

A Journal of the Arts & Aging

Edited by Karen Close & Carolyn Cowan

NUMBER 10, WINTER 2014

SAGE-ING

WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

KNOW YOURSELF. BE YOURSELF. LOVE YOURSELF. SHARE YOURSELF.



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A PUBLICATION OF THE
Okanagan Institute

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Cover: The Storied Stick by Steve Aird

OUR MISSION

Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude exists to honour the transformational power of creativity. We are a quarterly journal intended as an initiative for collaboration and sharing. We present 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.

EDITORIAL

"The end of art is peace." This thought was shared with me, almost two decades ago, by a wise mentor. The words were not her own. However, as we worked to write her story and catalogue her life's work as a photographer, we felt peace. The words planted themselves in my heart. Her life had not been made easier by art, but contributing her vision made her feel of worth; she felt a measure of integrity. Her life impacted mine and led me to consider the art of the human journey. As I paint, write, and indeed create my life, I understand I am being guided into alignment, harmony. This Journal is shaped by stories collected from others who have also discovered that making art is the release of passion that inspires peace within, and can create change without. There is a connection to the self that happens when one becomes aware that art making is a dialogue with self that aids self knowing, healing and leadership. Making art is a spiritual quest. Regular contributor Lisa Lipsett's articles urge readers to explore how we are 'creative by nature'. Harold Rhenisch shares his recognition of deep ancestral roots on a journey of creative rediscovery. In this our 10th issue, we mark a year end by presenting a collection of articles by other contributors who affirm the art of the human journey and the human need to actualize self through unique creative expression. The Sage-ing Journal is proud to be their easel presenting their stories for you.

– Karen Close, editor

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THE CREATIVE NATURE

ART BOOST

Lisa Lipsett, EdD

LIGHT AND SHADOW

“I thought the most beautiful thing in the world must be shadow.” Sylvia Plath

For this issue of *Sage-ing*, I’ve chosen to share one of my favourite creative energizers: drawing and painting with light and shadow. There are two parts to this offering, ‘outside-in’ artful engagement with nature’s shadows, and inside-out’ artful engagement with our own shadow selves.

Shadows have been on my mind a lot lately. Maybe it’s because in the pacific northwest, at this wintery time of year, the sun is very low in the sky and shadows are prolific and incredibly long as they wrap their tentacles across forest pathways, roads and over walls.

A few weeks ago, while trick or treating with my husband and daughter I was struck by the gorgeous branch shadow that appeared on my husband’s right cheek. It was created when a child illuminated her way with a flashlight along a bushy stretch of dark road. The effect was spell-binding as a moving tree face emerged, alive, yet with a complex tattoo of branchy pathlines.

Then two weeks later I watched a compelling contemporary dance performance entitled “Frontier” choreographed by Crystal Pike. www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yt-eVpG8MhI

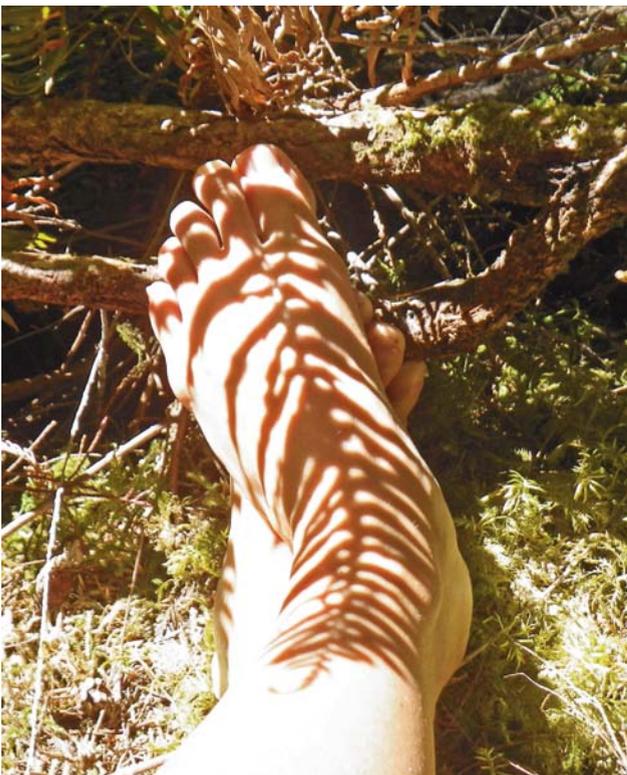
Dancers in white were embraced, supported, impeded, tracked, and intimidated by black shadowy figures with wild bird-like gestures. As the light dancers moved, tension was created by the continual presence of shadow selves or what Pike likens to dark matter, that mysterious parallel shadow universe that mirrors, sometimes bursts through, and continually shapes our own.

There has always been something about the dance of shadow on a wall or on a face that intrigues me. Maybe it’s their monochromatic nature or the clarity of their silhouette. Though even more likely it’s their continual movement. For unless created by artificial light, a shadow is always moving and changing - often very quickly since its very existence is directly tied to the movement of the earth relative to the sun. Drawing and painting shadow and light can place us in direct contact with this natural movement and change. We see and feel the movement of life.

“... the shadow of Wild Woman still lurks behind us



fernfoot



during our days and in our nights. No matter where we are, the shadow that trots behind us is definitely four-footed. “ Clarissa Pinkola Estés

In a parallel way, giving in-the-moment creative expression to shadow selves, thoughts, or impulses offers insight, releases energy and makes us feel more whole. Hidden aspects of self come into the light slowly revealing their power to transform our lives. By making art in the service of knowing ourselves more fully, we can slowly turn up the light and see what shadows reveal themselves because where there is bright light there is also shadow.

PART I: DRAWING AND PAINTING WITH NATURE’S SHADOWS

By making art in the service of knowing ourselves more fully, we can slowly turn up the light and see what shadows reveal themselves.

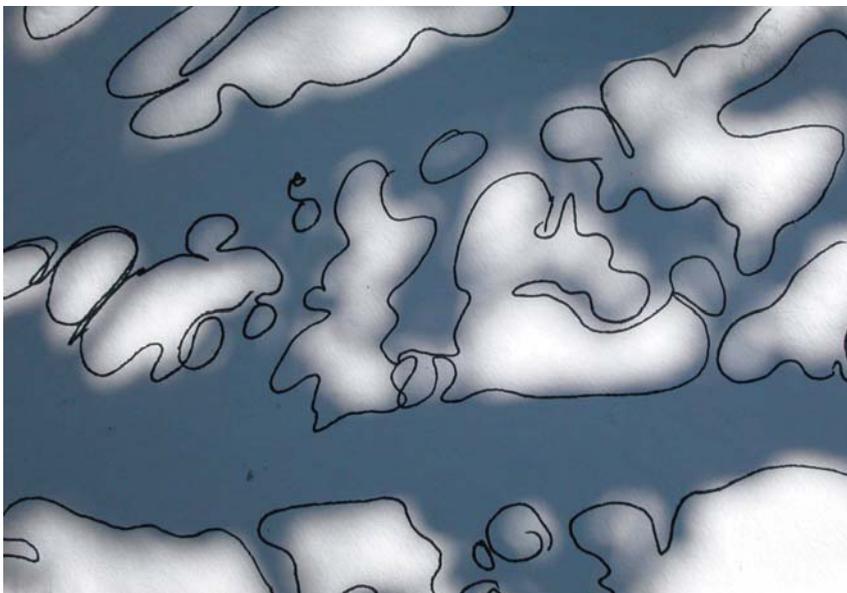
Pick a bright day for this activity. Begin your session by setting an intention (see the Create Cycle in the *Sage-ing*, Summer 2013 issue - www.sageing.ca/sageing8.html). To “intend” originates from the French *entendre, entendre* ‘to direct one’s attention’ (in Modern French, principally “to hear”), from the Latin *intendere* turn one’s attention, strain, literally to stretch out, extend.

Record your intention, then let it go. Literally. Setting an intention is like dropping a pebble into a still well of water and watching the ripples blossom outwards. By dropping your pebble into the well, you can then trace the meaning of your journey back to its source when you are finished. Don’t consciously hold on to the original intention, rather just carry on and create.

Take a few moments and write down what you are curious about or what you are drawn toward today.

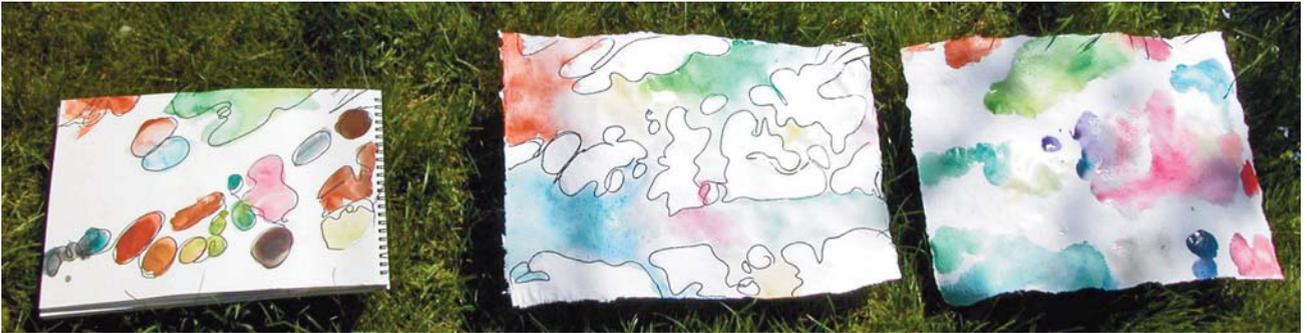
Take your art supplies (see the *Sage-ing*, Fall 2013 issue for a materials’ list- www.sageing.ca/sageing9.html) as you wander outside and open to a plant, animal, or tree whose shadow really appeals to you. Ask permission to engage.

shadow outline



To begin this activity, it is probably enough to simply focus on tracing shapes and staying present to what is happening in the moment. Draw and paint by balancing the use of each hand, creating with both hands for part of the session and painting relatively equal amounts of time with your eyes open and closed. Close your eyes to choose the paint colours at least half the time. Work slowly. See my articles in the *Sage-ing* Summer and Fall 2013 issues for lots of ideas about how to proceed.

Here is a video taken at the Cortes Island Children’s Forest where



Top: paintings
Middle: tree banner
Bottom: banner painting

I drew with light and shadow and the following narrative describes an encounter with the shadows of an apple tree in my front yard.

<http://creativenatureconnection.com/video/light-draw>

I worked quickly to trace the branch shadows because they moved enough to be unrecognizable in the very short time it took me to pop up and run to my studio to get my camera. I felt incredibly free as I alternated outlining the shapes created by the shadows and the dappled sunlight.

Then I painted inside the outlines. It was fun choosing the paint by running my fingers over the palette and letting my hand choose the colours. I painted the light spaces in and around the shadows. I loved giving colour to this beautiful dappled light.

For my second painting, I again started by tracing shadows but this time I gave *them* colour and left the sun lit areas alone. The shadows moved a great deal in the short time it took to paint them.

For my third painting I quickly painted the shadows free hand. This was very loose and freeing yet I needed to stay focused and decisive to quickly paint either the light or shadowed areas without outlining them first.

When all three paintings were complete, I laid them down on the ground on top of the shadows that had inspired their creation. Immediately I envisioned outlining the whole tree onto a larger piece of paper. Outlining light and shadow then painting on a large piece of mural paper seemed like an exciting extension. So I ran to my studio to look at paper options and I chose vellum because it's both smooth and shadowy.

I laid frosty vellum under the shadows of the apple tree. I coloured in the shadows free hand with a gold oil stick. I realized quickly that I needed to outline the shadows first if I wanted them on the page. So, I traced the limbs, branches, and leaves in black marker and mused that it could be fun to work in watercolour or fluid acrylic to quickly paint the moving shadows. Then I took the banner to my studio where I could lie it down on a smooth surface because I found the grass to be too uneven to paint on. I was compelled to paint the shadows gold and the dappled light shapes all different colours.

I finished the session by recording what I noticed and wondered about, then began my inside-out image.

PART II: DRAW AND PAINT SHADOW SELVES

Our inner world is a complex exquisite and powerful play of colours, lights and shadows, a cathedral of consciousness as glorious as the natural world itself. –Julia Cameron

Our inner world is a complex exquisite and powerful play of colours, lights and shadows, a cathedral of consciousness as glorious as the natural world itself. – Julia Cameron

Now I invite you to draw and paint spontaneously on a new page. Follow what attracts by tracking the flow of what fits easily in the moment. Begin an image by closing your eyes and drawing random shapes and lines. Use both hands at least part of the time. After five minutes or so, bring your paints out and close your eyes to choose the colours. Keep your eyes closed as you paint with wild abandon, alternating hands and having fun. Do this for as long as you'd like. If it's easier to paint in pitch darkness rather than closing your eyes, I invite you to try that. When you feel finished open your eyes. This is like turning on the light to better see a shadow image - the one created in the 'dark'. Using coloured watercolour pencils, or permanent marker (wait until the paint is dry before using marker or the ink will stop running) outline interesting areas, define shadowy shapes, deepen and darken colour. Just as you outlined light and shadow in Part I, outline and define shape and colour in this new image. What is asking to be illuminated? Watch this video to learn more about how to extend your drawings and paintings in this way. www.tinyurl.com/n48vulv

To finish, you can dialogue with a shape, a being, a colour, a natural shadow. You can ask, Is there anything you'd like to share? Also, take a few moments to record anything you noticed while you were creating and anything you wonder about. Revisit your original intention. Are there any new insights, observations or questions you have? Close by expressing gratitude in some way.

Consider sharing your images and creative experiences with members of the new Creative by Nature Art share space at www.facebook.com/groups/artsharespace and enjoy a supportive community of like-minded creatives.

Learn more about Lisa Lipsett's work at www.LisaLipsett.com

Creative by Nature Center – an on-line network with classes and event information: www.creativebynature.org

Art – www.Lisalipsettimages.com

Blog – The Drive to Create: www.thedrivetocreate.com

EMBRACING THE MYSTERIOUS

Lee Claremont



“The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion, which stands at the cradle of true art and true science.”

Albert Einstein

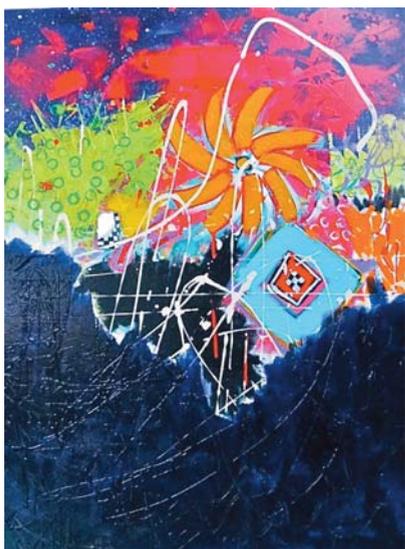
I am a contemporary Mohawk First Nations artist. I am 69 years old. My mentor, hero, inspiration and so many other superlatives, too long to list, is Daphne Odjig who just celebrated her 94th birthday. She is a national treasure and one of Canada’s finest artists. As a woman and an aboriginal artist, she broke the glass ceiling for many of us and we owe so much to her. Up until recently, she was still creating beautiful small drawings. If my math is correct, I have 25 years in which to strive to come anywhere close to her legacy.

Legacy, in artistic terms for me, means leaving a rich artistic impression that transcends time. It is an ambitious goal and one that carries with it a sense of responsibility. The art we leave behind is often a measure of who we were and an understanding of the cultural and the social climate of our historic past.

Creativity is a gift that I believe we have all been blessed with. When someone tells me they can’t draw a stick man, I take this as a challenge. What does a stick man have to do with anything? Creativity is not limited to ‘artists’.

Choosing to be a full-time working artist is not an easy path. It is a lonely profession. My paints, my brushes, my canvas and some music are my only companions during my working day, until my muse joins me. As my painting begins to develop its own personality, I know my muse has entered the studio. My muse speaks to me in a language that only we can understand and I am always grateful for her company. Sometimes the painting will become really nasty and out of control. There has been many a time when I have worked on a painting for hours and I end up slapping paint all over it. Surprisingly, such an act satisfies an emotional release and is quite cathartic.

My journey into this somewhat complex path began when I was in my early forties. I would like to say that my art making began at an early age, but it didn’t. I find it interesting when people ask me if I have painted all my life, and they seem disappointed when I say no. I used to feel cheated because I started so late in my career. I wonder, what if I had started in my twenties, look where might I be now and then I began to think of my ‘life’ files that I have all stored away in my brain, waiting. I realized that those memories are in fact my muse. I am my muse. All I have experienced is inside me waiting to be given form. Appreciating myself and my life for the experience it has given me feels grand and lends well-earned confidence to my art making process.



Top: Moontime
Above: Untitled

About a year ago, I began to explore and experiment with abstract painting. I would like to tell you that my exploration into abstraction was some sort of spiritual journey. It is now, but it didn't start out that way. I hate wasting paint so I always have an extra canvas nearby to wipe my brush on rather than waste the paint. The painting with the random brush strokes began to take shape and demanded my attention. I guess you could say my muse, which is me and which I have no control over, led me to the abstract process.

My latest abstract piece is titled 'Untitled'. For me the piece is very powerful, thought-provoking and taps

into emotions that are very deep and very personal. I am opening up the door into unknown territory and I am not sure where it will lead me. I think we do a great disservice to paintings when we are required to give any verbal meaning to them. I see this painting as a big step in my embracing the mysterious. I can't seem to find a suitable title for it so until I do, it will remain 'Untitled'.

Colour, colour, colour, colour feeds my insatiable appetite for the joy of color. Color is a great healer. The two most common comments I get when people see my work are, "I love your color", and "your work is very spiritual". These comments are a measure of success for me. Forty years ago, my youngest child Tina passed away at 22 months old. She drowned in Okanagan Lake. My three beautiful surviving daughters needed me more than ever and I had to go on living for them. Once they grew up and took on lives of their own I desperately needed someone or something to throw me a lifesaver, and something did throw me a lifesaver, my art.

I didn't really understand at the time why I was led into the magical and mysterious world of art making. It seemed like a good choice and I loved the process of creating something from a blank canvas. I was very hard on myself, as most artists are, and I still am.

It took me several years to figure out that through my paintings I was healing myself. I know that may sound strange, but I now look back and know that when I was younger, before I started to paint, I wasn't ready to grieve and heal. I had put healing aside for many years. It was too painful.

The healing process did begin right from the very beginning when I started to paint. I just didn't know it. A few years ago, I was featured in a documentary called 'From the Spirit' and as I watched and listened to my own words, I had an epiphany: I am healing myself. Since that time, most of



Left: Rhythm of the Woodland People.
Right: Boys Night Out



my paintings will have a star in them and that star represents my little guardian angel, my daughter Tina.

I like to think of myself as a visual storyteller. My subject matter tends to jump all over the place and each painting has its own story. I am always curious to see where the painting is going to go. I never know the outcome. It is like reading a great book and you don't want it to end, but you can't wait to see how the story ends. There is always that exciting time when I know the painting is finished and I sit back, relax and let the painting tell me its story.

As I 'sage', I become more and more thankful for the great gifts I have been given. If my paintings bring joy, a little humour, some reflection and healing to others that will be a legacy that I will be very proud of. I will have achieved my goal.

Lee Claremont is Mohawk and Irish and was born in Woodstock, Ontario on the territory of the Grand River Six Nations Ontario. Lee received her BFA (Honors) from the University of British Columbia and now resides in the beautiful Okanagan Valley in BC.

"I am a visual storyteller and colour speaks to me in an intimate language and we become one in the telling of the story. There is no doubt my indigenous world view plays a large part in the explosion of colour that busts with the world of the painting. They are an articulation to formulate the existence of the past intermingled with the contemporary."

Website: www.leeclaremont.com Email contact: lclaremont@shaw.ca

I am opening up the door into unknown territory and I am not sure where it will lead me.

MY STORY



Steve Aird

I was born and raised in Kelowna, British Columbia, and I'm proud to call it home. My youth was spent building tree forts and wooden go karts to race down the Barnaby Road dirt hill. My mentor was my older brother by four years. My grandmother's nickname for me was Me Too, because everything my brother asked for, I answered, "me too". My identity was somewhat lost as it mingled with my brother's, and so it was in the years to follow, until I began to draw myself out.

When I was 20 years old, I set off to follow my dream of learning the art of creating and upholstering automotive interiors. This schooling took me to the Fraser Valley where I lived with my aunt and uncle. Near the end of my schooling, I was en route to one of my classmate's parent's house. It was a very stormy December night as I traveled the unlit back road. I was living my dream; though dreams can also turn to nightmares, as I was about to experience. Out of the shadows darted a human figure dressed in black. I swerved and hit the brakes, but his dash was fatal. I saw death lying at my feet.

As you can imagine my life changed in that instant, and the fog of posttraumatic stress disorder and depression crept in. I tried dealing with the fallout in the old fashioned ways: drinking, working until exhaustion, and never talking about the accident or my pain. This technique of avoidance sucked up 15 years of my life, and led me only farther down the wrong path.

Personally I don't believe in luck; I believe everything happens for a reason. Looking at those years now, 30 years later after that fatal night, I see how fortunate I was that rock bottom came when I was living in Kelowna. There were resources through the Kelowna General Hospital (KGH). The same hospital that brought me into the world then showed me another world: the world of Art Therapy was in one of KGH's counselling programs.

After my involvement with art therapy, I was at our public library where I stumbled on a hand-written ad posted on their bulletin board. It read: Drawing Classes. I knew nothing about drawing, but I needed that light at the end of the tunnel, and something urged me to call. After the first couple of classes, my teacher was a little nervous; she had promised me that she could teach me to draw, but I was rather under supplied. I had cheap pencils and terrible paper and they just kept smudging. We figured out my technical difficulty and I began a truly fresh start.

I became hooked, and there really was a light. Still, I kept the drawing classes a secret for six months. I didn't have much money and I didn't want

I find art the perfect place to find one's true identity.

It seems we're surrounded by stories, written perhaps just for us, if we take the time to look and listen.

the naysayers telling me I was wasting the little money I had on drawing lessons. I knew what I needed. That was 12 years ago. Pencils and paint are now embedded in my DNA. Easily, those supplies are the best money I have ever spent.

I find art the perfect place to find one's true identity. These days, I've found a new outlet for my creative urges. After only a few sessions, I seem to be looking forward to Tuesday mornings a lot more. At the Rotary Centre for the Arts, in Kelowna, not only is there art, but also great humour - the perfect combination. I think setting goals for ourselves is key in personal development, though most of these goals are away from the safe places you least want to challenge. As an introverted soul, one of my biggest challenges is dealing with larger groups of people without feeling drained after the experience. I often find myself trying to explain my personality to an extrovert and receiving the blank stare. They can't see what's wrong with the spotlight. A great TED Talk, called "Quiet, The Power of the Introvert" by Susan Cain, gave me a perspective. So, creating art is one thing, doing it in front of the world under deadlines is a whole different challenge. I think I can... I think I can. In the past, I have created art in the seclusion of my own home. I look forward to my latest challenge of creating with others at HeART Fit.

On my second visit to HeART Fit, I brought along a canvas and some acrylic inks. Since I tend to overanalyze things, I enjoy the process of dropping inks randomly onto my canvas without thinking; as an adult it seems unacceptable not to think. As I'm dropping my inks, I'm twisting and turning my canvas, adding water here and there. As children we could play without accomplishing anything other than the feeling of pure enjoyment. I spent the morning at heART Fit watching the inks flow in all directions. I was

not sure exactly what I was going to do with this piece other than fill another space in one of my closets. Karen, the facilitator of the class, suggested we should just keep working pieces until we feel a resolution. For me, this meant spending some time staring at the inkblots, sometimes wondering if Rorschach was in that special place having a chuckle. After this process, I let the inks thoroughly dry. I then set the canvas up in a high-traffic area of my house. Throughout the days and week, I look for the story or stories that emerge. Once I see a story, I come in with my colour pencil to develop what I see in the ink blots.

On a hot August morning, I found

Within the blots





the keys in my hand for my friend's cabin on Mable Lake. I spent the afternoon combing the beach with my camera in tow when I came upon this stick washed up on the shore. I tried to talk myself out of dragging another worthless artifact back home. Then, I came up with the excuse that I could always burn it ... sure, free heat. That evening at the cabin I inspected my find. It seemed to have a story, or more like it several stories. I let the stick sit in the corner beside my computer for a couple of weeks until one day I thought, I wonder what pencil would look like on that piece of firewood. I spent the next two weeks, after work each day, developing the stick's story as it spoke to me. My dog has finally given up on the hope that I was just making a fancy throwing stick for her. This stick has given me meaning in ways that surprise me.

Top left: The Storied Stick
 Top right: Transforming
 Above: The Underside

It seems we're surrounded by stories, written perhaps just for us, if we take the time to look and listen. As I studied this stick, I saw the battle scars that might at first appear undesirable. Then upon closer examination, with a caring heART, I discovered those were often the most interesting marks on my stick. Now I have become a co-creator with mother nature. As I walk I stumble upon other pieces of wood. Others have asked how I choose, and I realise there is my story. I have brought wood home and had it sit in my rock garden for months until one day it speaks to me and I respond by developing a message of its kinship with me. I think the key is to keep in the now and listen.

Email contact: Steve Aird ripcordjr68@hotmail.com

A LONG TIME AGO IN THE LAND FAR AWAY

Julita Wolanska



I have painted since I was little girl ... and don't we all? I spent my childhood drawing and doodling, trying all techniques possible, dreaming about becoming an artist. It was fun. Schools and other subjects fascinated me too, but nothing was better than art.

In the meantime, I discovered books, literature, poetry and the captivating world of libraries. When the time came to make decisions about the future, I envisioned myself as an artist working in the library. It was welcomed by my supportive, but very concerned parents. "Starving artist" was not an option as a career choice. Since I truly felt at home in the libraries, it was not a sacrifice, but a balancing act.

Getting a Master of Arts in Library Science was almost effortless, and very interesting. I could study all from philosophy, psychology, mathematics, logic, literature, history beside all the technical subjects that librarians had to know. I put art making aside as something I already explored a bit and was positive I would in the future, while I studied the History of Art and Culture, in the meantime.

Having access to the library resources by running one was very good solution for a young woman in the turbulent eighties in communistic Poland. At the time of political uncertainty, the library was a temple of knowledge and the best source of politically independent information. We didn't have Internet back then. I absolutely loved my job, I was painting in the evenings, taking art courses, and enjoying being in charge of the robust library with strong cultural ambitions.

Then life happened. I fell in love with Prince Charming and came to beautiful and peaceful Canada. I got great jobs - first in the financial, then the public field. The jobs were based on my skills gained in Poland: computers, databases and record keeping. Having a young family to support and learning how to live in my new, adopted country, I didn't have time for art. I couldn't identify with the people I worked with; I didn't have goals for my career. It made me sad, empty and guilty. I adapted, but something was always missing. I wasn't surrounded by the art, literature or poetry I liked so much, and, most of all, there was no room for creativity. I was expected to follow other people's vision, to be obedient and silent. Art became silent too, patiently wait-

Against the Wind (Textual landscape, acrylic on canvas, 5 x 7, 2012)





Summer Memories (lyrical abstract, watercolour on paper, 9 x 14, 2011)

Having access to the library resources by running one was very good solution for a young woman in the turbulent eighties in communistic Poland.

ing in the back seat at first, and then it left me completely. That was the era of the dark ages, long and painful years in my life. Days had no shape and roads no exits. I was locked in the tower.

One day my colleague announced her retirement. "How will you fill your days?" I asked. "I will be painting, of course. I am an artist!" she said. "Oh, that is exactly what I want to do when I retire, paint!" I exclaimed. "I am due for retirement in 22 years", I added quietly. My friend looked deep into my eyes. "And why wait that long? You can paint now."

It was a revelation. It was middle of January, 10 years ago. The following evening I signed for my first watercolour class in the local continuing education school. I was forty-three years old.

THE SPELL IS BROKEN

I finished my Fine Art Diploma and have taken many courses and workshops with other artists since then. For me, the visual arts are the most important. I've had numerous exhibitions, sold several paintings. I keep my day job, but I paint, of course. I am an artist! This is the age of enlightenment, romanticism and renaissance in my life.

I was always an artist. I just didn't know that. I am a creative person and need to be creative to function. I need art, literature and poetry with a dash of opera as much as employment, family and friends.

WE ARE ALL CREATIVE

We all have that in us, and often we do not allow ourselves to explore creativity. "It is silly. It is childish. I do not have time." Creativity is all we have! Through creativity we can find hidden childhood joys. We can be ourselves, meditate, be at peace, find what is sacred, connect, become spiritual, heal, and learn new skills. We can share with the world what is unique and true about us. Art, music, crafts, dance, cake decorating, knitting, photography – pick what you like. Age has nothing to do with it.

INTUITION

Art helped me to find the path to my Intuition. That is how I paint – intuitively.

I prepare my stage carefully: lay down some brushes and plenty of the watercolour paper; I go for a walk or sit and meditate for a while, have a cup of tea, pick the right music, light a candle, read a favorite poem, and disconnect the phone. I have some ideas of general shapes and colors I want to use, but I prefer to be free from any constraints. I start to pour and mix watercolour paints or liquid acrylics on the paper. I work quickly. I observe my paintings as they appear from the oblivion, from a dream-like state, from the ocean of thoughts. I absolutely love the play of merging colours.



Top: Divine (lyrical abstract, watercolour on paper, 25 x 32, 2011)

Above: Romancing the Land (textural landscape, acrylic on paper, 4 x 6, 2013)



Unexpected journeys lead me to unknown or forgotten lands: childhood fairytales, tranquil lakes, memories of the sun flickering on the porch, flowers I received – all this unifies and materializes in the abstract shapes or fantastic landscapes. I fill one after another sheet of paper. I can spend hours painting, sometimes deep into the night without even noticing the passage of time.

LANDSCAPES OF THE MIND

The longer I paint in one session, the more serene my images become with colours pure and vibrant. I choose organic shapes, happy bacteria, vivacious bubbles, and molecules in a harmonious dance. My abstract paintings portray energy and life, often resembling coral reefs or colonies of microorganisms. I trust my hand, heart and mind to choose the right hues and tones. I use knowledge about design and colour theory to complete the image, darkening some areas, adding light, lines and dots.

I consider abstract art painting in this mode to be pure and true reflection. It is a glimpse at the state of mind, colour of the soul, temperature of the spirit, measure of the energy level, translation of the inside to the outside world in the language of colour and form, full of hidden

symbols and metaphors. Sometimes, those states are induced by the book I read, movie, percolating ideas or problem I am trying to solve. I call my paintings *landscapes of the mind* – pure expression of the emotional state, and lyrical abstracts.

Painting 'en plein air' is a different, but equally joyful process, still intuitive and immediate. It is a spontaneous response to observed and sensed elements, temperature, sounds, play of lights and shadows, beauty of nature. Trying to capture particular cloud formation, wind bending grass or reflections on the water can lead to intense contrasts, eruptions of vivid colours and unpredicted results.

MIND IN THE LANDSCAPE

I often paint outdoors in watercolours, but recently I worked impasto, applying thick layers of acrylic using rapid strokes of a palette knife or brush. I am not concerned about how accurate each line is, or the image itself. I want to paint an atmosphere or portray a particular moment. I call those trials *mind in the landscape*. They are a genuine impression, raw, direct interpretation of what is seen and felt at the same time. All this results in small, textural, and dramatic landscapes.

WRITING A POEM

For me creating a painting is not about replicating what I see, but rather expressing how I feel. It is like writing a poem.

Here is a quotation from the Wikipedia: “Poetry uses forms and conventions to suggest differential interpretation to words, or to evoke emotive responses. The use of ambiguity, symbolism, irony and other stylistic elements of poetic diction often leave a poem open to multiple interpretations.”

Poetry is a play of words, feelings and rhythms; it is about finding symbols, and so it is expressive art. Painting is a sonnet, limerick, ode, a rhythm, a story expressed in the special language to bring forward the essence of the image.

I choose organic shapes, happy bacteria, vivacious bubbles, and molecules in a harmonious dance.

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

Art smiled to me, again, 10 years ago when I took my first classes. Goals are not needed – it is not about the destination, nor about the next step or finishing something, but about the process itself, a lifetime journey, an adventure. I do not have to ask anybody where I am going. I have my own vision.

It was always fun to paint and it is now. I write poems to my friend Art and share them with the world in the form of my lyrical abstract paintings and dramatic landscapes. I live happily ever after celebrating 10 years with art, and I am more in love than ever.

Maybe your flirt with creativity can lead you to the deep, long lasting and passionate relationship, too! Give it a try. The future is now.

Julita was born in Poland, resides in Toronto near the Distillery District, paints and helps other artists promote their artwork by organising art exhibitions. Her paintings are colourful and vibrant created in a spontaneous, intuitive process using water based media. Poetic bubbles, aquatic balloons, happy bacteria representing the energy of life and transformation. Julita focuses, also, on Canadian landscape; her works are full of drama, movement and texture.

Email: art@julistka.com

Websites: www.artjuwo.com and www.julistka.com

SUKI

Carolyn Cowan



The Glorious Suki

There are two things you need to know before reading this article. One, I talk to animals. Two, I own a pair of old, grey suede slogging boots. They sit above the ankle and have grey plush material inside the boot and around the top.

Late last winter, I dog-sat a Shih Tzu for two and a half weeks. She's the glorious Suki and stands about 12 inches off the ground. A few weeks prior, Suki and I had relaxed into a three-day trial to ensure we were compatible enough to live together while her owners, Maureen and Wally Lejbak, went on holidays.

Growing up, our family had two dogs that I recall. One was a bulldog, so ugly he was beautiful, according to my mother. He was an excellent companion to a five-year old. To herd or round me up, he'd lick me with a big, sloppy, wet tongue. We lived in a second story flat in a small, southern British Columbia town. The flat had open windows with wide sills where my mother would place her pumpkin or apple pie to cool. You know what happened. And, I love pumpkin pie. Let's say, that dog and I had a hiccup in our relationship.

The other dog my parents brought home was a mongrel we named Prince. He was beautiful, too, but in a multi-breed sort of way. By that time, I was 10 years old or so. We were great playmates. Unfortunately, Prince passed away. I remember my father driving me, the body of Prince, and a shovel to Henderson Lake, in the centre of Lethbridge, Alberta. Among the trees, just a few feet from the shoreline, we buried Prince with all the dignity and tears accorded a beloved animal.

Imagine my delight, then, when Maureen, a wonderful artist and friend, and I negotiated the dog-sitting arrangement for Suki. Suki was a twin. Timeko was from the same litter and they were devoted to each other. Sadly, just over two years ago, at the age of 11 years, Timeko passed away. Suki was distraught for close to two years, trying to readjust to a world without her beloved sister.

Having survived the three-day trial last March, we were now locked together for two and a half weeks. Suki and I settled into a routine of morning and evening short walks in the slush and dirt terrain beside my condo. We took our long runs at midday. To be clear, I walked, and I waited while she sniffed every tree, lamp post, footprint, animal dropping, anything vaguely interesting and smelly that lay on or above the ground. Suki's belly is no more than six inches off the ground. Those were messy, messy days.

Still, we had settled into a routine that I considered mutually enjoyable. As it turned out, Suki didn't necessarily feel the same way.

For anyone strongly opposes the use of anthropomorphism, you may

Suki's belly is no more than six inches off the ground. Those were messy, messy days.

want to stop at this point. The rest of this article is the sageing part, that is, ageing creatively while trying to maintain some dignity and a sense of humour.

In the History log on my laptop, I found some emails Suki had written. One was addressed to her sister, Timeko, now residing in that big dog-bone valley in the sky. As it turned out, Suki and Timeko correspond regularly unbeknownst to me or her owners. Here are two of the emails. One sent to Timeko, and one to their Mammy and Pappy.

TIMEKO

Darling Timeko,

I hope all is well and you've muscled that retriever out of your food bowl. It's your bowl. Keep growling. And, of course, you need lots of attention too.

For the next few weeks, Mammy and Pappy have given me to a woman while they go away on vacation. They are all sweet and fussing with me while they hand me over to her, but I see that Pappy's hand never leaves the doorknob. I guess they deserve a break once in a while. Just don't be so obvious about your eagerness to leave, I say! The woman who's my dog-sitter, her name escapes me, so I call her or she.

I'll tell you the latest story from this morning. Remember our special growl about the absurdity of humans? You'll love this one.

She had been out on some commitment - not a party she insisted on telling me - until 3:00 a.m. this morning. She wakes up at 10:00 a.m., looks at the clock, toward the outside door and starts talking. "Oh, Suki, I'm so sorry. Here I am sleeping, and you haven't even been outside yet for your morning walk. Look at you, laying there so quiet, curled up like a cat. You could have barking to wake me up. You are such a sweetheart. Just give me a couple of minutes to wake up and get dress and we'll go. You are so good. I don't deserve you."

By this point, she's sitting up in bed and starting to move. She, then, squints her eyes toward the door and looks closer. You see, the door is on the other side of a room. Then she slowly looking around because something, I'm guessing here, doesn't make sense. Well, I'm lying on the floor of her bedroom closet, watching this spectacle while she's talking to some old grey boots sitting at the front door. I tell you, she's crazy like that.

That was Suki's email to her sister, Timeko. Here's one I found that she sent to her owners, fondly named Mammy and Pappy.

WHEN ARE YOU COMING TO GET ME?

Dear Mammy and Pappy:

She read out your email to me last night. She going to take a quick shower, she said. That's just like her. She tells me everything before she does



Top: That rascal Suki

Above: Suki enjoying my comforts



it, while she's doing it and then after she does it. Really, who gives a damn? Sometimes, she won't shut up. I'm a quiet dog, as you know, and the constant chatter drives me crazy. But, I have to be careful. I'm still here for another week and a half.

And, just so you know, if I have to stop this letter quickly, it's because I can't be too long on her computer. Don't want her to know I can type.

Things are OK here. I'm slowly training her. I haven't decided whether to keep up the sweetheart routine - she calls me sweetheart all the time. I'm thinking that as soon as I'm down to the last week and home stretch before you get back, I'll introduce her to the real Suki.

That's another thing. She calls me a little furnace. I don't like nicknames. My name is S-U-K-I, Suki. And that's something else. She says out loud that I'm a cat in a dog's body. And she laughs about it. How does she think that makes me feel? Does she think I lack feelings? What an insult. Just because I pee or poop, then walk away and scoop dirt or grass toward the dropping with my backpaws. What does she think I'm going to do? Stand right over my own poops and cover them over from that position? What's it to her, anyway, how I do my naturals. Her job is to clean up after me. That's the law.

And that's another thing. She says I'm stubborn like a cat, just because I want to go back inside where it's warm. OK, I do what I want, when I want it. I'll give her that. But, at least, I know what I want. Does she know what she wants? I don't think so!

I think of you often, especially when lounging in her chair. At least, she's taking me out for a lot of car rides. I sit on a big bump in the middle between the two front seat and check the neighbours.

Oop, the shower has stopped. Got to go!

Lots of love and my special leg hugs. Miss you like crazy. Glad to hear that you're having a great vacation, but what about me?

Your favourite and faithful dog,

Suki.

Carolyn is an editor of this journal, writer, aspiring poet, dedicated hospice volunteer, and likes to amuse herself. She can be contacted at cacowan@telus.net/

THE SECRETS TO CHANGE

SELF-LEADERSHIP: HOW TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE BY TRANSFORMING YOURSELF



Stan Chung

Change! Everybody is talking about change. Managing change. Innovating change. Leading change. Work change. Lifestyle change. Spiritual change. As they say, the only thing constant in the world is change.

A stroll in your public library tells us that this topic is of great interest. Whether we want to lose 25 pounds or orchestrate an initiative that will change a city, shape a nation, or inspire the world—there appears to be an endless appetite for transformation.

Here are five secret principles for engaging in a *change initiative*.

PRINCIPLE 1: CONNECT EVERY CHANGE GOAL TO AN INSPIRING PURPOSE

Why did you choose your particular change agenda? Why do you want to change? Of all the things you could do, why does this initiative mean the most? Goals are sometimes connected to a strong purpose, but sometimes they are not. Sometimes, we attempt to create a goal for something that is disconnected from us. You may lack energy around the goal and wonder why. It may be someone else's purpose. It may not utilize your talents.

Most tantalizingly troublesome of all is the change goal that seems great, feels connected to purpose, but ultimately fails to inspire. Inspiration is the secret. If you can combine your change goal with an inspiring purpose, then you will accomplish a lot more than trying to start a flame. You will stoke the fire.

If you depend on others to support change, then having the buy-in and inspiration is one of the critical success factors in allowing change to thrive.

Inspiration is a game changer.

PRINCIPLE 2: ACCEPT CHANGE ADVICE FROM THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN THERE

Stephen Covey talks about change from the inside out. Mahatma Gandhi exhorted us to be the change we want to see in the world. The principle of walk the talk, authentic change, and soul-based change begins with the notion that the best change agent to learn from is one who has already been on the journey. That's why general managers like to hire NHL coaches who have once been professional players. We like people who have been there and done that.

On the other hand, that's why people don't particularly enjoy being led

There appears to be an endless appetite for transformation.



The Minneapolis Sculpture Garden

That's why general managers like to hire NHL coaches who have once been professional players. We like people who have been there and done that.

by those who haven't been there. Would a surgeon take surgical advice from someone who has never been there? But it's amazing how many artists take advice from people who have never sold a painting or bought an original. It's amazing how many who face retirement take advice from people who have never been there.

Here is the secret: be careful who you take change advice from. Well-meaning amateurs have limited value as coaches on your change journey.

PRINCIPLE 3: REFLECT UPON THE BLESSINGS OF THE JOURNEY

No change goal worth achieving will be without bumps and detours. The best way to manage one's inspiration is to reflect regularly. Why does this goal mean so much to me? What can I celebrate as an achieved milestone? How am I managing my inspiration? What am I learning along the way about myself, about how I achieve my goals, about how I lead my own self-transformation?

A common, yet, highly effective tool is the journal. Counsellors use them for their clients, and they use journals themselves to help surface and guide their thoughts and feelings.

Possibly the most powerful journal practice of them all is the gratitude journal. Spend ten minutes writing down what you are grateful for. Such a small, seemingly inconsequential act has been demonstrated to be life-saving with the potential to significantly impact one's engagement with life and sense of well-being.

The journal is your secret to change success.

PRINCIPLE 4: CHANGE THE STORY

The arc and shape of our lives are partially determined by the cultural and social forces of society. How we are raised, what we believe, the values and behaviours that guide our sense of what is acceptable -these things are not created by individuals; on the contrary, they are normalized by groups.

This socialized reality influences the stories we tell. Our stories tell us who we are, and they tell us who we are not.

Often the story we tell about ourselves can unintentionally limit us. Minorities of one kind or another have been told, "you can't do that. That's not for you." But change marches on. It is only in this century that children are not slaves, women are not second class citizens, and that visible and invisible minorities were given the protection of the law.

Change is possible when we change the story we tell, and the story that

others tell about us. For change to succeed, we ourselves must change any stories that limit us or prevent us from believing we can succeed.

Why do so many people think they can't paint, do math or be creative? These self-limiting stories are often the first step toward change.

What stories do you wish to tell? Yes, you can become. The secrets to profound change are locked in the ideologies and assumptions buried in the stories we tell.

What stories inform your change process?

PRINCIPLE 5: INVEST IN THE MOMENT

Are you one of those people who exchange your life for money?

In one way or another, we all do. Is your life worth the time you devote to making money? Or do you think that you aren't receiving enough value for the time you give up? Are you satisfied with how you spend your time? Are you spending your life on the things that matter?

Changing your sense of time may be the most important change you ever make.

Are you one of those people that worries a lot about what happened in the past? Do you spend time worrying about the future? When you focus on the past or the future, one thing is clear: you are allowing the present moment to slip through your fingers. The present moment is the true wealth of your existence.

Invest in the moment by doing one very simple but exceedingly difficult practice: live in the now.

Attend to the now and all your change 'moments' can succeed. In a single moment, you can make the best choices. In a single moment, you can engage in truly listening and loving another person. In a single moment, you can transform yourself into the person that you want to be. No change initiative can succeed if you cannot live it in the moment. By practicing living in the moment, I truly believe all things, all change initiatives, are possible.

Blessed are those who dare change themselves.

Whether you want a healthier lifestyle, more creative work, improved relationships, or simply find yourself a kinder person, these five secrets to change leadership can help you realize your goals.

When you focus on the past or the future, one thing is clear: you are allowing the present moment to slip through your fingers.

Contact Stan Chung at stanchung@gmail.ca. He is the author of *Global Citizen* and currently Vice-President, Academic and Research at Red River College in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

CREATIVE INTERVENTION



Karen Close

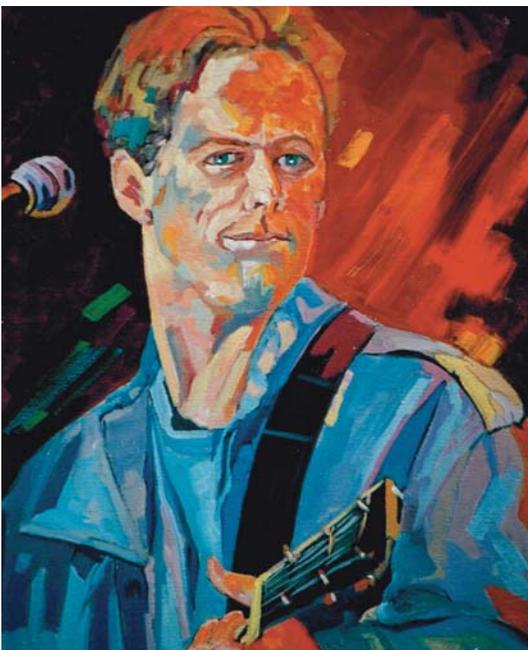
“Value your connection with creativity. Embrace your imagination. The universe will show you how, teach you how, help you along the way.”

Meditation entry, *Journey to the Heart*, by Melodie Beattie, July 20

I keep savouring the day that began with that meditation and the creative intervention that I saw at Cottonwoods Care Centre in Kelowna. You may recall the epilogue to the article on Canadian artist, Daphne Odjig, and her ninety-fourth birthday published in the Fall issue of the *Sage-ing* journal. Her story tells how creative spirit intervened to help two senior artists find each other and develop a friendship, often rare in these circumstances, that continues to bring delight to both artists.

The intervention began when Daphne took her wheelchair across the room so that she could look out the window beside the bed of her roommate, Karen R. Hersey. Unfortunately, while living with dementia, Karen had let her connection with creativity slip. She still had her paint box near her bed, but had not used it for 10 years. Instead, her days were filled reviewing the albums of paintings that told the story of the rich creative life adventure she feared was over. Daphne listened with enthusiasm to her new friend’s reminiscences and became eager for me to see the albums, too. Among the beautiful landscapes, a portrait of Canadian singer Bryan Adams jumped out at me.

Portrait of Bryan Adams



Unsure of how long ago it had been painted, Karen explained she and the singer had both been part of an anxious mother’s plan to help her bed-ridden daughter find creative engagement. The portrait was strong and sensitive. Spontaneously, I suggested that Karen could paint a portrait of Daphne for her upcoming 94th birthday. There was immediate agreement, despite the intervening years of non-painting, and three days later I returned to see the portrait completed. It is excellent and these new friends had delighted in the lively conversations that accompanied its creation.

Karen says she has found herself again. As we studied the portrait there was a special communion. Each of us felt the embrace of creative spirit. We are all believers in what creative spirit can accomplish if we relax into its embrace.

In 1897, esteemed writer Joseph Conrad, best known for his novel *The Heart of Darkness*, wrote: “The changing wisdom of successive generations discards ideas, questions facts, demolishes theories. But the artist appeals to that part of our being which is a gift and not an acquisition - and, therefore, more permanently



Left: Portrait of Daphne Odjig
Right: Portrait of Ricardo



enduring – and to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation... which binds together all humanity.”

If you’ve seen the movie *Quartet*, you’ve seen how this enduring power of creative spirit activates and brings pleasure to an aging mind. With Daphne looking on, offering observations and encouragement, Karen has put herself to work. The walls in that corner have become a gallery of new friends. She offers to paint a portrait of all those who come to see what’s happening at the small table by the window.

One day, as I drove to visit, I heard CBC Radio present the following: “Artists are ‘better protected against dementia’ study finds - Neurologists at St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto found that artists suffering from vascular dementia may still be able to draw spontaneously and from memory, despite being unable to complete simple, everyday tasks... Dr. Fornazzari said he believes educators should take the findings seriously and encourage schools to teach the arts – whether sculpture, painting or music – rather than cutting back on them... Art opens the mind, he said. It should be taught to everyone. It’s better than many medications and is as important as mathematics or history.” www.cbc.ca/news/health/story/2013/08/22/art-dementia.html

A seed was planted. That day, I almost pounced on the young candy striper bringing fresh water. “Do you know these two women are important artists? How would you like to have your portrait painted by Karen?” The handsome young 14 year old boy was very polite and readily agreed and with that a project began.

There is an active candy striper program at Cottonwoods. What better way to expose young minds to the healing power of the arts and demonstrate how creative expression is a lifelong friend. Karen has found purpose and indeed reverted to her old self in many ways. She has made an appointment book, keeps records and greets each prospective sitter with a plan. “If you wish to pose for a painting, we’ll need to get to know each other. You’ll also have to bring me a recent photograph so that I can refer to it later when I’m painting. I’ll prepare my canvas and do an initial study, but I do need to talk with you so I can feel I know a bit about you and have a sense of your personality. I’ll retain the finished portrait for an exhibition we plan to hold in June.”

To me she explains, “Really I’ve painted all my life, I can’t understand why I was letting my passion slip away. I was very afraid when I felt dementia settling into my life, but now I see the most important part of who I am is still with me. As soon as I open my paint box, every movement is intuitive. I know

We are all believers in what creative spirit can accomplish if we relax into its embrace.



Karen loves the mountains

She offers to paint a portrait of all those who come to see what's happening at the small table by the window.

about the right side of the brain. How do you think that applies to me and my painting?"

Karen was born December 8th, 1941, the day they bombed Pearl Harbour, she points out. She remembers a youth heavily impacted by a family preoccupied by World War II. She spent her days in the kitchen, beside the wood stove, watching her grandmother, a well-regarded illustrator and poet. Through her grandmother, Karen felt the embrace of creative spirit and the joy that opens one's whole being to beauty and Mother Nature. With further support from a teacher, who saw her student's talent and opened her mind further to the process of creativity, Karen developed skills. In adult life, she became a well-recognised oil painter of landscapes and portraits. You'll see her works in a google search of Karen R. Hersey.

A keen mind and curiosity urged Karen to audit courses in philosophy, history, and theory of art at the University of British Columbia, and later painting courses in Nelson B.C. After marriage and children, she returned to painting and received acclaim in juried exhibitions and admiration from the many students she instructed. Exciting helicopter and hiking adventures into the backcountries of British Columbia and Alberta fuelled her passion for nature, its atmosphere, light, textures, vegetation, wildlife and people. These trips helped her create a strong body of work admired by art collectors.

Inside an album, Karen has written "I consider my art most successful when it stands free of verbal interpretation and touches the viewer on an intuitive level of appreciation and understanding." When I read this to her she responds, "Yes, a very strong sense of intuition has directed me in my choices. As I painted, I often followed where it led me and it has never led me astray."

Karen, Daphne and I are excited that perhaps we can make a contribution to understanding the important place painting has in the care of dementia. The twenty-first century is just beginning to awaken to the healing power of creativity. There is much wisdom, perhaps what some might call aboriginal



The Art Of Listening

“Yes, a very strong sense of intuition has directed me in my choices. As I painted, I often followed where it led me and it has never led me astray.”

knowing, to regain understanding for the role of creativity in helping individuals assume greater responsibility for self-care. A person’s *creative fitness* helps support physical fitness. Karen, Daphne and I hope the laughter and excitement filling this room at the end of a dark hall can be a beginning; that the universe will continue to guide our anecdotal research. We continue to be buoyed by anticipation. Storytelling has deep roots in human evolution. Stories need to be fostered in any care facility that is human centred.

Our conversations are not just reminiscences, but frequently become

rich and probing. We talk about how creativity is an energy that runs through us and can bring connection for all those willing to engage. Karen has strong opinions, intelligent questions and quick humour. Both women want and need the stimulation they have found. Daphne and Karen are generous hostesses to visitors of all ages, and give from the reserves of life experience. Often, as I walk to the end of hall, I wonder how creative conversation might inspire other residents still wanting to share from their own reserves of stories. Family members have sometimes heard the stories so often that they miss the richness of them. Engagement in a creative activity gives a new perspective.

In our conversations often it is Daphne, the most senior, who keeps clear focus, pulls us back with pointed observations, clear opinions, but best of all humour - sometimes a little risqué. We tease her about that, and she shrugs. She knows these have been her strengths as an artist on the human journey. She was always a shrewd observer and painted to share her vision. She has a humble confidence and a love for Karen. Karen tries to grasp why she is the one who is living with dementia. “Oh well, isn’t it fun dealing with dementia? Write that down won’t you?”

Can two women nurturing each other and discussing painting give insight into the importance of the arts in dementia care? Some answers come into focus slowly, but conversations that value the place for creativity in human care need to begin.

Writer Karen Close, karensageing@gmail.com, is on the advisory board of the Arts Health Network and the board of The Society for the Arts in Dementia Care
www.artshealthnetwork.ca/initiatives/british-columbia www.cecd-society.org

LOSING CREATIVITY

AND FINDING IT AGAIN

Harold Rhenisch



When I was a young man, I thought that creativity was a special activity granted to artists and writers. I believed that such people, myself among them, created new expressions and new patterns in the world. Together these patterns amounted, I believed, to the height of civilized activity. I believed that by creating poems, novels, paintings and songs, artists were renewing ancient traditions, keeping the world alive, and keeping society on a healthy course, in mutually-supportive conversations with their audiences. I threw myself passionately into this work and created out of it over twenty-five books of poetry, fiction, nonfiction, translation and essay.

In 2003, though, I glimpsed darkness. I spent an afternoon in the Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp in Alsace, where the Germans imprisoned captured French resistance fighters during World War II. It was one of the most brutal camps in the entire camp system. I had a terrible attack of claustrophobia there, when a rusty, sixty-year old latch imprisoned me in a latrine. The room was built by prisoners during the war, with walls of roughly-formed concrete, painted a sickly green. It was lit by one dangling, naked bulb. I felt that if I opened the door it would be 1943. I'd be in the middle of the camp. There'd be no way back.

Despite my cold sweat, I eventually deciphered that latch and gathered the courage to open the door. It was 2003. I breathed a sigh of relief. Words from my cousin, helped, a historian from the nearby German city of Freiburg. "Don't try to understand it," he told me. "It is insane. By its very definition it can't be understood. It just is what it is. If you try to understand it, you'll just hurt your head."

Our grandmother had a role in this tragedy. She was a doctor, across the Rhine. Due to the great shortage of doctors, she was the camp surgeon for three sub-camps of the Natzweiler complex. These were lumber camps in the Black Forest. Her response was to rescue three prisoners, at great personal risk. My father was raised by one of them, a sixteen-year-old girl from the Ukraine. A second taught him how to garden, while convalescing from bullet wounds in the basement. The family survived the starvation of the French Occupation because of his report after his return to France. My grandmother's humanity was, indeed, profoundly creative.

In 2008, however, I hadn't realized this. Scarcely older than my grandmother had been during the War, I was standing inside the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany on pilgrimage to the East, on the Northern Camino. It was a journey that changed my life, as Sage-ing Journal has



My grandmother, Charlotte (Rhenisch) Hartlief



Top: Skriduklaustur, Gunnar Gunnarsson's home in Iceland (Photo by Diane Rhenisch)

Above: The remains of Goethe's oak tree, with stones on it to remember the dead

I felt that if I opened the door it would be 1943. I'd be in the middle of the camp. There'd be no way back.

graciously allowed me to tell over the last two years. Today, I want to tell you about Buchenwald—not because I want to leave you there, but because I have lived with this for five years now and have found a way out. I want to share it.

I lost creativity in Buchenwald. One moment, I was a Canadian writer with a story to tell, entering an insane

place of nearly unspeakable barbarity on a sunny summer day. The next, I understood everything. It was a place of utterly complete and complex logic. It was evil, despicable logic, but, nonetheless, I understood it. There was the terrible joke of the letters of the camp gate, written in reverse, which made this political camp, and the communists and socialists and writers it jailed, a Wonderland straight out of Lewis Carroll. There was the brutal joke of the zoo, in which bears were goaded to fight to the death, which was used to acclimatize young guards into brutalizing the Russian prisoners (Soviet bears) inside the camp. There was the horrible joke of the camp jailing the very tree under which the German poet Goethe composed the first stanzas of his dramatic poem, *Faust*, the greatest work of literature in the German language, and the inspiration for Germany of the 1920s. The Nazis despised that so much that they used it as a hanging tree. I understood that this was a spiritual prison, not the physical one that appeared to the young American liberators of 1945. It was built to kill souls. Spiritually, I did not walk out of that camp again for five years.

The rest of my stories about the pilgrimage to the East are about the angels, demons, saints and fairy tale figures that came to guide me (or to taunt me and lead me astray) as I wandered ever more enthralled, ever further east. I found my doorway out in East Iceland in the spring of 2013. I had gone to write about the Icelandic writer Gunnar Gunnarsson (1889–1975), who had given literary readings throughout wartime Germany in March, 1944. At the end, he met privately with Hitler—a great fan of his tales of Icelandic peasants. Logically, for this Gunnar's fellow Icelanders damned Gunnar as a Nazi.

He wasn't. I have the speech he read on that tour. It's code—psychological suggestion written as a literary fable. Without fanfare, Gunnar had been working as a spy, for no country but his own vision of Scandinavia. Since 1928, he'd been writing books intended to change German military policy and prevent war. At the end, Hitler had a hysterical fit, as he often did when receiving guests, and booted Gunnar home to Iceland.

And what did Gunnar tell Hitler in this speech, in his clever literary code? Ah, that's the thing. He told Hitler that poverty was the greatest wealth of the Germans. Poverty! The great tragedy of Gunnar's life was that his mother was killed by poverty-induced pneumonia in 1901, when he was nine years



Top: Waterfall at the head of a fjord in East Iceland



Above: Harold and Gunnar say goodbye

Harold Rhenisch has been writing poems and histories of the Okanagan for over thirty-five years. His work is based on a wide range of models from literature to ancient prayer, myth, and spell-craft. He is currently exploring the deep roots of the language in Old Norse and Anglo Saxon. After twenty years in the Cariboo and on Vancouver Island, and after two long journeys on the German section of the Camino, he has returned home. He lives in Vernon, where he writes the deep ecology blog, www.okanaganokanogan.com and is webmaster for Gallery Veritgo, at www.galleryvertigo.net

old. As a child, his one remembered pleasure was when he floated one half of one walnut shell, from the single walnut of his childhood, down a stream. I wondered how that could be wealth and how it could possibly be an answer to Hitler's brutal aggression.

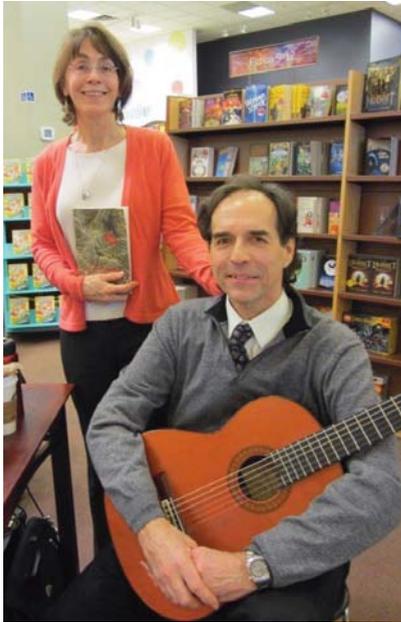
After four weeks in Iceland, hiking to waterfalls that radiated a blue sun, teasing out the brilliant Icelandic purslane from stones only recently released from snow, tracking ravens up canyons, and rediscovering the simple, earth-bound language at the heart of my language, English, I found the answer. It was up among the reindeer herds in the Suurdalur, the old foot path leading down to the East from Vatnajökull glacier. It was a small ice fall full of magical ice formations above a glacial river full of swans. At its base were the foundation blocks of a collapsed turfhouse, big enough for a man to lie down in and wide enough for him to stand beside a door. When this was an active croft, and a man's home, this was his shelter only. Like a sheep, he lived out on the mountainside. It was an impossible place, yet he couldn't have built down by the river. That was flat land, owned by rich men. He could only build on common land, the property of all men, out of the way. That is poverty. It is also wealth that belongs to everyone and can save everyone. It's also a part of an alternative form of economic organization, based not on capital, such as the economic system of Canada, but on creativity.

Today, the over-grazing induced by this man's poverty has been corrected with a new forest. Out of poverty, out of nothing, future wealth has been created from the creative capital of the land. And the past wealth? It's all there, down below the fall, stacked up by the gravel road that winds along the river, every bit of wealth that has been removed over the successive years from the cycle of this piece of earth — a vast array of capitalized milk separators, trucks, engines, roofing materials, piping, electrical poles, bales of wire and lengths of lumber, all used until it was out-dated, in the fashion of such products. It is banked there, ready to be mined for new uses, so that its stored creativity can continue to benefit the farm. In Canada, it would be melted down and recapitalized, then depreciated, then treated as raw material again. In Iceland, the product was never important. It was the creativity that had gone into it that mattered. In this economy, the shape of a piece of metal is its value. It can be re-fashioned through imagination and re-used for ever new purposes until the metal that holds it in place is rust in the hand. Only then can the debt to the land created by the original slaughter of that poor crofter's sheep be erased. Until then, the creativity of its life remains for use in the present, and on into the future.

So does my grandmother's. It's no accident that the chains on my soul were released there in the Suurdalur. Creativity may no longer belong to me, but I belong to it.

MARRYING POETRY AND CLASSICAL GUITAR

Janice Notland and Alan Rinehart



My writing seemed to have come out of nowhere, but felt incredibly satisfying, like I had reached a deep part of my being.

I have sat in an audience and watched my husband, Alan Rinehart, perform as a classical guitarist many times, but I never imagined I'd be on stage with him performing a piece of work together. I never imagined in the past that I would write poetry either.

In 2006, a friend suggested I write a poem about something I was describing to her. I told her that I'd never written before and she told me to try it anyway. I did. I went home and wrote a poem about the event and then a couple of days later, started writing poem after poem. Within two months I had written thirty poems. My writing seemed to have come out of nowhere, but felt incredibly satisfying, like I had reached a deep part of my being.

In the past, I always felt that the biggest changes in my life had come about, seemingly, out of nowhere. Years later, I know this is not true; the work of creating anything in our lives always starts in the invisible realm before manifesting in the physical world. Still, writing poetry and giving voice to it, alongside Alan playing guitar seemed to be one of those unexpected changes.

I felt like something had opened into me and I was just receiving. When I'm writing well, I feel like I'm in another, more fertile zone, and more connected to my true self. Because of this, the act of writing feels very healing and is something I deeply appreciate in my life.

As time went on, and I continued to write, it was not always as easy as those first thirty poems. I often felt stuck and wasn't happy with what I ended up with on paper. Yet other times, I managed to write something that I felt was good enough or even very good.

I love poetry, how it delights the mind in different ways and provides insight and shows commonality in unexpected ways, but I also have short stories living inside of me that I want to express and even a novel sometime in the future, centred on a subject that is dear to me. To me, writing is about expressing an idea that has value to me, and if it resonates with someone else, then it's a gift both ways.

Right now, I am gifted with being able to give voice to some of my poems alongside Alan performing on classical guitar. Since Alan initiated this endeavour, I am going to let him elaborate.

Watching Janice hone her writing, and find a very creative channel for her emotions and observations gave me the opportunity to examine my own ideas about poetry and its relationship to music.

ALAN RINEHART

Playing a musical instrument is one of those activities that demands a significant amount of solitary time to develop a reasonable skill. This is particularly true for classical musicians who must deal with the creative output of their predecessors since the advent of written music. Many hours of disciplined practice, over many years, are needed to achieve the highest level of performance, and to meet the challenges of the greatest works in the repertoire. That's the bad news; the good news is that there is a vast array of well-written music of all levels to inspire players as they take their first steps along that path.

Many classical musicians are fine improvisors, as well, but most of us spend our time re-creating existing musical creations. For me, the real joy of creation in musical performance comes from playing with others. Like pianists, classical guitarists do not have the early and regular experience of playing in groups that is the mainstay of the orchestral instruments or choral singers. Over the years, I've been fortunate to play chamber music in many different instrumental groupings, but I had yet to work with a creative writer.

Watching Janice hone her writing, and find a very creative channel for her emotions and observations gave me the opportunity to examine my own ideas about poetry and its relationship to music. I personally feel that poetry is closer to music in its imagery, not just in the song lyric sense, but also how a poem 'speaks' to the brain, especially when read aloud. Janice and I often talked about the phrasing and rhythm of a particular poetic passage and it became a very short step to then consider how I could find a way to add actual music to her poems.

In one of those serendipitous moments that appear occasionally, shortly before Janice decided to publish her poems, I found the website of a guitarist/composer in California whose music intrigued me. Michael Karmon has a growing reputation in the classical guitar world for writing interesting and appealing music. When I approached him about writing a set of pieces based on one of Janice's poems *Dreams Laid Down*, he responded with a wonderful suite of six musical gems.

Now, Janice and I have done a number of readings together, and it is particularly enriching and exciting to share the performing experience with my life partner.

DAILY BREATH

Janice Notland

Again I awaken
surrounded by trees,
breath of boughs discernible
even in stillness of form.

Have I nothing to say to this grace,
no inflection
no tone of wonder
of what is living in these hills?

I see wind picking through leaves
drying and sorting;
as a mother tends and dotes.

Mountain chickadees
sound amidst distant chainsaws
pushing upon the land,
retooling rawness.

Earth hidden in change,
yet in all ways unchanging
behind bold configurations.

I hear music outside my window
swimming in the creek.
My lips dare not mimic rather,
find my mouth wide and gaping.

I try to catch the dew
evaporating from sea to sky,
transported back
from the roof of the world.

Falling as sacrament
fitting into breath;
a taste of life descending
fresh and wholly new.

For over 40 years Alan Rinehart has dedicated his creative life to music through the voice of the classical guitar and its historical cousin, the lute. He has given concerts and recitals internationally and has been heard frequently on CBC. A long time resident of Vancouver, he was a faculty member of the Schools of Music at UBC and VCC for 20 years. He and Janice moved to Kelowna in 2010. www.alanrinehart.com/

Janice Notland has had a many faceted life journey. Born in Calgary, Alberta, she has lived in Montreal and parts of the pacific northwest U.S.; for many years she was a community health worker on the West Coast of British Columbia, primarily Vancouver. From 2004 to 2010 she lived in the West Kootenays. The book, *Dreams Laid Down*, her first collection of poetry, was inspired by her time living in a rural home outside of Nelson. www.littlewhitepublishing.com/category/authors/

MY MANDELA



Rashida Sial

Trying to find some solace in a new art course during a health crisis, I signed up for Art for Health, a course taught by Suzanne Valois founder of *The Art of Being Human*, in Ottawa, www.theartofbeinghuman.ca. The course included making mandalas. Mandala means ‘that which encircles a Centre’, the centre being a meaning or representation (symbol) of a meaning. To create this type of mandala, the participant works from the outside ring inward.

Discussing dreams and interpreting symbols within them was part of the culture in which I grew up. However, creating symbols within a Mandala was foreign to me. The process evolved into an intense journey. At times, I was totally unaware of my

surroundings. Perhaps you will also find something meaningful in this story of my journey on the basis of what we share as a human family.

The mandala is read from the outside in. In my mandala, the outer red circle or the *ring of fire* is symbolic of what you would bring with you to start your journey inward. Choosing a symbol for this ring did not faze me as I used hearts with light emanating from them, believing love can help you cross any fire.

The *second ring* of hopes, desires, and what is important in your life brought symbols of swirls of water, perhaps to cool and calm the heat of fire I had just crossed, and the boats to navigate the waters. Realizing that I needed the support of a solid ground as well, little green islands emerged.

Figures denoting family, which brings both joy and heartbreak, also appear in this ring. A loved one, who chose to distant themselves, stands a little apart, but is always present in my heart. There are papers, pens and brushes representing my unfinished paintings and manuscripts. Within this circle, small pinwheels can also be found, representing efforts at organization, analysis, and movement which I lack, but need.

The *third ring* involves heart and light symbols in even stronger shapes, which mean love, courage, and warmth for me. This ring also has the calm of blue skies, and the bright light and warmth of the sun. These are the tools I need to overcome difficulties, but I still feel unsure about that being enough,

Creating symbols within a Mandala was foreign to me. The process evolved into an intense journey.

One way of stepping forward is to be quiet and patient

Born in Pakistan in a family where girls were only tutored at home, Rasheda Sial was the first woman in her family to get her Bachelor of Arts degree, thanks to her very determined mother. She is a self-taught artist and a watercolorist. Urdu poetry is her other passion and she is a published writer and a teacher of Urdu language arts. Moving to Ottawa in 1969, she has kept her love of art alive by learning new art forms at the Ottawa School of Art, and University of Ottawa, while working in the Government.

Although busy with her family and community, she finds 'Art Time' just for herself at Ottawa School of Art. Facing some health issues, she signed up for an 'Art for Health' course with Suzanne Valois, continuing with the next level. Rasheda continues to make her home in Ottawa with her husband, her daughter and two grandchildren.

and how they would reverberate with the rest of the world.

Stepping forward into the centre, I face the four gates through which I may enter my inner garden. Four small triangles, containing dark images, are at the corners of these gates: a heart which is cracked, and chains (symbols of things that bind, and hinder movement) as well as some life blood that has been spilled. I need to acknowledge some hard spots in my life. They cannot be undone, cured or changed, and they still hurt. I have to accept them, but I contain them. I don't dwell upon them for too long when they flash back into my consciousness.

Opening these gates is unbelievably difficult. I have a sense of foreboding. My hand moves to draw an iron grill for the first gate. Two hands close it shut, though you can still peep through. This is my gate of heartbreaks, mistakes, and wounds. It has a deep connection to those four corners I just passed. If I go through this gate, trying to undo things which cannot be undone, I will never reach my inner garden. Acknowledging what is there, I decide not to take this path. Once I clank it shut, I can look for another way to go in.

At the second gate, my eyes are closed with a zipper on my mouth. It is harsh, but I have learnt that I am quick to give my opinion, at times impatiently, interrupting what someone wants to tell me. One way of stepping forward is to be quiet and patient, and closing my eyes to what I perceive as faults, which may not be so.

At the opposite gate, my eyes and ears are open and lips smile, symbolizing open communication, seeing good, saying good and hearing good - creating positive vibes and ease to enter through this gate.

As I turn to my last and most favourite gate, the first thing I see is an open book illuminating the way. This represents the sources of eternal truth and values that guide us to a spiritual journey. It is always there and within one's reach, but require effort and attention. The path is narrow with some rough stones around it as it is not the easiest path to take, but if I can deal with the stones, I am home.

Yes, I am home at last. An off-centre lotus blooms in the calm of nurturing waters, in the center of the mandala, its paintbrush buds and a lily pad palette celebrating creativity. Colourful boxes stacked in a corner contain papers, research, and writing. Projects complete or ongoing are represented in somewhat of an organized fashion. They also contain mementos, letters, and books. A scroll and quill display the Urdu alphabet, my language for writing poetry or prose; whereas stylized ABC symbolizes English, my language of choice for research, learning and teaching.

Encompassing all, there are swirls around the mandala, to give thanks for having the opportunity to take up this journey.

WORDS FROM THE HEART

POETRY

DORMANT

Lesley-Anne Evans

In the orchard behind our house
apple trees still bear fruit. Mid December
and golden orbs adorn naked branches
like fairy trees shimmer Narnia
through the crack of a wardrobe door.
The other soft fleshed Macintosh, drop fruit
at first frost. Their gloss now fermented and dull,
even the geese don't want them. But these unpicked,
yellow and delicious have an inner glow,
a crisp tenacity. Despite evidence of
winter's kiss, despite the push pull
of wind and gravity. My husband admires
them one sunny morning, sends my son
out with his camera. To capture defiance
in the fruit hanging on,
like iced flesh be damned, they won't fall
without a fight. It's as if, within the graft
of trunk to branch and stem to fruit,
lies dormant hope of harvest.

ME AND J.M.W. TURNER



K L Hirliman

I had never heard of Turner when I visited the Clark Museum in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Browsing I came upon his *Rockets and Blue Lights* and thought I had discovered a painter that nobody else seemed to know about. I couldn't believe the experience I was having – having to step back to avoid being splashed by the cascading explosion of water on the canvas.

Several years later, in an Art class I learned what Turner's place in the art world really was. In England, where the majority of his work lives, he is to art what Shakespeare is to theatre. We were shown a slide of what is probably his most famous work, *The Fighting Temeraire*. Then in 1978, when I finally got to London, I saw it at the National Gallery and I was totally gob smacked; the real painting had so much more depth than a two-dimensional slide could ever convey. I couldn't contain it. And though I kept a journal, it was impossible to capture my reaction in prose. So I wrote my first Turner poem.

THE FIGHTING TEMERAIRE

The sun falls through a net of clouds
 a giant hammock drawn across the sky.
 The fading light fractures into
 crimson – ochre – ripe persimmon:
 it splatters off the clouds &
 dances on the water.
 Spitting fire the small black tug
 plows the quiet river
 as it pulls upstream.
 The ghostly ship looms majestic;
 three naked mastheads proud in the sky,
 her burnished hull stripped to the bone.
 Mated to her perfect reflection
 she glides through the sunset water
 imperious as a swan.
 The tug tends towards the picture plane
 and I, unpainted, unperceived
 am the Temeraire's intended harbour,
 but for her fixed position
 forever on the Thames.

Having to step back to avoid being splashed by the cascading explosion of water on the canvas.



The Fighting Temeraire
Turner: Oil. 1839. National Gallery London

The real painting had so much more depth than a two-dimensional slide could ever convey.

At the time my husband's work took us to London once a year; he'd work, I'd gallery hop. Each trip yielded two or three poems. Then the explosion: friends introduced me to the watercolors at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. I think there were four boxes of watercolors, some finished, some just color sketches. We got through all the boxes in under two hours. I realized it was time to see the watercolors that were part of the Turner Bequest.

But I was still clueless. I strolled into the Prints and Drawings Room at the Tate Britain. "I'd like to see the Turner watercolors." Which one's? the attendant asked. "I'd like to see them all – I have all afternoon." That attendant is deserving of an award for diplo-

macy. Instead of laughing at me outright he handed me a sheet of A4 paper on which was a list, in miniscule font, of boxes; each box contained 20 to 30 watercolors. And that was only the small watercolors.

I rapidly calculated that based on an annual two week trip, it would take me at least a lifetime to see them all. Then my husband started his own company and I was no longer guaranteed my annual trip to London. I needed a viable excuse and somehow visiting friends and luxuriating in English theatre didn't warrant the expense. So the Turner poems became my validation for travel. I never suspected where it would lead: a fully developed passion for Turner and at last count over 50 poems. The line from Roethke's *The Waking*, says it all: *I learn by going where I have to go.*

MOONLIGHT OVER THE SEA

www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-moonlight-over-the-sea-d24587

In a darkening sky
moonlight waltzes with the clouds
the sweep of a white
satin gown catches
the tidal crests casting
a ladder of light
on a brocaded sea.

KIRKSTALL ABBEY ON THE RIVER AIRE

www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-kirkstall-abbey-on-the-river-aire-d18146

Time flows freely through
the vacant bell tower
and the call to prayer
echoes in the valley.
The Abbey monks in shadow

keep their silence as
 the crash and roar of
 the Aire rushes from the weir.
 Cattle by the river bank
 will graze forever
 under age-swept, wind-bent trees
 and simple reverence
 lies dormant in the land

THE TEMPLE OF POSEIDON

www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-the-temple-of-poseidon-at-sunium-cape-colonna-t07561

Monumental still
 the remnants of the great temple
 on the cliff. Fluted columns reach
 for a cloud-filled cauldron of sky -
 lightning strikes the
 distant horizon -
 a shipwreck founders
 in the vulnerable sea -
 a pack of wolves begins to gather
 mid fragments of the frieze
 scattered in the foreground.
 Supplicants may be
 centuries gone but scholars
 and the curious still make the climb.
 Night reveals the vacancy
 as the full moon's beams
 rifle the Aegean tide
 glance the broken antique stone.
 Is Artemis seeking her missing kin?
 How does a god disappear?

I grew up in New York City. I attended Hunter College High School, and was graduated as a writing major from Queens College, *summa cum laude*. I had gone to the night school at Queens College while raising a family, with the antique imperative of acquiring an 'enrichment of life', and not as a means of gaining marketplace skills. In 1988 I was the founding editor of *Voce, Voce*, a 24-page arts magazine that published four times a year. I was forced to abandon *Voce* because of time constraints prompted by my husband's catastrophic medical problems. I had been committed to maintaining 20th Century literary standards, producing a print version that I would then distribute to subscribers via first class mail. Now, a not-so-merry widow, I'm looking to reactivate *Voce* in some form. I had long resisted going online with it however, realize that this is the only viable way forward; I am now in the process of arranging for that transformation.

ASSESSING THE CREATIVE

EXPRESSIVE ABILITIES OF SENIORS WITH DEMENTIA

Dalia Gottlieb-Tanaka, PhD,

Introduction

The Creative-Expressive Abilities Assessment (CEAA) tool is designed to obtain in-depth information about the expressive abilities of seniors with dementia. The instrument covers a wide range of abilities that have shown improvements when seniors participate in creative activity programs. The tool is easy to use and provides a convenient method for quantifying changes in behavior. It can be used, for example, for comparing the effectiveness of creative activity programs or to identify the successful matching of activities to the unique needs of each client or of a group. The CEAA package includes an observation/rating form, a user guide, 2 DVDs and the Self-Assessment Checklist for facilitators. The User Guide is a reference book with instructions that are easy to follow. It is available for first time users and experienced users of the instrument.

About the Team

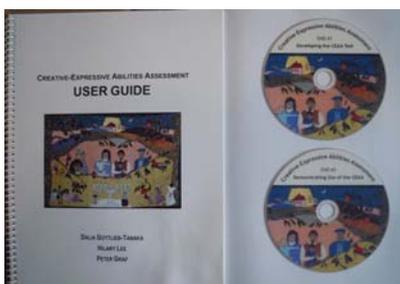
The idea for the CEAA tool was conceived in 2007 when Hilary Lee from Perth, Australia attended the Creative Expression, Communication and Dementia Conference at the University of British Columbia in 2006, managed by Dalia Gottlieb-Tanaka and sponsored by the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care. Dalia and Hilary found many things in common, became friends and began collaboration.

The two women agreed that new instruments were needed to assess and document the diverse benefits of creative activity and related programs. Both had witnessed how such programs were effective in maintaining and enhancing the expressive abilities and quality of life for seniors with dementia. It did not matter that Dalia was in Canada and Hilary was in Australia; both faced the same issues in interacting with clients, in dealing with the politics their fields which created difficulties in convincing authorities that the arts are crucial in dementia care. Early on, these women established that no other comprehensive tool existed to assess creative abilities of people living with dementia, and they proposed to develop one. To date, the CEAA is the only comprehensive tool of its kind.

With backgrounds in qualitative research, Dalia and Hilary understood that to make the tool more credible and accepted academically, they would need to join forces with a quantitative researcher who could contribute skills to the qualitative aspect of the tool. They recruited Peter Graf, a professor of Psychology at UBC, to join in furthering the development of the CEAA too,



Below: Cover of User's guide
Bottom: detail of tapestry



Hooked on Hessian

The importance of psychosocial approaches to care that are designed to maintain or enhance the well-being and quality of life are rarely appreciated and often are first to be cut back when resources become scarce.



Sonia learns violin

and the original team was born. Peter would later lead the study testing the reliability and validity of the tool that took place at Miami University in Ohio.

Two more milestones marked the development of the CEAA tool. In 2011, Julie Gross McAdam, from Melbourne, Australia, generously contributed film clips based on sessions with her dementia clients. Julie is the founder of the MAC.ART program. In 2012, Elizabeth Lokon, from the University of Miami in Ohio, assisted in validating the tool with the help of her students. Elizabeth is the founder of the OMA program for seniors living with dementia.

About Developing the Tool

In Canada, as in most regions of the industrialized world, the aging of the population will peak between 2025 and 2045 when the Baby Boom generation reaches 75+ years of age, and it is expected that one of every four persons over the age of 80 will have some form of cognitive impairment. According to some estimates, 500,000 people in Canada are living with dementia today and that number will increase to over one million by 2030. About 200,000 healthy Canadians are required to provide care for the dementia population today, and the cost of care is a staggering \$5 billion a year. The overall cost to Canadian health care was \$15 billion in 2010 with a projection of \$153 billion by 2030.

As the number of people living with dementia increases dramatically along with the cost of care, we fear that the focus of care may turn to physical needs and be limited to providing basic medical services. Even today, the importance of psychosocial approaches to care that are designed to maintain or enhance the well-being and quality of life are rarely appreciated and often are first to be cut back when resources become scarce.

Prominent among the programs designed to enhance quality of life are the creative expression programs, which engage creative thinking and spiritual contemplation. These programs may focus on painting, listening to and making music, dancing, singing, reminiscing, storytelling, life review, and on activities of daily life such as cooking, dressing, planning and gardening. The specific aim of the programs is to foster psychological health and well-being – quality of life – by encouraging and developing the seniors' ability to express themselves in a meaningful and possibly novel way, by stimulating curiosity and self-evaluation. Concretely, reminiscence programs kindle the recall of life experiences, promote interpersonal functioning and improve emotional well-being (Kasl-Godley & Gatz, 2000). The Breakfast Club, developed at a Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged in the Bronx, New York (Boczek, 1994), was designed to maintain conversational and social skills, to promote recollection of early life memories and to foster organizational, decision-making and problem-solving skills. Other programs, such as the Creative Expression Activities Program developed by Dalia in Canada and the *Spark of Life* program developed by Hilary Lee in Australia, nourish the social, emotional, cultural and spiritual needs of seniors living with dementia. In



Top: Collaborative painting
 Middle: everyone contributes
 Bottom: everyone's work is appreciated

brief, creative expression programs harness and build on seniors' remaining abilities, to reaffirm their dignity and self-worth (Lee, 2007).

Engaging in creative activities can serve to relieve boredom, depression and anxiety, and to increase interest in life. Ashida (2000) found that music therapy alleviates depressive symptoms in people with dementia.

Sonia, a senior with dementia, is holding a violin for the first time in her life and tries to produce sounds at random. Her expression on her face tells it all. Her curiosity and keen interest was evident and helped direct the facilitator's interaction with her.

Brotons and Koger (2000) found music therapy increases language functioning in these clients. Aldridge (1993) found that music reduces the need for tranquilizing medication. Ridder (2005), in an overview chapter on therapeutic initiatives, reviewed 92 studies carried out between 1980 and 2004, and suggested that music can contribute to neurological rehabilitation. O'Toole and Lepp (2000) found drama therapy helps with the integration of "thoughts, feelings and actions". Lepp et al (2003) found that a combined program of dance, rhythm, song, storytelling and conversation increased socialization. Palo-Bengtsson and her colleagues (1998) found that dancing promoted closer relationships with caregivers, contributed to positive feelings and better communication. Social dancing also has been found to promote a sense of identity, self-worth and self-esteem (Trombley & Radomski, 2002).

Engaging in creative activities can contribute to or even define the quality of life at every stage in human development (Runco, Ebersole & Marz, 1990; Runco & Richards, 1997). We are convinced that one major reason, perhaps the most important reason, why this basic but profound lesson is not more widely recognized stems from the lack of an easy-to-use instrument for collecting comprehensive, compelling, solid quantitative evidence concerning the programs' many positive effects.

We created the CEAA tool to enable the collection of this type of data. More specifically, we created it as a tool that might be useful for answering important questions, such as these: Are some creative activity programs more effective than others for maintaining or enhancing the expressive abilities and quality of life of seniors with dementia? Which frequency of program delivery (e.g., 3 times per week versus once every 2 weeks) is most effective in maintaining expressive abilities? Do the benefits of such programs change for seniors with different degrees of dementia? We believe the CEAA tool can permit health care administrators to fine-tune their programming and invest their limited resources in the best interests and for the long-term benefit of the seniors in their care.

About Testing and Validating the Tool

Based on our understanding of the relevant literature and our extensive first-hand experience with developing and delivering creative activity programs, we drafted a first version of the instrument. Its name reflects our interest in

Creative expression programs harness and build on seniors' remaining abilities, to reaffirm their dignity and self-worth.

small-c creativity (Cohen, 2000), where the word *to create* is a synonym for *to make, to produce, to generate* and *to express*. The name also reflects our conviction that a person's creative abilities are crucial determinants of quality of life even in dementia.

With the aim to develop a comprehensive assessment instrument, our first draft included over 45 items and covered 8 different ability areas or domains. Over nearly 6 months, this instrument was used in Western Australia by 8 different observers who assessed 88 seniors with dementia who participated in 2 different creative activity programs. With insights, experiences and data from this phase, we drafted a new version of the instrument and a user guide. In Phase 2, the new draft was used in Vancouver, Canada, by 4 different observers who assessed seniors with dementia participating in 17 different creative activity programs. Of these assessments, 140 came from 2 individuals who observed the same seniors in the same session. We combined the results of these analyses with feedback from two focus groups (one with 6 participants in Canada, and the other with 10 participants in Australia) and with activity program directors who are likely to use the instrument. Based on these results, we drafted a new version of the instrument and the user guide and tested them, making 98 additional assessments (each of 2 observers made 49 assessments) in Vancouver, Canada. The data from this phase were used for the following analyses.

The CEAA has Good Internal Consistency and Inter-rater Reliability. The current version of the CEAA consists of 25 core items, plus 2 optional items that should be used only in connection with activity programs that involve some form of writing. Most of our assessments were made in programs that did not include a writing component, and thus, our data concern only the 25-item CEAA tool. The tool covers 7 different domains: memory, attention, language, psychosocial skills, reasoning/problem solving, emotions and culture. The CEAA can be used to make reliable and trustworthy observations on the creative-expressive abilities of seniors with dementia.

Benefits of Using the Tool

A creative expression facilitator: can observe clients' creative abilities in a systematic way and monitor any changes in those abilities over time. The document is easy to complete and read at a glance. It provides reliable results for reporting in meetings with colleagues, administration and families. It helps in getting to know new clients and documenting their abilities. A facilitator can monitor sessions and assess their effectiveness by analyzing clients' responses. It serves as a guide in planning activities to suit each client. **An administrator of a care facility:** can monitor how residents respond to various programs. The tool provides specific reports on residents' creative abilities to complement medical reports. It can be used in planning budgets for effective arts activities and as a guide in hiring facilitators. **If you are a researcher:** The tool is based on solid quantitative research. That means

creative abilities can be measured in a quantitative way. For more information on the reliability and validity of the tool please log on www.dementia-activities.com. The tool provides a reliable way to monitor subjects in a range of domains, such as memory and attention, and researchers report the accompanying manual has proved to be a useful training resource.

Dalia Gottlieb-Tanaka, PhD, graduated in 1976 from the Bezalel Academy of Arts & Design in Jerusalem, and received a Master of Architecture degree in 1980 from the University of British Columbia. She is the founder of the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care. The Creative Expression Activities Program she developed for seniors with dementia won an award from the American Society on Aging and the MetLife Foundation. She continues to do research and to deliver presentations and workshops internationally. Dalia supports interdisciplinary collaboration with other professionals who share an interest in the use of visual and performing arts in health services provided to seniors with dementia.

Hilary Lee MSc, has a background in occupational therapy. She completed a Master's degree in dementia research in 2007. With over 20 years of practical experience in dementia care, Hilary has been implementing a person-centered and holistic approach with projects such as the early identification and prevention of depression in dementia, and in designing innovative and creative programs to enable people with dementia to express themselves in new ways. Hilary established a new chapter of the Society for the Arts in Dementia Care in Australia after connecting with the Society in Canada. Hilary has published her work in age care and peer reviewed journals and is sought after as a presenter both nationally and internationally.

Peter Graf PhD, is a professor in the University of British Columbia's Department of Psychology, where he is the director of the Memory & Cognition Laboratory, and an investigator with the Brain Research Centre. His expertise is on human memory and related abilities, on how these abilities function in normal intact adults, how they change across the adult lifespan, and how they are affected by trauma or diseases such as Alzheimer's. He has published extensively and presented his work at national and international conferences.

For more information please log on www.dementia-activities.com or send an e-mail to Dalia Gottlieb-Tanaka at dr.daliagt@gmail.com or Peter Graf at pgraf@psych.ubc.ca MacAdam's e-mail and her website are: juliemacart@optusnet.com.au and www.macart.com.au

Lokon e-mail and her website are: lokonej@muohio.edu and www.scrippsoma.org
Hilary's e-mail: hilary@dementiacareaustralia.com

Website: www.dementiacareaustralia.com

SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

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www.sageing.ca

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Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude exists to honour the transformational power of creativity. We are a quarterly journal intended as an initiative for collaboration and sharing. We present 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. Ageing 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.