *Kelowna Forum* to their schedule as they began a Canadian tour. The group is known across Europe for their avant-garde interpretations, and as I watched and listened my understanding of my father's early career in music expanded. How wonderful it is for me to join with him as he reconnects. This has become the most exciting time of my life, and certainly one of the happiest. What inspires me now is the positive reaction from the community, and that my community is supporting my father's and my dream. In the coming years, I hope that *Kelowna Forum* will truly blossom, and that through the events that take place within its walls, we can all grow together in meaningfully enriched community. I am continuing the journey in the arts that my father began so long ago, at such a young age. I hope focusing on the arts will have as positive of an impact on my life as it did for him in his early years.

Victor Snarski was born and raised in Kelowna, BC. Until now he has had few passions outside of soccer, but with this new venture he hopes to grow and discover new parts of himself as he seeks to bring diverse culture to his birth community and more deeply understand the passion that has driven his father to create The Forum.

To be added to the mailing list for upcoming events at *Kelowna Forum*, please email Victor at forumkelowna@gmail.com. Keep up with events on the website www.kelownaforum.com.

STRIKING OUT



Gene Weisbeck

After a time at art college, majoring in sculpture, I was encouraged by my instructors and considered continuing in this field, but I had fear; the artist discovery process looked challenging for future financial stability.

I'd had a practical upbringing, in a large farm family. Obtaining a fall-back trade seemed like a good move and things fell into place when I got a foot in the door because I'd taught myself the knowledge of silkscreen printing. I was approached by a local Kelowna sign shop and worked there for about a year. While there I was delighted to be introduced to another skill - the art of hand lettering was done by the in-house journey sign writer with amazing brush skills. I seemed on a clear path and enrolled in a sign manufacturing course at BCIT and a four year apprenticeship. I obtained journeyman status and best of all old school sign lettering skills.

After working for other companies in Vancouver and Kelowna for a few years,

I went on to open my own sign company. I had excellent clients who shared my appreciation for design, hand painted graphics and manufacturing projects. I developed a reputation and became well known in Kelowna and area, particularly for my custom carved and sandblasted wood signs. Some of these received awards.

Midstream, things started to change in the business and the art of signs was responding rapidly to the beat of digital production; machines were purchased and life raced on. After 35 years in this field of precision style work,

there was a need for more creativity in my life. In my heart sculpture was luring me back. I considered a possible artistic expression that had colour; acrylic abstract painting seemed to fit.

I like the easier clean up and acrylics are a less toxic medium than oils. In my abstracts I'm seeking creative freedom as I apply random and controlled marks from my inner impulses. There can be magic moments and struggles which can seem meaningful or accidental, but being in the moment seems to quiet unwanted, critical inner voices and allow more honest expression.

No matter what the subject, realistic or non objective abstract, the fin-

"TRI" acrylic on canvas 40" x 28"





Above: Spirit Rising

Right top: Against All Odds 3'x4'

right bottom: Rail to Rail 2'x3'



I pictured a vibrant, big colour, painting starting with a blue ground and a wash of vertical lines rising upward. Something magical happened as I worked the colours with a dance like movement and a large flat house painting brush.

ished work seems to be all about the energy put forth. I have learned to let go of composition complexity or who the painting may please. Learning what is good for me is paramount.

“Here’s an early energetic piece I’ve kept in my possession because I like to recall how I felt when I painted it.

This piece started with a black chiseled line, that took a spiral like convergence toward the core. Three is a repeated theme throughout. I worked quickly to promote freedom of discovery and enjoyed the dance of shapes and colour created without hesitation .

Texture is how I often start with non objective abstract. Texture creates interesting peaks and valleys for the paint to get trapped. There was a lot of dark at first with a loose random approach. Then I went in and out of these lines and shapes with colour. A lot of this varied texture and shading



Changes

happened from what paint was removed.

I was commissioned to do a cover for a program using a train theme. In this image I wanted a limited palette. I started with a few textural lines and bold brush strokes emphasizing motion, and a horizon line evolved. A vision of a setting sun seemed to take on prominence and I felt there was a need to add bits of the same colour to create depth and interest for the eye. Adding the darks and defining some shapes created an ethereal quality that continued as the train arrived on my canvas; I added more texture, colours

and movement. As I continued distant buildings and/or forest suggestions emerged.

I pictured a vibrant, big colour, painting starting with a blue ground and a wash of vertical lines rising upward. Something magical happened as I worked the colours with a dance like movement and a large flat house painting brush. I mixed clear medium with my individual colours on the palette and on the canvas, blending and shaping. Enjoyment is when you let go, and know when to stop.

This painting was brought about from experimenting in texture and mixed media application.

Using sand, hemp string and newspaper along with gesso and heavy medium compounds I created points of interest to carry your eye throughout the piece. I limited myself to a monochromatic fluid tone so that the viewer would be carried along by forms and texture, and go in and out with defined depths. Using this old weather wood frame added a natural roughness.

Sometimes my art will be influenced by other artist's work and techniques. I am appreciative to those who are willing to share. Still my own experimentation is always paramount to me finding my inner happy painter.



work at <http://www.geneweisbeckart.com/>

THERE'S THIS THING ABOUT POETRY

CHANNELING BURROUGHS AND BORGES



Robert MacDonald

Say the word “poetry” and people immediately know what you mean. Some people call the current poetry famine “poetry poverty,” or the “poetry suck.” Others call it the war against verse. Still others just whine, “I don’t have enough poetry. There’s never enough poetry.” We could imagine these complaints as fear of mortality. Of course we don’t have enough poetry. We get the poems we get. But more pervasively, these complaints are practical statements. I have more to do than I have poetry with which to do it. I want *more* than I can get in the poetry I am allotted. That is the poetry famine. It involves our consent to a metaphor for life, one that we set up ourselves by not defining what we mean by *more*, *less*, and *enough*.

The poetry famine becomes a deeper disease as well. It goes viral. It turns a spiritual and psychological corner after it attacks our dreams, sleeping habits, and even our nocturnal practices. *The New York Times* recently published an article showing how most, if not quite all, people no longer write poetry. A quick portable tweet will do.

And it’s not just this week or next week during which we don’t have enough poetry. The poetry famine is the despair that develops around our singed edges. It is the feeling that we may *never* have enough poetry. We may *never* get what we need from prose. We may *always* feel this way. Such experiences make us sad. The experience of the poetry famine erodes our desire and stamina for self-improvement. We find that we no longer bother with resolutions. We imagine that we are stuck in silence. This “stuckness” hurts and saps our spirits, and it goes on to sap the spirit of our cultures and our families, our children and our parents. Evidence mounts that the poetry famine is no longer just for people who have jobs. The poetry famine is an equal-opportunity unemployer, engaging the upper, middle, and working classes, as well as all age groups.

Systemic change rarely comes from stuck and sapped people, and this very lack of systemic change gives the poetry famine a curious permission to persist. So this is not just about the poetry famine. The opposite of a poetry famine is a “poetry feast.” It is like feeling rich rather than poor, unencumbered rather than encumbered. Instead of feeling poor, residing in a country called scarcity, we feel rich and reside in a country called wealth. We become like the proverbial octogenarian billionaire who swears he tap dances to work every day.

But here’s the thing. When we realize that we are in good company, we find a bit of comradeship, if not liberation. Recognizing the extent of the poetry famine helps us aim our way out of it.

This is also about the importance of *aim*. Very few of us *aim* to have the poetry famine in our lives; most of us just endure it. We also know that if we don't prioritize our life, someone else will happily do it for us. We are taught "you can have it all," even though we know this is a despairing form of nonsense. Here I want to take the winding, interacting tendrils off our bodies and lives and *aim* for *feast*. I want to show both how the poetry famine is "done" to us, and how we do it. I want to move beyond the posture of victim into the posture of victor.

I am not saying we can cure ourselves of the poetry famine. That would be hubris. The powers that be really are the powers that be. The systems that hurt us really like our despairing passivity. Instead, I offer a solution to the poetry famine. I am *aiming* for spiritual participation. We *do* have control over our spirits, if not the systems that surround them. I don't personally know anybody who doesn't live some version of the poetry famine. Even people with too much poetry on their hands, the idle or those very late in life, say they wish they could create poetry with something good for themselves

or for others. It is difficult to find a retiree who thinks they have enough poetry in their day. But here's the thing. When we realize that we are in good company, we find a bit of comradeship, if not liberation. Recognizing the extent of the poetry famine helps us aim our way out of it.

Aiming for feast is the point. It is very nice to know where you are going and then to arrive there. You might even call the takeoff and landing at the intended place *happiness*. Or *focus*. In the good life, we take off at fuzzy and land at focused. We don't put up with famine, especially because we don't have to. We *arrive at feast by aiming for it*. Like a good pitcher, we aim for home plate. A less able pitcher throws the ball and hits first base. Or third base. A good writer hits a target. A less able writer starts off fuzzy and lands at fuzzy.

Some of us self-hijack. We agree to the terms of the famine rather than aim to change them. Instead of taking off and landing at the destination we intend, we participate in going off track and ending up where we don't want to be. We participate in how bad we feel by consenting to it.

Here I try to break the systemic and personal cycle of the poetry famine. I have said that keeping a poetry volume on one's person is a form of civil disobedience. Aim for a poetry feast – practically, spiritually, on the job, at home, and in our hopes for a coherent life; a life in which we are the reader and not the driven.

There is this thing about poetry. The sooner we start doing something about it, the better we'll be at it.

Start by building shelves.

Wulf and Eadwacer

Translated from Old English

He's as good as wild game given to my folk.
They want to kill him if he comes to their clan.
Different is our lot.
Wulf is on an isle, I on another.
Secure is that island, surrounded by marshland.
Men brawl on that isle with bloodlust beset.
They want to kill him if he comes to their clan.
Different is our lot.
My wayfaring hope tracked my Wulf like a hound,
When I sat wailing in rain-wracked weather,
When that sword-strong lord laid his limbs about me
And gave me joy though it grieved me greatly.
Wulf, my Wulf! It wasn't lack of food
But the lack of you, my longing for you,
And how seldom I saw you that made me sick.
Eadwacer, do you hear me? Wulf whisks our poor whelp
Away to the woodland.
What was never united is not hard to sunder:
Our tale together.

Wulf and Eadwacer, as this poem has been called by posterity, is one of the most enigmatic, ambiguous, vexing and haunting works of all Old English literature, not only because there is hardly a line whose meaning is not subject to question and which doesn't contain a difficult word or two, but because the very poem's composition and structural format seem curiously out of place. It is the only Old English poem that has come down to us with two characters named "Wulf" and "Eadwacer," the only one with a repeating refrain.

SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

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Sage-ing with Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude exists to honour the transformational power of creativity.

It is a quarterly journal intended as an initiative for collaboration and sharing. It presents the opportunity for the free exchange of wisdom gleaned from creative engagement. We invite all ages to contribute their discoveries.

Sage-ing is about seeking - satisfying inner gnawing and transforming it to knowing and action. Aging can be alchemy when one allows the realisation that to *Know Thyself* and contribute that knowing to our culture is indeed one of life's highest purposes. That knowing brings the gratitude, grace and integrity that a life deserves. The creative journey into self is a strong aid to health and well-being for the individual and to our culture.

This journal exists for all those serious in exploring their creativity, in a chosen expression. It is a forum for publication and exposure to other artists, both novice and established. This journal is an easel for any form of artistry undertaken out of personal intuition and imagination.