

THE JOURNAL OF Creative Aging

# SAGE-ING

with Creative Spirit, Grace & Gratitude



A PUBLICATION OF  
THE OKANAGAN INSTITUTE  
NUMBER 20, SUMMER 2016  
EDITED BY KAREN CLOSE

KNOW YOURSELF. BE YOURSELF.  
LOVE YOURSELF. SHARE YOURSELF.  
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# The Voices of Creative Aging

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

**This is the first book to document the movement.**

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

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

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

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

## CREATIVE AGING

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



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NUMBER 20, SUMMER 2016  
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A PUBLICATION OF THE

### Okanagan Institute

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Cover image by Sabine Jaspert

## FROM THE EDITOR

For many years I have been fascinated by what the Greeks called *kairos* or 'participatory time' as opposed to *chronos*, or chronology, the sequential order of events with emphasis on the duration of time and what has happened. In contrast, an appointed time or an opportune time was expressed as *kairos*, with no regard for the length of the time. I wonder when is the opportune time to discover who one is, one's special uniqueness?

Sage-ing is discovering *kairos*, becoming more aware and embracing those opportunities and activities which draw upon our creativity, intelligence and life experience. Sage-ing invites a richer, deeper wisdom. As one creates in *kairos*, absorption in the moment is total, and there is no sense of time passing. We feel as though we are living from within the deeper depths of our being and bringing to light our personal myths.

Life gains meaning and integrity.

Over the past 20 issues, our publication *Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude* has shared the stories of those who have found their own ways of bringing creative spirit into their lives. Issues are released around the solstices and equinoxes, those times of changing light. Creative spirit is light. It is interactive energy that enlivens those who create and their audiences. Creativity comes from an ethic of giving, from a union of being true to oneself, one's skills and one's experience. Sage-ing is adopting this considered and considerate attitude to life. *Know Yourself. Be Yourself. Love Yourself. Share Yourself.*

The articles in this issue are particularly honest and sincere expressions of those who have felt challenge, pain and joy - life. In response, they have chosen to embrace 'participa-

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tory time', to actively and positively co-create with the moments of their lives. As you read you'll feel the interactive energy that creative expression excites. With our autumn issue we will enter into the 6th year of publication. We hope you will co-create with us as we build this Journal into an expanding reservoir of wisdom and generosity. We are always eager to hear your suggestions of stories that need to be shared, your own or others.

Have a beautiful summer,  
Editor, Karen Close

## SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE TO SAGE-ING

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

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

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

– Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 1246b

# WHY I AM A PAINTER



## Sabine Jaspert

There is talent in all of us and it is pure luck, when, early in your life, someone close to you recognizes this gift and provides you with support and stimulation.

I was fortunate growing up with supporting, art loving parents, surrounded by sketches, paintings, music, books, self-designed furniture, fabrics and inspiring artist friends of my grandparents.

Both of my grandparents had been successful artists in their time. Due to an illness, which kept me bedridden for a long time of my childhood, a pencil and a piece of paper became my world. The small pictures I made, built another, exciting world, in which my mind could move, and that I was part of.

Even without drawing tools at hand, I had a glimpse into this space. A crack in a wall, or the intriguing folds of drapery opened a fantastic theatre with figures roaming strange landscapes, ever changing images with a slight move of the head. Music and books just added another gateway to the imagination. One of the best gifts of my parents was time for myself in a time where there were none of today's distractions, no computer, and very little television.

At times I compare making art with cooking. There is hunger first. Then you decide on what to cook. You get groceries. Depending of what you find, the previous idea changes. While cooking, with a little bit of spices, sugar or salt, what you had on your mind might lead to further changes. In the end you get a tasty meal after all.

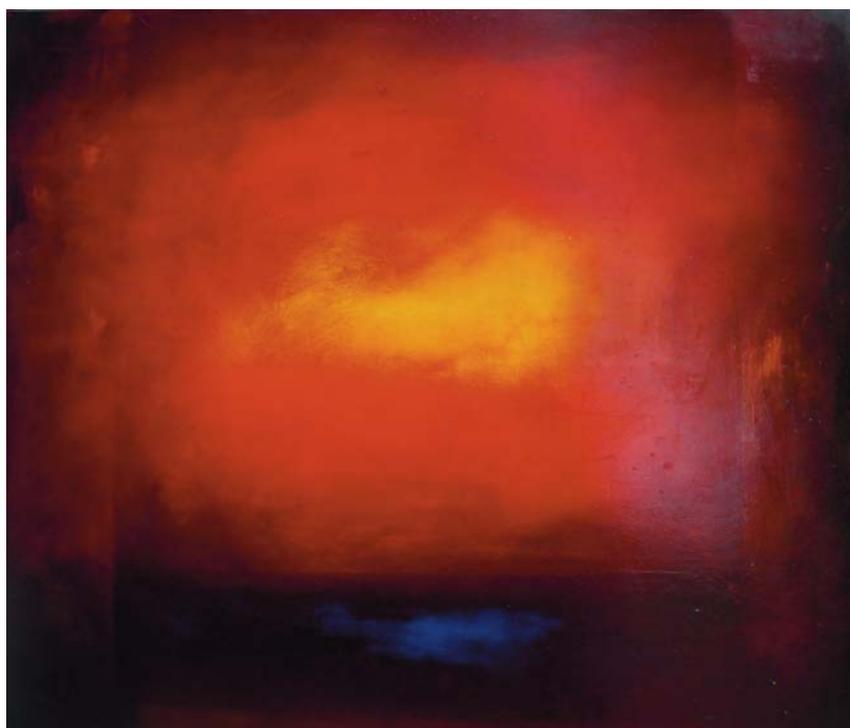
A white canvas can be intimidating. It is an incarnation of freedom. Most of the artists I know, stroke its surface; they need to touch, before they take up the brush. Although images come to me on their own, previous ideas might vanish with the first brushstroke. The color, shape – even the smell of the solvents and paint - all the dynamics of the initial movement, might lead away from previous concepts. While painting, you forget your lunch; you might thoughtlessly grab the glass of turpentine instead of the mug with the meanwhile cold coffee. Often, what makes you halt is, when your eyes are burning and you realize that your studio has become dark.

In art school days, we used to jokingly divide between “them” and “us”. “They” usually saw “us” as hopelessly immature and far from useful for the demands of real life. For “us”, the demands could become a wonder, asking for a child-like curiosity and joy. But there is also restlessness, a struggle and even depression.

I decided early on that living for the art alone, a bohemian life, is an unhappy one. Having children, a somewhat ordinary life, gives balance. My granddaughter Ana is the “light of my eyes” and a great companion in my

Now I encourage my granddaughter





Top: There Shall Be Peace  
Above: never have I loved like this

studio. She radiates pure joy, innocence and deep fascination when immersed into painting. Watching her, is a helpful reminder for what I, many years ago, have decided on, and what I feel, a true artist has to have - an undisputable, inner urge for his or her art.

I have known the singer and songwriter Matt Epp for many years. He is inspiring. Like Ana with her painting, music and lyrics seem to come to him without effort. Singing is an expression of himself. Matt Epp is a true artist. A couple of years ago, we had a successful collaboration at the Black Box theatre. I illustrated his songs with paintings, which were blown up to fit a big screen over the stage. The amazing videographer Francisco Fuentes had made a music video of Matt and me, which can still be viewed on YouTube: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0juezxJ0-k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0juezxJ0-k)

In 2002 my friend Dr. Patrick Keeney and I founded “Sabine’s Salon”. Many of those I call friends today, I first met in the “Salon”. To this day, we are listening to talks, readings, having conversations, and enjoying musical events and art shows. Why a salon? When my husband Abbi, our three children and I immigrated to Canada in 1995, it didn’t take long and I became homesick. Feeling miserable for rather a while, I was looking

for a solution. For centuries the “Salon” has been a quite typical institution for immigrants all over the world and is a wonderful idea. With the “Salon” woven into my daily life, I love having a family, very good friends and understanding neighbors. In contrast to the artist cliché, I enjoy being part of society. There is a grounding truth in this, a framework, which I strive for and hope my paintings reflect. I feel that everyone’s heart has a knot in it and the mission of an artist is to help to untie it.



Top left: A Promised Land  
 Top right: Leaving  
 Above Soiree

*Sabine Jaspert:*

I was born in Gelsenkirchen / Germany and grew up in Muenster, a very “black” catholic city in Westphalia. After 10 years, my family moved south to Swabia, where I attended the “Hans Grueninger Gymnasium” in Markgroeningen, a beautiful, medieval town. Still, this choice of my parents was not the best because it was a purely scientific school. However, I received art lessons from Rudolf Wesner, Lothar Schulte, Hermann Foersterling and at the “Freie Kunstschule Stuttgart”. Shortly after, I took on an apprenticeship in a film studio and became an editor (film cutter), at first just for commercials. Later, I also worked for Roland Emmerich and Tomy Wiegand for the big screen.

I had another apprenticeship for broadcasting after that.

When I had children, I took over a public library in a small town close to Ludwigsburg. Later my husband and I moved to Lower Saxony and there we started house art shows with local artists, provided art time with children with learning disabilities for a local therapy center.

In 1995, we decided to join my in-laws (who have lived in Kelowna since the late 70s), immigrated to Canada and settled in Kelowna

If you want to contact me, my website is: [www.sabinejaspert.com](http://www.sabinejaspert.com)

# I CAN'T ACT, BUT I CAN PLAY



## Charles Bidwell

And the GeriActors and Friends (G&F) do play well together – even acting well as a result of their playing.

The G&F is an intergenerational community theatre company/troupe that meets weekly for a few hours and shares stories and issues from their lives or from others that they know.

They certainly put the ‘play’ in playwriting and play performing. Each weekly gathering starts with sharing any news or updates from the members. Then they set their circle of chairs against the walls and get on their feet to play improvisational games that evoke words and phrases. These are simple enough to be quickly understood but challenging enough to stimulate thinking on your feet and building on the previous player’s idea.

For example, a game called “I see one...” invites successive players in the circle to name the next number and a new object while adding an appropriate action to go along with that object, as in “I see three tennis players” (and swinging an imaginary racket). Expressing ideas and memories physically is an important ingredient in our play. Embodiment or ‘physicalization’ is a distinct factor in our work – we offer Performance Storytelling workshops – after we invite folks to share a story, we work out some way together of putting ‘legs under it’ and act it out.

After two or three of these games, they again sit in a circle and share memories of events in their lives that the games evoked. Often when someone shares an event, another will chime in and say “That makes me think of the time when...”. Such sharing sessions lead them to drafting a ‘scene’ re-enacting an event or several related ‘scenes’. A recent series was based on experiences folks recalled involving trains and another concerned issues related to having to move into long-term care and giving up things.

But where do the “Friends” in G&F come from? They are university students studying in a semester-long course on intergenerational theatre. They attend the weekly sessions and learn first-hand what it is like to engage with seniors. This relationship gives benefits to both age groups. It usually destroys or radically revises stereotypical thinking of one age group regarding the members of the other age group. Another benefit is that the two age groups enjoy switching roles with seniors enacting the part of a youth and a youth playing a senior in an enactment of a scene. A third benefit is that the students make notes of what is expressed in the weekly gathering and then in their class later they draft a script of what the seniors said and did in recalling an event or scene. These draft scripts get played out at the next G&F gathering and further revised as folks think of other ideas to incorporate into



Left: Geriactors with Charles  
Right: this is who we are



a scene. But perhaps the biggest contribution of the students is the energy and enthusiasm that these 'Friends' inject into the lives of the GeriActors.

*Trains We Remember*, our most recent play (and still very much in development) is a montage of reminiscences about our personal experiences with trains from childhood curiosity to World War II and beyond. This play showcases the journeys we've all taken, the goodbyes we've had to say and how trains of all kinds have gotten us to where we are today.

**Charles Bidwell** is a retired teacher and minister who has been acting in an amateur manner since high school drama club. He lives in Edmonton and visits his daughter in Kelowna. He is a graduate of Hamilton Teacher's College, McMaster University and Syracuse University. He has been a keen member of GeriActors and Friends since discovering them during a Creative Age Festival in Edmonton in 2009.

You can keep up on the activities of this seniors group by visiting their blog at [geriactorsfriends.wordpress.com](http://geriactorsfriends.wordpress.com)

**GeriActors**, which began in 2001, is based at SAGE (Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton) and is supported by the Drama Department and Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta. We perform to the general public, seniors and caregivers.

Through the University of Alberta, **GeriActors and Friends** is involved in teaching and research projects. The 'Friends' are undergraduate and graduate students studying intergenerational theatre, and many continue as volunteers after graduation.

We believe in the principle of 'creative aging', in which seniors become engaged in artistic activity at a level of comparative mastery. This leads to effective artistic expression, a developing sense of community, social and civic engagement, and an overall increase in health and well-being.

# MY VIEW THROUGH A NEW LENS

## Arlene Howe



In my early years. That is to say before my fifties, I had no inclination whatsoever to be a visual artist. In fact, I lacked any form of artistic flair. I couldn't draw - never mind sketch. My photos were abysmal. I always cut off a head or two, and my subjects were often on one side of the photo. I had no concept of colour or line or light. Then, in and around 2007, I developed a bucket list. I thought it was time to do some of the daring things I felt I needed to do before I pass on. Probably the most daring on my list was to take a painting class. I wanted to learn how to transfer vision to canvas. It was a daunting task, but by 2008 I had put my vision into motion and signed up for classes. I am so very pleased that I did. I learned to view life through a new lens.

Although my goal was to paint, I was taught that each painting is first created by focusing our visual field, either by doing a quick sketch of the subject or by taking a photograph. These tools show us what we think is important and help us create a memory of colours, lines, composition, and light that can later be referenced in a painting. Every painting I then did has been inspired by a photograph.

Over time I realised my eye was craving the perfection I saw in nature.

I started seeing nature in a way I never thought possible. Everything became vibrant and stunning in its own way. Everything in my vision had

potential. When I looked, the sun, the sky, the clouds and the shadows aligned in perfect ways. I became compelled to capture my observations.

Soon I was never without a camera. I looked at life differently. Everywhere I went, and everything I saw, became fodder for my photographs. By opening my eyes I was gathering subjects for my future paintings. I felt more alive. Suddenly buildings I would never have viewed had perfect light casts. Mountains, forests, lakes, and streams were viewed as though on a vast canvas with the perfect light and the perfect colours. I just had to snap

Perfection





that shot, and crop it for composition. I was changing my perspective on how to view life. I can choose how to view what I am looking at. I know that wherever I go, perfection is there for me to see, if I take the time to pay attention and really notice. Beauty comes in so many forms. I just have to pause, and really look through a new lens of appreciation. Even more significantly I began to gain new confidence in my own skills. I realised that when I take the time, I have an eye. I know I am not a professional, but my photographs please me. They show an appreciation for balance and contrast, and a gift for noticing what is



important for me to see. As I was enjoying developing my creative instincts, perhaps life was preparing me.



On January 31, 2015, our 32 year old son Steve died of a drug overdose. I have reflected on this past year's journey, and have realized how unexpected and difficult so many aspects of grieving, mourning and accepting are. It is certainly 'that thing' you never talk about, until you are 'in it'. Nothing really prepares you for the deep void, and vast emptiness inside. It is like trekking through, and navigating an immense unknown wilderness - you have no idea what might be around the corner or what is coming next. There is so little understanding of grief and mourning, for both the griever and the griever supporters. As a griever, you go into survival mode, and just put one foot in front of the other and try to find ways to be distracted from the pain.

Top: Knox Mountain, Okanagan  
Middle: Zebra, the original photo  
Above: Zebra, my painting of the photo

I have realised you can choose to merely exist in your sorrow, or choose life and the pain that accompanies it. I choose to live. I choose to work towards acceptance and healing. I choose to push myself through the fire to get to the other side. I embrace the pain and the waves, because now I recognize that they represent Steve and my love for him.

I have chosen to give back, to give something to those suffering through addiction, relapse and recovery and to those seeking a healing place, such as I am. I am learning to live with this experience life gave me. 'To love is to one day mourn. This is the most poignant of life's lessons.' This past year my Facebook posts have been an expression of my grief. I hope this article will be an expression of my healing.

I find comfort and significance that the first painting I chose for this article, was from a photo I took while on a safari vacation.

The photo was of a zebra and her foal or colt viewed from behind as we followed. I had cropped the image to give an up close view. A zebra's stripe pattern is unique for each animal - like fingerprints for humans. It's said that



Gestures of the heart

each zebra in the herd can tell each other apart by their stripes. Steve couldn't change his stripes. My painting was done before Steve's death, before I decided to turn to embracing my creativity and painting as part of my healing journey. Now, as I consider the symbolism of zebras I find comfort in this first painting. Zebras have a very intimate and tight-knit social structure. They prefer to be in groups. This closely connected social structure is symbolic. It implies reliance upon community. It's symbolic of seeking shelter within social networks - whatever your herd or network might be. I accepted that Steven had chosen another path, an alternate herd that I came to accept, albeit with a struggling heart. I have begun speaking to groups within his network to tell Steve's story, my story, and to give them a message of love and hope. Being Steve's mother taught me unconditional love.

Taking photographs, writing, speaking to groups in addiction relapse and painting allow me to express the unconditional love my son taught me, and to celebrate my relationship with him and the other members of my family. These creative expressions are giving me the opportunity to open to me and to share myself with others. Through photography I learned to truly look. Writing taught me to express openly. Speaking to groups in addiction relapse is teaching me the importance of love and unconditional sharing. Now when I pick up a paint brush my arm feels an energy I must release and I hear that message.

I can feel life force and encouragement in all my more recent creative endeavours and in me as I create them. My earlier painting of the zebras shows my love of details, respect for what is and the patient determined love I gave my son. I paid attention to the details and I stood right behind him, but I did not, and could not, change him.

I am in my sixties. I have changed. My skill set has changed. I now view objects, people and nature through a deeper emotional eye and feel I have a deeper appreciation for life. I have a view through a new lens.

**Arlene Howe** has resided in the beautiful Okanagan for the past 38 years. In 2013, she retired from an illustrious and rewarding career at Kelowna General Hospital, as the supervisor in the Kelowna Cardiac Pacemaker and Defibrillator clinic. In 2015, Arlene returned to the Interior Health Authority in a contract position as the "Pacing Coordinator". While enthusiastically embracing the task of learning multiple art forms, including photography. Her photographs and paintings reflect her love of nature and her family. She hopes for others to enjoy her works as much as she does.

# FEEDING OTHERS IS FEEDING ME

## Ashley Karnes



My life was miserable. I just wasn't happy. I spent a lot of time wondering, "What can I do to change this? I'm killing myself. I am only forty and I'm only halfway through this show." Then

boom, there was an advert for someone to work with food at an arts centre. Well, I know there is something inside me that is creative, but I can't paint to save my soul. I briefly studied civil engineering at Oxford University, and I like to build things. Still I thought, "Doesn't art have to create a product?" I'd thought of being a sculptor at one point. Then I realized, "I do know the food business." While putting myself through university, that's where I'd worked, waitressing mostly, but I'd learned a bit about cooking and there is this juice inside me that pushes. I decided, "I'm going to try this job."

Shortly after I started in the Bistro in Kelowna's Rotary Centre for the Arts, the chef took a leave and I filled in. The chef didn't come back. There I was in the kitchen. I was making gelato; I was making soups; and I was making changes to the menu. People were liking the changes. One day I thought, "This is it. I am actually quite happy. This is awesome". Unfortunately, there was one big problem. I was a drinker. I knew I couldn't continue to do this job as I wanted to and to drink. I didn't see AA as my way so I started reading books and after I read *Seven Weeks to Sobriety* I became interested in nutrition. I also read a whole foods book. Then a switch just flipped and I knew making food is my passion. I want to make good healthy food for people. It became important to me that what I was putting in my body is what I wanted everybody else to eat too. At the same time the movement towards locally grown organic foods was gaining interest in the Okanagan. I had learned a bit about this movement from a time when I worked as a chef in northern California. I was there for ten years before we moved to Canada. I found love during those years. Now in Kelowna people are loving my soups made with fresh local Okanagan products. I also chose to make my soups gluten free. Customers began coming for my soups and they were asking for other gluten free items. I was happy to research more, and make these. I was creating products - expanding the menu and the business. I was seeing happy smiling people in the Bistro and I was happy too. I was creating.

To move forward, we need to reflect. As I look back, I realize that although the food industry constantly exposed me to alcohol, a temptation I found hard to resist, I was also having happy times. When things were slow, I would always go back into the kitchen and ask questions of the chef. Just helping a chef cut a carrot or chop an onion I was discovering the environment that is around food in the kitchen and I liked it. The other really strong



Left: I make great soups.  
Right: main stage menu.

influence was the chef I worked for in Sonoma who had a five acre farm and she was growing vegetables. That was really an eye opener in how she dealt with product. She was a busy woman. Her philosophy in business was a real education. I was there for 3 years.

The Okanagan has been called Napa North and that is why we moved here. We wanted a similar environment. Just being in the Okanagan, gardens become a part of life. I got interested in community gardens. I became fascinated by just touching the produce and seeing how it grew. My interests kept growing too. Then I started incorporating what I was learning into the food I was making at work. I needed to make the Bistro grow. The only way I was going to be successful at that was to make good food that people wanted, and I wanted it to be good for them. At the same time I was noticing the changes good food was doing for me. My skin cells were coming back; I looked better and I was feeling great. I'd been consuming alcohol on a daily basis for 25 years. It depresses you and rins your colouring. Now I haven't had a drink for 4 and a half years and I am a healthy eater.

At 40 years of age I have travelled to many parts of the world and have gained a fair bit of experience. There was ethnic diversity in my family and thus I have learned about many different foods. Now I can bring this knowledge to what I'm preparing. Who would have thought that trip to the Mediterranean when I was 21 had a bigger purpose than partying? I do realize that if I hadn't gone to the depths of depression with alcohol, I wouldn't be so happy now. We need all of our experiences to create ourselves into who we want to be.

I want this Bistro to be a huge success bursting with people eating healthy and enjoying themselves. I want to hear lots of "mmms. This is so good." Processed foods are not good for us. Nurturing what is around you is



Our gelato is very popular.

a process for making yourself happier. I can see that if I let myself be unhappy, I can taste it in my food. If I'm not focused, I might not put that extra little bit of salt in that is really needed. I see my passion is contagious too. This morning two ladies came in and enjoyed my soup so much that they bought containers to take home for dinner.

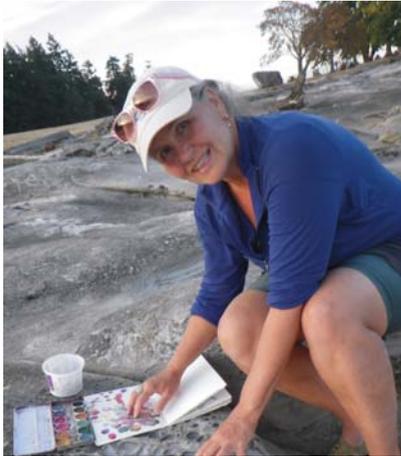
They were so excited about the soup that they made everyone around them feel good. I thought, "I started that energy by creating with passion. I was excited about my cooking and they left excited." I knew they hadn't come in like that. I asked myself, "Can I change people's lives with my food?"

It's taken me a while to get stabled, and to get to know myself before I can go out and work out what we want here. I say 'we' because we are a team. We all want the place to be inviting so that people will hang out. There is Denis, Brittany and myself. We each contribute where we see little touches that are needed to make this a special place serving special food. When the former manager of the Bistro left last spring we made a pact that as a team we could create our dreams. We want this to be a meeting place for people to come to eat and enjoy themselves. Everything counts. We want our menu to be The main stage at the Rotary Centre for the Arts.

An important part of me that is part of my food preparations is that I can never throw anything out. When I see something is still fresh, and could be used, this often leads me to make something different and unique. Last summer it was our cinnamon gelato. I had cinnamon buns in the freezer which were good, but not popular, and so I created the gelato. It was unique and people loved it.

For me making food, and finding products, is very intuitive. I never follow recipes, but my mother always said I was very logical so maybe these two ways of working come together in my food. I have a new plant I'm particularly enjoying this spring. It's the almost forgotten perennial herb Loveage. The flavour is full and the plant grows like a weed to about 2 feet tall. I use the delicious tender young sprouts in my soups and salads. The name is perfect too. I'd say this plant suits just perfectly where I am right now.

# COLOURING OUTSIDE THE LINES



## Lisa Lipsett

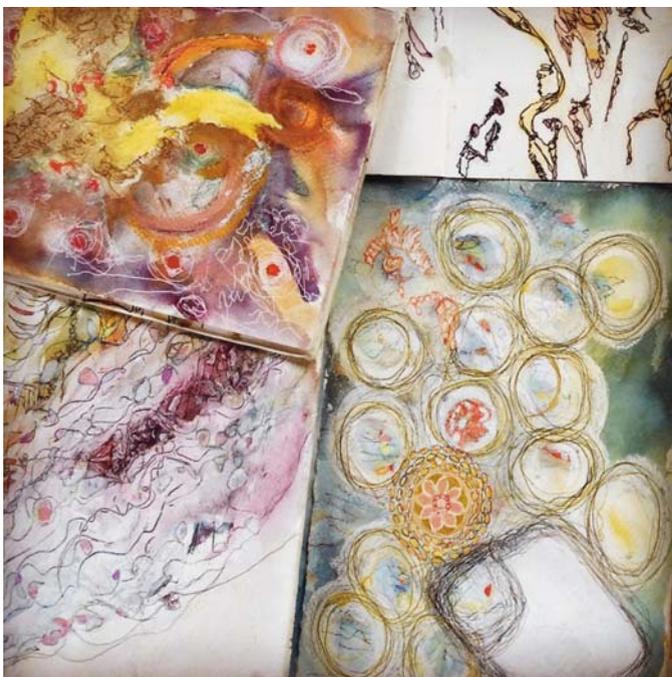
Recently there has been an explosion in the popularity of adult colouring books. This new very popular craze is demonstrated in the sheer number and variety of colouring books available for adults. Things reached a point in the Fall of 2015 when 6 of the top 10 best sellers on Amazon were colouring books. [www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/adult-colouring-books-most-wished-for-1.3304409](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/adult-colouring-books-most-wished-for-1.3304409)

Why has colouring become so popular? Colourers (I am not sure this is a real word) report feeling reduced anxiety and have a sense of nostalgia when they pick up the artful past time so many loved as a child. Keeping our hands busy creates a quiet mind according to some. Mindfulness and wellness come together when we colour. [www.thejournal.ie/colouring-books-for-grown-ups-2264550-Aug2015/](http://www.thejournal.ie/colouring-books-for-grown-ups-2264550-Aug2015/).

Julie Beck of the Atlantic states, “There’s something satisfying about seeing your thought and effort create a tangible, pretty thing at a reasonable, predictable pace. This rarely happens in life”.

[www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/11/sorry-benedict-cumberbatch-your-head-is-fine/414010/](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/11/sorry-benedict-cumberbatch-your-head-is-fine/414010/)

A selection of coloured in drawings



I personally love some of these books and can attest to the mindful state

colouring promotes and the hours of joy available to those willing to give colouring a try. However I am also really excited to colour in my own drawings and I wonder if there is a potentially negative message underlying the professionally rendered flowers and mandala patterns of adult colouring books. By colouring in other people’s drawings could we be perpetuating the mistaken notion that only special people are artists? In other words there are those who make artful drawings and those who colour in?

I think there are many reasons why drawing then colouring in our own images is very rewarding. Here are four for starters.

### 1. Joy and excitement

When we colour in our drawings we spend more quiet time with ourselves connecting to the nuances of our images. We begin to see fresh aspects we never



Top: Coloured in Doodle  
Above: Snoring Doodle - by Isabelle DeLauniere

noticed before. When we look at our drawings new forms emerge. We also feel like we are in an expansive present moment. This is simultaneously relaxing and exciting.

## 2. Self reflection

When we colour in another person's art we learn all about someone else's images. When we colour in our own images, we bathe in our own colour and shape language. Why is this important? As art therapist Pat Allan author of *Art is a Way to Know* explains-

"Images take me apart; images put me back together again, new, enlarged, with breathing room. ... Art making is my way of bringing soul back into my life. Soul is the place where the messiness of life is tolerated, where feelings animate the narration of life, where story exists. Soul is the place where I am replenished and can experience both gardens and graveyards. Art is my way of knowing who I am."

Drawing and colouring-in as a regular practice helps us to see ourselves more clearly. Our feelings, sensations and notions about things are expressed and mirrored for us in colour and shape. When we look at our work over time we see our own patterns, our own affinities our own changing landscape emerge before our eyes.

When we take time to lay out our images chronologically and look at the patterns and listen to the stories they tell, we become more visible to ourselves as a living, growing, transforming natural organism. This is especially rewarding if we write down a few words about how we are feeling each time we draw and colour-in.

In her second book *Art is a Spiritual Path*, Pat Allen shares, "Art is a vehicle that allows us to transcend linear time, to travel backward and forward into personal and transpersonal history, into possibilities that weren't realized and those that might be".

## 3. Creativity at a moment's notice

Drawing is always available to us. It is a free loyal constant personal companion available any where at anytime. Colouring our own drawings can be energizing, playful and can make daily life more joyous when we grab a pen and draw whenever the opportunity arises. Last month one of my students drew then coloured in her husband's snoring! What was initially a frustrating experience blossomed with devious discovery when she realized snoring could be a spark for fun creative expression!

## 4. The beauty of creative fitness

We strengthen our creative muscles and feel the beauty of deeper connection



Top: Max Ernst, The Kiss  
Above: watercolour book

with ourselves and the world when we draw. We move energy from our busy minds to our hands. We take the energy focus from our brain's inhibitory and managerial pre-frontal lobe to other more creative areas. We expand our focus. In this way we clear out tensions, what if's, worries, ruminations, and concerns. We move from feeling overpowered to being a more grounded observer. We learn to appreciate beauty in even the most challenging emotions. We see ourselves anew and build emotional confidence as we strengthen our repertoire of ways to cope to include drawing and colouring-in that build resilience and strength.

So I invite you draw then give colouring-in your own drawings a try because though potentially a little more challenging at first, the result is infinitely more rewarding.

Of course Zentangle is one way to start. [www.zentangle.com](http://www.zentangle.com) We can create repetitive geometric designs of our own to colour in. This is definitely a step in the right direction though committing to solely repeated patterning is still too structured and prescribed for my rebellious nature.

Better still we can doodle then colour. Watch this 2 year-old doodle then watch her mom colour in. I love the way the daughter so freely uses all the edges of her marker. <http://youtu.be/bIwYrhjHHJI>

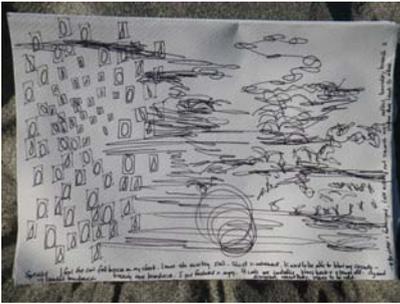
Check out how painter and Peggy Guggenheim lover/husband Max Ernst used his doodles as a jumping off point for painting (a liquid form of colouring in). In his painting *The Kiss* he dipped string in black paint and laid it on the canvas. Then he coloured in the resulting shapes. How simple is that? If he can do that, so can you!

How hard could this possibly be? Maybe you *think* you can't draw, but honestly I have yet to meet a person who truly can't draw once they are given a few simple strategies to help them shift into quiet mind and expressive hands. Maybe you just need a little help to get started.

To begin a drawing practice of your own equip yourself with a spiral bound watercolour book (or a folded nature art book- visit [www.creativebynature.org](http://www.creativebynature.org) to learn how to make one), two ultrafine sharpies and a set of watercolour pencils.

Here are some art encounter starters to help you get going.

**Closed Eyed Drawing-** Using an ultrafine Sharpie or a similar permanent marker close your eyes and simply let your hand move over the page. Have fun with this as you move this way and that. Now open your eyes and colour in the shapes.



Top left: beach drawing series A  
 Top right: beach drawing series B  
 Middle: beach drawing series C  
 Lower: beach drawing series D  
 Bottom: Drawing over a painting



**Non Dominant Hand Drawing-** Close your eyes and doodle draw with your Couch Potato or New Born hand (the one you don't normally use). Go slowly. When you feel done open your eyes and colour in the shapes you see.

**Both Hand Doodling-** Close your eyes and doodle with a Sharpie in each hand. Go slowly, have fun, open your eyes and colour in the shapes you see.

**Round and Round Doodling-** Start a drawing with your eyes closed then turn the page one turn and add to your drawing. What is the drawing asking for? Turn the page one turn every minute each time adding more to the drawing. Finish by colouring in.

**Sense Drawing-** tune into sounds then draw. Feel textures with one hand as you record and draw with the other. Outline shadows on the page. Track the movement of ants or birds. Walk and draw. There are infinite possibilities.

The purpose behind these “starter” activities is to help you shift from planning mind to a place of free-play creative drawing. Experiment. What works best for you?

## Extend your Drawings

After I draw I “extend” my drawings. What do I mean by the word “extend”? I mean I take the time to revisit the lines, shapes and colours in an image in order to bring them out more fully. I also open to simply spending more time with my images. I add and deepen colours, add line in order to define areas, add colour to plain drawings. There are infinite possibilities to explore and hours of joy to be had.

Finally might I suggest you try reverse colouring or drawing on a painting- Choose a painting you have created or close your eyes, choose paint colours with the fingertips of both hands and paint with abandon. Use the watercolour pencils to emphasize lines and doodle on the painting's surface. When the painting is dry, use your sharpie to do the same. Be free and loose with this line making. What needs darkening? What shapes are trying to be born from below the surface? Have fun with this. Close by writing down a few words about anything you noticed or wonder about.

For more ideas about how to get started with your personal colouring practice visit [www.creativebynature.org](http://www.creativebynature.org). Consider enrolling in the Fall 2016 Creative by Nature Art Foundations course and give your art-making a real boost. Happy colouring!

# MY LIFE MESSAGE: “SO WHAT, IT’S JUST MUD.”

**Shelley Bauer**



In my life, my mind is always creating form and texture. I have always had some handiwork going on around me, whether it was sewing, cooking, quilting, arranging, set up or taking down, sculpting, building, throwing on the pottery wheel or oil painting. Some of my creations and creative spirit are just for me, some are just to please others and then other parts are to just completely share and give.

I am very connected with the outdoors and my senses absorb color, form and shape in almost everything I do, and everywhere I go. I love to see the soap bubble glisten when the dishes need doing, the fall of early morning light in the trees, the scent of my oil paints as I am walking into my studio and the excitement I feel when I open that box of sensuous clay knowing I am going to dive my fingers into its lush silkiness. It all moves my spirit.

My journey began with jumping in and making creativity a daily part of my life. Did you notice that I did not say producing a finished product? Rather, I believe in accessing creative spirit, and allowing it to grow - and me to grow by relaxing a little, just showing up, and letting things happen naturally. Returning to the playful side of me, to the loose abandon of my real self, helps with procrastination and allows something new in me to be reborn. Learning how to quickly get into that headspace takes some practice, but it does come. I had to engage in some purposeful training at really looking deeply and becoming mindful of the daily life around me. Taking notice of the magnificent colors, the dominant shapes and the eye catching textures helps you to start accessing the creativity within you.

I remember my first day of taking a pottery class. I was nervous and exhausted because I had fallen into that trap of the daily grind, and was desperately trying to fight my way back to my real self. My first step was committing to a class and then actually going. The instructor handed me a piece of clay and the moment I touched that sensuous piece of earth, something in my soul stirred and I knew, that finally, I was on my way again! Was everyone else feeling this?? I looked up and my classmates seemed preoccupied with their own pots. There was nothing holding me back now. I threw that mound of clay on the potter's wheel with abandon and didn't care what became of it. I had touched a nerve and I just didn't want it to fizzle out. I realized right then and there, that this was just a piece of mud that mud truly is at the bottom of the (life)cycle - so it just doesn't matter; it just doesn't matter.

Below: my pots

Bottom: Shelley with her paintings





Facing toward the sun.

“So what, it’s just mud!” became my mantra.

Now here we are, a few years later. Ha, quite a few years really. I have been throwing that lowly mud on the wheel continuously. I love the grounding that mud gives me. Sometimes, feeling adventurous and experimental, I experiment and create some uncommon pieces, and sometimes not; I just need my familiar family of pots.

I have taught others over the years from preschool children, to home-schoolers, to teenagers, to advanced potters. I have shared my story with most, but for sure, ALL have heard my mantra, “It’s just mud”. It becomes a pretty comical thing when a young child is experimenting with their clay creations that he chuckles when that piece of clay just isn’t working out as planned and he shares with his neighbor saying, “Hey... it’s just mud”. That’s when I know they have got the message from me and are creating from their hearts and souls. I know they will be proud of their art.

Creating has become a healing part of my life, for myself, and also for others who I have instructed. I love to see the faces of students young and old, when I let them know that there is not going to be pressure to produce in my classes. Instead, they can just climb into the other side of their brains, break loose with abandon and still find the pleasure of creating a pot or a vessel with the lowly material of clay. I talk them through that little vicious fiend inside them telling them they must be perfect and of course *they* cannot do it. I remind them, “It’s just mud” and when they realize this, they too are able to let go and find the mesmerizing motion of the clay on the pottery wheel.

A few years later, after feeling comfortable with mud, and quite by accident, I discovered oil painting.

Our young daughter wanted to paint, so I began looking for a kind hearted instructor who offered lessons. I certainly met the ones that made sure that I understood it was their way or nothing; of course, we discounted that attitude and moved on. Finally, I met an artist and I signed our daughter up. Providence then stepped in. When we arrived at the studio our child was the only participant. Not wanting her to be there alone, I volunteered to stay and paint alongside her. We had so much fun together. Again, I put aside my expectations that I had to accomplish something that afternoon. I focused on being there to support my daughter. For a second time, the stirring began in my soul. I was enthralled by the gooey tactile feeling of the paint, by making marks on that canvas and by having them become something real and identifiable. I was hooked, once again. Oil paints were so forgiving, you could work them so many times without the drying in between; it was positively lovely.

I continued with that same wonderful instructor consistently over the next couple of years. Painting called to me constantly. I began painting things that were in my heart and soul. While painting, sometimes I needed to become calm and mindful and create soothing paintings; other times I needed to make connections that were expressions of energy, passion and pain. I created tiny paintings with small brushes and concentrated efforts and



Falling leaves rustling.

large paintings with huge house painting brushes that required me having to move my entire body to get the paint where I wanted it to go.

I knew this as the same feeling I had previously experienced through making pottery. It wasn't the medium itself, but the river of creativity inside me that I was accessing and releasing on to the canvas that was exciting me. This is the healing power of the creative essence in each of us. The more I let go and didn't try to make *a something*, the better my paintings became. The more I became grounded, the freer I became and I lost the little fiend who says, "Oohh, don't make a mistake..."

Currently, I own and run *Blue Apple Studio* in Kelowna, BC. I create my own pottery and oil paintings for shows and for sale. I also work with students, young and old, in clay and oil painting. I have a very casual studio setting where I like students to feel comfortable creating and letting go. Students are satisfied with themselves when they take home pieces of art that they are proud of creating. I always get a charge from spending time with my students and feel satisfaction when they can reach into their true selves.

This summer (2016) I will be teaching some painting classes in the local vineyards. If you are interested in those or other studio pottery or painting classes I can be reached at the below contacts;

Shelley Bauer, Blue Apple Studio  
[blueapplestudio@shaw.ca](mailto:blueapplestudio@shaw.ca) | [www.shelleybauer.faso.com](http://www.shelleybauer.faso.com)  
 facebook blue apple studio

As an emerging artist, **Shelley Bauer** was primarily under the private tutelage of artist and oil painter, Brenda Young, Brenda Young Studio, Sherwood Park, Alberta. Shelley is also a self-taught artist who uses various mediums to express mood, pleasure and well-being.

"Daily, my eyes continuously take in and record the fall of light, the depth of shadow and the reflection of color. I could probably paint for decades with just the images caught in my head." Shelley describes herself as a very tactile person responding to form and texture in a hands-on manner. She believes she should forge her own path by painting what brings her peace, solitude and appreciation in life. She is not afraid to try out new methods and colors and is constantly acquiring knowledge regarding her art, and herself.

"As a busy mother engaged in all aspect of my children's lives, I have become a very observant person. I have only brief periods where I can absorb my desired surroundings and apply them to my art. When I come across a situation where an image is making a strong impression on me, I immediately absorb as much as possible and store it in my mind for a later. When it comes time to create art, I use these impressions to recreate the emotion or feeling that were previously caught. I ultimately enjoy texture, light and the emotion that the depth of color and form can bring. I am able to complete."

# A PERSONAL JOURNEY IN FABRIC ART



## Mary T. Fabris

In the minds of most North Americans, the mention of quilting conjures up images of pioneer women gathered around a frame working together on a blanket or bed cover. Sometimes dismissed as old-fashioned craft, or mere women's work, quilting has been, and continues to be, a pursuit requiring a high level of skill, resourcefulness and creativity. These early practitioners worked with what they had, sometimes commercial cloth, but often worn out clothing or flour sacks, and although designs were developed from traditional block patterns, each quilt was unique in colour and design.

My first experience, and my deep appreciation of quilting, came from the Mennonites of southern Manitoba. In a group, I worked as those early quilters might have done, doing everything by hand: drafting patterns, making cardboard templates, tracing them onto fabric, cutting out the pieces with scissors, sewing them into blocks, sewing the blocks together and adding borders to make a top, assembling the top with batting and backing, working out and executing a quilting design to hold the layers together, and finally binding the edges. At the time, I was a caregiver to my elderly mother who was in the late stages of dementia, and this painstaking process took my mind off a painful reality, while the quiet act of hand stitching provided me with comfort and relief during many long and stressful days. I found the process challenging and satisfying, and went on to make several quilts, which, if not objects of great skill or beauty, were uniquely my own.

My first quilt



When I moved to Kelowna in 1997, I quickly found out that quilting was no simple pursuit — it was big business. Quilt stores were selling designer fabrics, patterns, and kits, some of them with pre-cut pieces, leaving little more than colour choice to the imagination. Commercial quilters could do the quilting for you. At its worst, quilting had become a soulless exercise in merchandising and mass production; at its best, quilting became accessible to a wider audience, and even a novice could make an acceptable product. I delighted in the availability of beautiful fabrics, while the development of better sewing machines and new tools made the process of quilt making, basically unchanged from earlier times, only faster and more accurate. Rotary cutters, rulers and mats made it possible to cut pieces accurately and quickly; improved sewing machines



sewed precise seams and made the final quilting process much faster.

One aspect of quilting which had not changed over the years was the spirit of community. Shortly after moving to Kelowna, I joined a quilt guild and met women with many different interests and skills who were not only inspiring, but generous in sharing their talents and expertise. Through workshops, classes, group projects and trips to quilt shows, I gained an exposure I never would have had working on my own, and I grew in skill and confidence as a quilter. At the same time, however, I was dismayed to see the reliance on commercial patterns. It seemed that everybody was making the same quilts, and it was not unusual to go to a quilt show and see the same design over and over again in different colour ways. Fortunately, the development of quick construction techniques and ingenious formulas for piecing, cutting and recombining fabrics gave many quilters the

confidence to move beyond the patterns and to make some unique and original pieces.

Two current trends — Modern Quilting and Art Quilting — have changed the image of quilting and sustained my passion for working with cloth because they represent a return to originality and resourcefulness, which to me, are the heart and soul of quilting. The Modern Quilting movement was inspired, many believe, by the women of Gee's Bend, a poor village in southern Alabama where the women have worked their way from poverty to artistic acclaim with their colourful quilts executed in everything from used coveralls and corduroy pants to polyester tablecloths.

Modern Quilting is about simple design with lots of negative space, bold colours, and intense machine quilting. The emphasis is on using the fabrics at hand and on improvisation, which has inspired many quilters to take the design process back into their own hands. Although one of the original intents of Modern Quilting was the creation of utilitarian items, many modern quilters are now creating art pieces, and the fields of Modern Quilting and Art Quilting have begun to converge.

Art quilters have left the traditional block patterns behind entirely and are using the medium of layered cloth to create original and purely aesthetic pieces. Art quilts are usually displayed on walls and often resemble paintings, representational or abstract, although some may be sculptural in nature, and the techniques of art quilting may be applied to garments, accessories and more utilitarian objects. Art quilters incorporate a variety of textiles, fibres and found materials into their work, and often create their own fabrics with paint, inks, dyes, and bleach. Although most of the work is done by machine, hand stitching is frequently used for embellishment and texture.



Top: Citrus Celebration  
Above: Dandelion panel



Transitions

Community has once again come to my rescue, and I have found inspiration working with the art quilting group within our guild and with the Trial by Fibre Art Quilting Group. Our gatherings are playful and fun as we share ideas and experiment with new techniques. We spur each other on through challenges to use a particular colour, fabric, concept, or technique, and we are eager to present and talk about our work. The talent and ingenuity shown in the design and construction of our pieces astounds even ourselves, and we are experiencing joy and satisfaction in using skills honed over years of quilting in truly creative and innovative ways. Stepping away from the perfectionism, square corners and rigid forms of traditional quilts has been a bold move, and we find now that we are working more as artists than quilters, considering elements and principles of design, engaging with the creative process, and allowing work to evolve and develop.

Is quilting a humble craft or high art? I think the answer is that it can be both — and many things in between. Quilting offers opportunities for practitioners at many levels of craft and creativity, from working within

the limits of traditional methods and patterns to the design of increasingly original pieces. Fabric and Fibre Art are gaining recognition and acceptance and have found their way into galleries and shows all over North America. Home in the Okanagan, galleries in Peachland and Vernon have held Fibre Art shows, and the Fibre Art component of ArtWalk has made its way from the Home Ec room at the end of a long dark hallway at George Elliott Secondary School to a featured space in the Lake Country Council Chambers.

For me, quilting, which began as a pastime, has become a passion, an artistic outlet, a learning experience and a chance to be creative, imaginative and resourceful in a medium with which I feel confident. Having observed first hand the ravages of dementia, I am hoping this activity will keep my mind alert and flexible, and I am grateful for the social interaction, also so important as we age, that I have found in the community of quilters. At the same time, being an introvert at heart, I find the many hours involved in creating even the smallest piece a respite from the busyness of life and a time for quiet reflection. I feel blessed that I have an interest which so engages my spirit, and that I have the freedom, the means and good health to enjoy it.

# SUPER AMMA

## Michelle Furtado



For forty-three years my mother has warned me of thieves. I was a latch key kid. So she worried. “Lock the door!” she’d admonish me. Once I had made it home from elementary school I was to dutifully call her at work. Just last month, it was a pack of bandits the next city over from my home who had her phoning me at night. “They tied up the men of the house! Why didn’t those idiots fight back? I would have kicked them,” she told me. This was not an idle threat. I’ve witnessed Mom kicking a perverted scoundrel who rubbed his genitals up against my back oh-so-innocently in a crowded Delhi market. To my astonishment, Mom’s swift kick sent him tumbling into a ditch. So she knew how to handle the criminals she worried might attack me. My sister and I were her prize possessions, and she was determined to keep us safe. As it turns out, it was my mother who was robbed, not I. The thief snuck up right into her body when she least expected it. It stole a sacred treasure she hadn’t even thought to guard. It took her memory. This villain – whose cruelty left my family forever changed – is known as Dementia.

When I was a child, I believed my mother to be invincible. I remember running up snowy streets to meet her bus once after she’d finished work. My father hadn’t seen me slip out. I didn’t have a coat on. This explained Mom’s exasperation as she strode down the center of the road with her fabulous brown knee-high boots. I slid along after her, in awe of the strength with which she ground the black ice under her heels. Puddle after frozen puddle fractured in her wake. I, an avid comic book reader, thought she was way better than Superwoman. For one thing, my Mom wasn’t dumb enough to wear her underwear outside in a crisis. She had on a sensible Sears coat. And for another, Superwoman couldn’t cook the way my Momma could. My mom could make French fries better than McDonald’s. Her coconut chicken curry made my mouth water. But her curried beef rolls. Well, they were little bundles of chili bacon goodness.

Mom was always the life of the party.

The day she retired from her job as an elementary school teacher, I arrived at her school gym late. I got there just in time to see the staff serenading her to the song of her name, “Cecilia.” You know what she did? She grabbed two maracas, jumped up on stage, and danced solo to the enthusiastic hoots of her co-workers.

When I got into graduate school, Mom moved to San Diego with my father. I used to joke that I could visit them anytime. I just had to hop on a plane without giving Mom anything but the date of my arrival, and she’d be at the gate to greet me at the airport and take me home to a waiting pot of her chili beef rolls. She’d figure out arrival time and airlines to be there with a welcoming hug.

New Years Eve 2016





Top: Dad's camera catches her creative spirit

Above: Family is important

After getting married, I moved to Seattle. I had two children. It was on my phone calls to Mom that I first noticed something a little off. She'd ask the same questions. Repeat the same stories. And then, on a visit, she'd perpetually forget the most elementary details. Where I kept the forks, for instance. "What are we eating for dinner?" She'd ask. I'd answer. Then fifteen minutes later she'd say, "Oh no. We forgot about dinner." "No Mom, we didn't. We're having rice," I'd say. Then, about half an hour later she'd ask, "Have we got dinner plans?" I began writing the dinner menu on a white board. Soon I was writing the whole day's plans. Then she stopped making me beef rolls. And I knew something serious had gone wrong.

So when Mom visited my sister in Canada, Ingrid took her to a doctor. He asked Mom a series of test questions. "What is the name of the President?" He asked. "What month is it? What day is it?" Etc. Mom passed with flying colors. He then made a pronouncement that, I believe, tainted my sister's relationship with my mother from this point on. He said, "There's nothing wrong with you, Cecilia. Try not to be lazy. You need to make your mind work to remember the thing that is just beyond your reach. Make your mind work, and the memories will come back."

It was around this time that mom's behavior started to take a toll on all of us. My sister took the doctor's words to heart. As the eldest daughter of new immigrants to Canada, my sister, it must be said, had done a lot to help my parents. She helped me transition to daycare at an early age. She helped my Mom clean and cook. She showed me how to take public transit when I was in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade so that by the following year, when she went to high school, I was a pro. Neither my sister nor I begrudge our parents our lessons of independence. They were the greatest gifts they could give us. A small, ugly part of us, however, naively and wrongly believed that Mom only had to take care of herself. That's all we asked of her. And yet, she screwed that up. Plus, Ingrid could not forgive Mom for her poor health habits. Ingrid's case was strengthened by recent research that shows a possible link between refined food and Dementia. Mom is the only member of our family whose idea of balanced eating includes muffins and Costco sized bags of potato chips. An angry Ingrid swooped into San Diego to clean out Mom's pantry of all refined food. While she was here, she "decluttered" Mom's home and labeled every single cupboard. It was a valiant attempt at heroism. The problem is that Mom saw Ingrid as worse than a thief who stole her collected curios. Ingrid was a traitor. Then Ingrid, myself, and Dad, turned on Mom in a way she had never experienced before. We made decisions without her. We changed her food, took her 'junk,' hired help she hated. In short, we stripped her of all authority against her will. All because she could not remember what she was supposed to eat for dinner. Or, if I'm being painfully honest, she did not remember what I wanted her to make me for dinner.

In 2014, my father suffered a series of heart attacks. I have only seen my father cry twice in my life. One was at the death of his mother. The other was at the cardiologist's office, when the cardiologist asked him if there was

ongoing stress at home that could have caused his heart to fail. The awful truth is that we don't cry because of the stress of living with Mom's dementia. We cry because of the constant sense of betrayal we have over taking away her rights, relegating her lower on the strata of superheroes. It was around this time that Dad and I made a conscious decision to stop stealing Mom's life away from her.

Last year, Mom was diagnosed with bladder cancer. This should have been the final knock off Mount Olympus. It should have sent us running for a Memory Care Center. But in fact, it changed my mind about my mother. Rather than despair at her plight, Mom rallied. She picked up the phone and talked to her old friends about her condition. She told them about her memory. She told them about her cancer. They told her about their ailments associated with aging. She made her friends laugh. She reestablished connections. She reminded all of us of her power. Every superhero has a superpower. My mother has the greatest strength of them all. She has the power of love. She demonstrates this power by making people laugh. My mother and her aging friends grow old together. But they do so with humor. When a well-meaning researcher came to her sixty plus community to give a talk about memory loss, the woman mentioned the healing benefits of Indian spices such as turmeric. My mom hollered, "I don't know about that. I'm Indian. I cook with spices. And I can't remember a damned thing." She got the laugh she intended. But she also gave the crowd the healing relief her laughter inspires. If you're laughing at Dementia, you're no longer afraid of it.

So Mom marches on down the road of life. She kicked her cancer into a ditch. She takes the stigma associated with Dementia and shatters it under the heel of her boot. Once she decided she could take on these foes, I watched her mirth bloom once again. In many ways, Mom has returned to her most essential self. When my children are upset, I call her. She has them giggling in five minutes flat. Some things, the most important ones, Mom will never forget.

Dad told me recently that he took Mom to their old dance class just to say hello. When Mom heard the music, she started to move. She could not remember the correct steps. But like at her retirement party, she knew how to get in front of the group and dance with abandon until the crowd cheered.

I used to think there was no way to win against the despair wrought by Dementia. Even Harry Potter had a hard time with Dementia's evil offspring, The Dementors. But my Mom has proven me wrong. She has shown me that true heroism does not entail stopping a villain in its tracks. In involves embracing the natural process of life. After all, as Vivian Greene said, and my mother demonstrates so well, "Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning to dance in the rain."

A dual Canadian and American citizen, **Michelle Furtado** lives and writes full time in San Diego California. She grew up in Toronto, was born in Nairobi, Kenya, and is originally from Goa, India. She has an Honours BA, a B.Ed, and an M.A.(T.) from the University of Toronto. Her current project is a Y.A. novel, *A Friend in Mind*, the story of a sixteen-year-old Indian Canadian girl who has schizophrenia. Her short stories are featured in *The Literary Vine Anthology of Short Stories* and *San Diego Writers Ink's A Year in Ink*, Vol 9. Find her at [www.michellefurtado.com](http://www.michellefurtado.com)

# FINDING FULFILLMENT



**Article photos by  
Suzanne Chavarie and  
Grace Frank**

Below: celebrating each other

Bottom: we're teaching creative values



## Karen Close

*“Occasionally there are those moments of unutterable fulfillment which cannot be completely explained by those symbols called words. Their meanings can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart.”* Martin Luther King Junior

Since February 14th, 2008 fulfillment seekers have been dropping into heART Fit at the Rotary Centre for the Arts (RCA) in Kelowna, British Columbia. heART Fit encourages ‘Spontaneous Process Painting’ as an act of faith. There are no instructions or rules. The process encourages allowing and trusting that when one paints, from the heart, rather than from a head filled with words of instruction, and judgment, the act of releasing and allowing, will open the participant to ‘self’ and to the creativity and healing energy that is within each of us. Each week a painting intention is sent out. Participants may choose to use it or not. Sessions conclude with a guided discussion of works displayed. We take time to learn from each other, and to discover new techniques and approaches.

We describe heART Fit as:

A weekly practice for those seeking a creative lifestyle and improved health through creativity.

A time to create ‘a resting heart’ by embarking on a journey of creative exploration, inviting creative spirit to lead you within, and awaken you to your authentic ‘self’.

Open to all ages (children accompanied by adults) and levels of experience – to those who have never picked up a paintbrush and those who are experienced painters.

A group experience whose focus is to learn from and encourage others as we evolve creative values.

On June 2, 2016 heARTists gathered at the Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art in the RCA. Together they had hung their exhibition with guidance from the curator Cortnee Chulo. The space echoed the language of heart and the theme *When I am Creating I AM*. Enthusiasm filled the room.

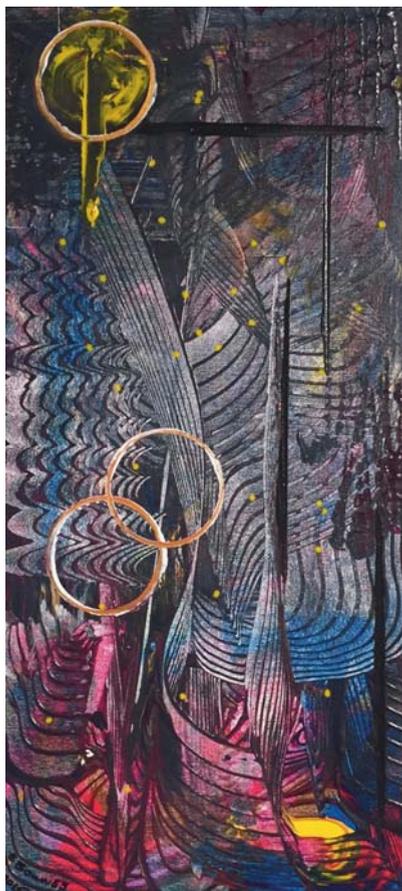
Featured heARTist, Ed Bownes explains his personal celebration:

“Irony, fate, good luck, and opportunity were all at work when 5 years ago, my wife Edna and I decided to move to Kelowna from Calgary. At the very same time, I was diagnosed with melanoma cancer, had surgery in Calgary. Upon arrival in Kelowna I just knew it was somehow part of our leap of faith into our new lives. I was full of hope and excitement. Our decision brought that and more.

As we were discovering what Kelowna had to offer, we visited the Rotary Centre for the Arts and saw a colorful poster inviting us to explore a group called heART Fit. Its description intrigued me into thinking “why not” check it out to see what spontaneous process painting was all about and if I would like it.



Top left: Purple  
 Right: Crazy 8's  
 Above: Imagination



For me, this exhibition is part of my celebration of being 5 years clear of cancer and in some small way a story of how I evolved as an artist in the company of non-judgmental men, women and some children just like me wanting to have fun with painting from the heart.

I have emerged from a sense that I had to reproduce something that looked like someone else's work, to being free and confident enough to let my inner self express my joy of color, shapes and imagination into my own unique style of art.

The opportunity to exchange ideas, fears, insecurities about what art is and to simply have fun with a group of people who see and feel the joy of creation from a wide variety of places in the head and heart has been a highlight of my new life in Kelowna.

My works demonstrate my playfulness with color and shapes, with the

help of a variety of tools. I enjoy the opportunity to add the dimension of depth and texture by mixing acrylic paint and other materials. I do seem to have a penchant for circles and waves of color, often with the treble clef or words that mean something to me, woven into the works."

The integrity of heART Fit is that each finds fulfillment and a place to be according to their own experience and needs. Their heARTist statements and their art reflect their individuality.

Grace Frank was raised under the wide-open spaces of southern Saskatchewan observing the minutiae of tiny, delicate grasses and the big drama of anvil clouds. She now eyes the shifting light on beautiful Lake Okanagan. Grace completed the University of Saskatchewan Certificate of Art and Design program in 2011.

"When I am creating I Am  
 the inside-out me  
 the becalmed and wordless me  
 the tetherless, time-stopped me"

Nela Odarijew says: "I am the painting. If you look you will see my joys, my sorrows my happiness and my disappointment - my paintings are my poetry in colour, my vision, my imagination and maybe even yourself. I am Becoming.

I did my art training at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. "

As a child Lynda Zorn lived in Thunder Bay, and was fortunate to have been taken under the wing of a neighbourhood artist. "When I am creating, I AM the



creation - completely absorbed, completely one with it. Sometimes this spans one sitting, however long, sometimes I live it for days until I feel it is complete.”

Suzanne Chavarie smiles remembering a favourite quote: “To be playful is to allow for unlimited possibility.” - James P. Carse. I Am an artist inspired by the energy in the room during a HeART Fit session. Unexpected things happen when sharing a creative space with others. Sometimes you need to let things go – the planned becomes the unplanned.

Born and raised in Edmonton, Lauren Greaves was immersed in the arts from birth, encouraged to explore a diverse range of mediums of artistic self-expression.

“When I am creating I AM – / Awake. / Alive. / Free.”

Cynthia Richards has been part of HeART Fit for about eight years and says, “I enjoy going to the studio - this place where I can work away from my home. “When I am creating I move into an energy level and a concentration level that is free from worry and stress. It is a part of myself that works in the “ here and now” and is less judgmental. In Abstract #4 I used the palette intuitively, and the form just came together, as a whole.

Dolores Caswell is reflective, “This painting is symbolic of my feelings. I have lost my vision for the art I previously enjoyed, so, like the boat, a small part painted in earlier times, I Am trying to stay calm while I feel threatened by the frustration of dealing with the limitations which I now deal with in trying to express my artistic ability.”

After graduating from the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) in the 1980s, Renata Kerr enjoyed a successful career as a graphic designer in Ontario and Europe for over 25 years. Since her retirement to Kelowna, she has rediscovered her love of painting and the opportunity it provides for creative expression. She believes in the healing power of art.

“When I am creating, I am lost in my own world, one in which only I and my painting exist. Time stands still. The marks on my canvas are an extension of me. I AM my painting.”

Mary Broadland maintains, “I am a newbie, even after 6 years with this group of incredible HeArt Fit artists. Through the glorious hours of being “lost” in painting, I have found that I do have a sense of colour and balance and that this is what I can rely on when I am not sure what to do next. But it is the kinship and constant encouragement that has buoyed my spirit and truly inspired me to be the creator that I am.

“When I AM creating, I am one with the painting and we are having a little conversation of where it could go and what could happen next.....we are unraveling a mystery!”

“My paintings, while appropriately juvenile to the eye, are interesting to the touch. The overlaying of many textures over time is reflective of the weaving of the I Am.” Ruth Bieber explains, “I have has been blind since I was seven years old. I hold a Master’s degree in Education, with a specialization in Rehabilitation. I explore the power offered by the arts. It is a curiosity even to me to consider what is going on in the heart of my imagination while I am creating. ‘thrOUGH



Top: Navigating Tricky Waters, Grace Frank  
Middle: Finding My Way, Nela Odarijew  
Bottom: Mask, Linda Zorn



Left column, top to bottom:  
 Abstract #4, Cynthia Richards  
 DAWN in orange, Lauren Greaves  
 Spontaneous Discovery, Suzanne Chevarie  
 Middle column, top to bottom:  
 The Calm In The Storm, Dolores Caswell  
 Break on Through, Renata Kerr  
 Right column:  
 Water or Sky, Mary Broadland

thE LAYERS of dIstOrAtIOn' was painted believing I had remembered where I had placed certain colours of my paints, I began by working with layers of black and white. The layers of perception were in my thoughts. Later I was informed, that I was actually using bronze and yellow; I just went with it. Feeling my way through the perceptual distortion and making meaning of it has been my life's journey; a mapping of my reality."

Alberto Azzis came to Canada from Italy, almost 20 years ago, after retirement at age 66. He was in grade eleven when he started to take drawing, but was discouraged by his teacher who felt he used his imagination too much. Later his mother bought him paints and he has painted ever since staying up until 2 or 3 in the morning to paint even during his busy career years. "It was my relaxation. I am not a professional. I am a dilettante, but I love to paint. In my profession I was a dentist." The voice inside his head and journeying with his imagination has brought Alberto great pleasure.

For Kellie Schonfeld, local Kelowna Artist, art is more than self-expression; it is a way of life. Her paints and brushes, pencils and pens, shutters and lenses are an extension of self and the result is soulful artistic creations filled with vibrant colours depicting the beauty of nature and the simplicity of daily life. Regardless of her medium, Kellie follows her intuition when creating, allowing her art to flow from within. Having been raised in Lake Country, Kellie often finds inspiration in the natural beauty of surrounding vineyards, farms, and the unparalleled majesty of the Okanagan Valley. In art, Kellie finds life; she cannot imagine any other way of living.

Daughter, Lexie Schonfeld, Age 5 says, "When I am creating I am an artist."

Her brother, William Schonfeld, Age 7, echoes, "When I am creating, I am focused and happy."

When Jennifer Pritchard was 16 she began painting on large pieces of drywall leftover from her family's construction business. "Painting has not been a daily



Left column, top to bottom:  
thROUGH the LAYERS of distOrAtiOn, Ruth Bieber

As I Remember, Alberto Azziz

Aura, Kellie Schonfeld

Middle column, top to bottom:

Sully, Lexi Schonfeld

Thunder Color, William Schonfeld

I Am Afraid, and Excited, Karen Close

Right Column:

Still Searching, Jennifer Pritchard

practice, but more of a reflective process unveiled every few years when I once again pick up a paintbrush. Changes in what I paint reflect the changes in my life. As my perspective matures as do the artworks. Almost a fractal process, as I develop on the larger scale of life, I develop on the smaller scale of the canvas. When I am creating I am accepting the process of growth.”

Teaching English and Visual Arts gave Karen Close a deep appreciation for the healing benefits of creative expression. Since 2008 she has facilitated heART FIT at the RCA. When I am creating, I AM so engaged on my day dream playground that I AM unaware of where I AM going and what might emerge. ‘I AM Afraid and Excited’. All my senses are enlivened and my hand

rushes to translate my emotions into marks and gestures. I love texture.

This community of heArtists knows that together they are following a path rich in value and tradition.

“I am seeking. I am striving. I am in it with all my heart.” Vincent van Gogh

# WHAT IF THE HOKEY POKEY REALLY IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT?

## Commentary on Move: What the Body Wants by Karen Close

When I first started heART Fit, attempting to lead others to embrace the connection I saw between creativity and play was a message not always readily received. A helpful participant suggested I might feel reinforcement for my perspective if I read *What The Body Wants*. I was hooked by the second paragraph of the Foreword by Phil Porter, co-author and co-founder of InterPlay, [www.interplay.org](http://www.interplay.org)

"To play is to do the things that we enjoy, that feed us, that we are compelled to do, that give us deep satisfaction, that lift our spirits, that are fun, that transport us, that are ephemeral, that lead to a sense of accomplishment, or that move us."

And then I read the section You and this Book by Cynthia Winton-Henry: "*What The Body Wants is about reawakening your body wisdom, about saying yes to our whole life, and about being more playful, creative, powerful, and integrated...It often takes a community body to help individual bodies gain ease...Reweaving our various gifts of thinking, feeling and action into one symphonic way of being can feel awkward and clumsy. But, in the end, the tapestry is spectacular... What is important is finding the treasure and the treasure is you...Searching for a way to foster the alive, free, truthful, spontaneous, integrated human beauty and power we've seen when people create.*" Yes, Yes my heart resonated. I had found a book I couldn't put down.

That was seven years ago, well before Robert MacDonald and I decided to begin publishing this Journal of Creative Aging

*Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace and Gratitude*. Then six weeks ago Robert told me Wood Lake Publishing, the publisher of *Creative Aging: Stories from the Pages of the Journal Sageing* had contacted him to do a new layout for a book they'd published in 2004. He was struck with its affinity with our ideas about creative aging. "What's it called? I asked."

I felt a crevice in my understanding open wide and '*the tapestry is spectacular*'. Although Cynthia Winton-Henry and I are from different countries and have never met I am very excited to help launch the reprint of her book, now titled *Move: What the Body Wants*. What if the Hokey Pokey Really is What It's All About? Have we misplaced our core values?

Enjoy the stories that made Cynthia Winton-Henry know our deepest wisdom resides within the body's core waiting to be released through free movement and an ethic of play. The story of Pat Pothier and her 75-year-old grandmother had great appeal for me. You can also join her in an InterPlay warm up: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnWT77j9otk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnWT77j9otk)

Unlock the wisdom of your body!

Have more fun!

Decrease stress and increase ease.

Make wiser, more grounded decisions.

Thrive by getting body, mind, heart and spirit to all work together.

Find easy ways to change what you want to change in your life: relationships, work, community, home, spirit, body image...

Discover your hidden resources.

InterPlay is a practice and philosophy begun in 1989 and shared around the world ever since.



**CYNTHIA WINTON-HENRY AND PHIL PORTER ARE PHILOSOPHERS, SPEAKERS, AUTHORS, TEACHERS, AND PERFORMERS.**

They have collaborated for 30 years. They began developing the InterPlay practice and philosophy in 1989 and have been sharing it around the world ever since. They are co-directors of the non-profit organization Body Wisdom, based in Oakland, California, which encompasses all InterPlay activities.

There are InterPlayers all over, including a large group of people who have been trained in the InterPlay Life Practice Program and the InterPlay Leader Training Program. The program is offered regional in several cities in the US and other parts of the world.

They have written and published several books both together and separately: *Chasing the Dance of Life*; *Having it All!: Mind, Body, Heart & Spirit Together Again at Last*; *The Wisdom of the Body*; and *The Slightly Mad Rantings of a Body Intellectual Part One*, and the new edition of *Move: What the Body Wants*.

## **An Excerpt from the Introduction to the book by Cythia Winton-Henry**

*Move: What the Body Wants* is about reawakening our body wisdom, about saying yes to our whole life, and about being more playful, creative, powerful, and integrated. This is both easy and hard. Lao Tzu says, “All difficult things have their origin in that which is easy, and great things in that which are small.” So it is with the seemingly simple ideas and practices in this book. They offer a challenging new way of thinking and behaving, one that is rooted in an ethic of play. One person called this book a conversion process. It may inspire you to play more, to listen to your body more, to redefine spirit and mind, or just to wonder how freedom, play, and being embodied got so hard.

*Move: What the Body Wants* is a treasure map and you are the treasure. You need no prior confidence or disposition for your journey. You only need a body and some willingness. As the stories of people in this book reveal, anyone can retrieve the grace, spontaneity, and mystery of interplaying with the ever-dancing universe: aging nuns, prison inmates, scientists, the dying, the depressed, and those with bodies too big, too old, or too artistically trained.

You may want to make reading this book a solo journey. You can also set off on this trip with a companion or supportive group. You may not want to get out of your chair. That is completely acceptable. Even if you just take deep breaths and shake out your body a little every day, you will be doing one of

## What is InterPlay?

It's a folk art, a community practice, a healing experience, an educational toolset, a spiritual path, and a system of good ideas. It is professional development that makes your body say, "Thank you!" It's challenging, fun and lets you enjoy lots of connections that foster health. Rooted in play, it's radical. It helps professionals move quickly to self-care, people care, and earth care through surprisingly unconditional, unplanned creativity. It's not an emotion, cult, or answer. It simply helps people take small creative bites, reflect on them, and move to bigger bites. Why? Because bodies want to create and care for each other. InterPlay assists by restoring our access to freedom of movement, voice, speech, stillness, and connection in simple, but thought-provoking ways. You'll have chances to play alone and in community. You'll regain body wisdom tools too rare in adult development and find the grace to dance with human limits and strengths. With its emphasis on human sustainability you might see why people link InterPlay to local food, global peace programs, gift economies, and artful, down-to-earth community life: The Earth and body wisdom like each other. The learning is endless as Porter and Winton-Henry know. [www.InterPlay.org](http://www.InterPlay.org)

InterPlay's regular exercises. An InterPlay T-shirt says, "Shake Out Whatever You Are Sitting On!" It seems silly, but it works. As you go, I wouldn't be surprised if you got the itch to play in a bigger way.

Based on experience, sharing the *What the Body Wants* journey with at least one other open-hearted, willing person will speed up positive change and health. It often takes a community body to help individual bodies gain ease. Visit [interplay.org](http://interplay.org) for contact with other InterPlayers near you. If you are not ready to be that public, this book is full of companions who began as you have, wandering around looking for something "more." Their stories and voices on the *Like Breathing* downloadable audio resource, offer friendship for those who are returning to the simpler joys of embodied life.

The audio resource, *Like Breathing*, provided with the book, created from nine hours of improvisation, is provided in a downloadable format, to accompany you into the spirit of InterPlay.

Journalling will help you collect insights about your body wisdom as you go. It is surprisingly hard for humans to answer the question, "What do I want?" Brief writings, poems, images, and art can help you track whatever you notice. Body Wisdom is based on noticing the little things in our experience over time. If you find that you cannot write, or if you resist it, that is normal. People have not been trained to integrate their word selves and their moving, singing, being selves. You may need relief from words. Take it. It takes time to get all our parts to easily interplay.

*Move: What the Body Wants* is written as a developmental process. One thing builds upon another in the incremental system of teaching InterPlay. Bodies love this incrementality. The mind and spirit like to dash around willy-nilly. But integration is embodied and brings mind, spirit, and heart right together in the present moment. Reweaving our various gifts of thinking, feeling, and action into one symphonic way of being can feel awkward and clumsy. But, in the end, the tapestry is spectacular.

It is also fine to jump around in this book should a particular focus speak to you. Or you might want to take an exercise to a group or meeting to assist others in the step-by-step interplay of becoming more embodied.

My greatest hope is that by reading, noticing, and doing the exercises, you will come to play. That's where the real power is. I am saying a prayer right now that when the time comes to put on the music, or to babble, or sigh out loud, your inner elf will rise up and say, "Ah, what the heck! Time for "elf-awareness!" Or maybe your inner angel will help you out with a nudge. G. K. Chesterton said, "The reason angels can fly is because they take themselves so lightly." In not taking it all too seriously, I hope you will surprise yourself by playing and praying with your four potent embodied gifts: your movement, voice, words, and stillness.

InterPlayers use the processes found in this book over and over. Hand dances; hand-to-hand contact; babbling; "walking, stopping, and running"; deep breaths; and one-breath-at-a-time singing are our ABCs of embodied play. Each practice can lead to more sophisticated play, or suffice as it is to reveal our body wisdom. For instance, a hand dance quickly moves to whole

## From the back cover of the book:

MOVE: WHAT THE BODY WANTS FROM THE CREATORS OF INTERPLAY  
Cynthia Winton Henry with Phil Porter includes the music Like Breathing

If you were to look one place in the world to find a more embodied, playful and grace-filled life, the InterPlay people would tell you to go straight to the source! Your own body!

Move: What the Body Wants introduces readers step by step into InterPlay, a practice for creative and spiritual development that reintegrates the body into all aspects of life. Interplay, which is practiced throughout the world, is a philosophy and technique developed by Cynthia Winton-Henry and Phil Porter in 1989 to foster health and transformation through community and creativity.

Read this book as inspiration or as a guide to the practice of InterPlay. Most exercises can be done alone or with a partner. However, InterPlay is at its best as a communal a practice. Included with the book is online access to fulllength album Like Breathing, which will help awaken your body wisdom.

Meditation / Healing / Creativity  
\$24.95  
ISBN 978-1-77064-915-6



Phil and I listened to our own body wisdom and that of the thousands of people with whom we have played. Encouraged by our friends to find a systematic way to share InterPlay so that they could lead it in their part of the world, we discovered that shared vision, language, common practices, and as much community as you can get, make a huge difference when you want to shift your life toward freedom, playfulness, and becoming more embodied.

I love the fact that it took two people to create InterPlay. Given the word InterPlay, it makes sense that it would. Phil and I are quite different from each other. Although we were both born in Indiana, are strong intuitives, and have a deep commitment to community, creativity, ideas, and embodied teaching, from there we diverge. Phil calls himself the president of fastidious men. He is a *magna cum laude*, well-balanced, even-tempered, methodological thinker who counterbalances my dauntless, messy, bungee-jumping approach to life. His introversion and respect for people's limits counterbalances my tendency to collect herds of gorgeously weird people as friends.

You may recognize ideas or exercises that seem familiar to you from other systems. For the greater part this is due to coincidence. Phil and I intentionally stayed away from other people's methods. We wanted to develop our own thoughts and practices and discover body wisdom for ourselves. What we share with other teachers and traditions is call for celebration. I am convinced that the universalities found between any two approaches is a testament to the structures guiding the physicality of creation. For instance, I have discovered several people and groups that employ the one-hand dance as a step into the waters of play. The heart of things keeps making itself known to anyone who will listen and can patiently find the simplest forms. To those colleagues who have been researching, rebuilding, and re-teaching the wisdom of the body in this era, I bow down in humble gratitude and acknowledgment. Phil and I consider it a privilege to be among more and more colleagues devoted to rediscovering what our bodies honestly need and want.

body solo movement.

Once you get going, don't stop. Whatever works for you, keep doing it – even the simplest of things. Whatever doesn't work, let it go. If you are disabled in any way, the key word in InterPlay is "adapt." Take care of yourself and change things to work for you. You know what is best for your own body. What is important is finding the treasure – and the treasure is you.

*Move: What the Body Wants* is the fruit of our purposeful desire to change the world and have fun, too. Searching for a way to foster the alive, free, truthful, spontaneous, integrated human beauty and power we've seen when people create,

## Advance praise for the book:

Move: What the Body Wants is a book that sparkles with possibilities, inviting the reader into the wondrous journey of discovery through simple, yet profound tools. InterPlay is truly a marvelous gift to the world and Cynthia and Phil are wise, soulful, and trustworthy guides.

– CHRISTINE VALTERS PAINTNER, PhD, reace, author of *Illuminating the Way: Embracing the Wisdom of Monks and Mystics*.

Cynthia Winton-Henry clearly and playfully describes the purpose, methods, and experiences of InterPlay. Meditations, practices, and stories intermingle gracefully with the text, and while reading, I was moved to move, embodying the vivid words and images. I finished knowing that Interplay is what my body wants!

– REV. JANE E. VENNARD, author of *Fully Awake and Truly Alive: Spiritual Practices to Nurture Your Soul*.

Move: What the Body Wants fuels us with the courage to leap into our own beings and playfully discover the joy that physicality is basic to all of life. It is a perceptive dance of words, alive with the body wisdom of many lives. I celebrate a timeless embodied articulation that companions humanity to what the body truly wants.

– CELESTE SNOWBER, author of *Embodied Prayer and Wild Tourist*.

This book is good news for the body! While we all live in bodies that have been constrained by culture, this book provides tools to develop new pathways of grace, vigor and passion. This rich compilation of observation and experiment comes from two artists and improvisers who enliven our ability to create a more just and graceful social body. These practices give eloquent speech to our skin and empower the manner in which we touch the world.

– REV DR ROD PATTENDEN, artist, art historian, theologian, and innovator of creative spirituality in Australia.

## One of the more than 20 stories from the book:

**“A 50-something woman and a 75-year-old grandmother were bouncing off one another like little giggly girls.”**

## PAT POTHIER

great grandmother, retired pediatric psychiatric nurse, and professor, began to dance, find voice, and play in her 70s, and became a self-pronounced body intellectual.

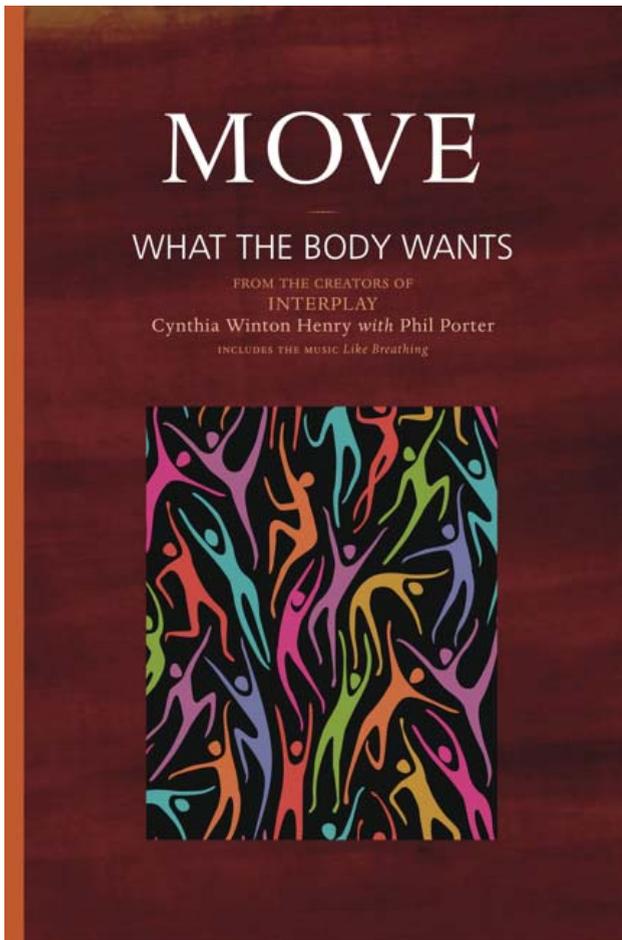
Lately, I have noticed the pain in my left lower rib area occurs when my mind is conflicted. I wake up in the morning without any pain, but the minute I begin to think about something that is potentially stressful, it sets up enough tension to cause my ribs to talk to me. “What’s happening?” I ask myself. Oh, yeah, I am undecided about whether to participate in the 5K walk/run on Sunday.

When I made the decision not to do the race, my body responded to me gently, without pain. Recently, in a support group at check-in, I talked about my dancing at church as a credit and my rib pain as a major complaint. Janice asked me if it didn’t hurt to dance. I replied, “My ribs never hurt when I am dancing.”

I believe that I have been working on this body/mind connection since I was a little girl. When I was five years old and suddenly separated from my foster mother, I languished in bed, ate very little, and would not go out to play. The family doctor could find nothing wrong with me. Eventually, my bodyspirit healed enough to let me take up the tasks of growing again.

When I went to live with my mother and sister in my grandmother’s house, I started throwing up. I was thrown into an angry cauldron as my mother and grandmother lived out the unresolved conflicts in their lives and my sister showed her resentment of me in uncomfortable, even dangerous ways. The tension in our house was greatest on weekends, when mother was not working. It was usually on Saturday morning that my body tried to relieve this tension by throwing up at a safe garden spot. When Mom remarried and we moved from that house, the Saturday retching disappeared.

Later, when I was old enough to be a Girl Scout, I saved my money to go to summer camp in the High Sierras. A clean bill of health from a doctor was required to be accepted at camp, so Mom made an appointment with our family doctor. Before we got there I was extremely anxious about the examination. The doctor found me in good health, except for an elevated temperature. Since there didn’t seem to be any rationale for the fever, the doctor suggested that we come back in a few days just to take my temperature. When that day came, sure enough I had an elevated temperature again without cause. Without my knowledge, Mom and the doctor conspired. The



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doctor came to our home unannounced one day and took my temperature and sure enough, I hadn't had time to work it up that day.

I always loved to play in the park just a block from my home. After school, on weekends, and all summer, this park was my second home. I entered the park at a corner by climbing up into the thick bushes, and travelled across the park all the way to the playground without ever touching the ground! I was the Tarzan of Albany Memorial Park! This was real play, completely divorced from any reality of my life except for getting home in time to wash up for dinner. Later in the same park, I learned to shoot baskets and play tennis. However, by this time play had become more mastery than the freedom that comes from just being and using my body for pure fantasy and fun. Of course, with mastery comes the critic. How well am I doing? Am I better than her?

I notice it is hard for me to identify times in my life when I am just having fun. I think I am basically a very serious person. Still, I have enjoyed watching my grandson Dylan (who is now 26 years old) play since he was an infant. Watching grandchildren is a special treat because I don't have to be a parent. I can just watch and indulge. I watched him in his crib playing with the spinning toy that was suspended in front of him. I watched as he learned that

his hands and sometimes his feet made the toy spin and make a musical sound. I watched later when he began to crawl and extend his exploring to the larger world. He loved to open cabinet drawers in my kitchen and pull out the pots and pans for nesting and making sound. However, the watching I enjoyed most was when we went to the beach at Santa Cruz, where his father lived. After lathering his red headed fair skin with sunscreen, I would release him to the surf. With his arms wide open, and screaming loudly, he plunged over and over into the waves with great, exuberant abandon.

I miss the feeling of playing with abandon. Most of what I do each day seems to be stuck in the period of mastery and I fear that I have almost lost the pure pleasure of just playing. However, I was reminded that this is still possible for me last Sunday at church. I was standing next to my friend Stacey as we sang Let the Walls Fall Down. We were rocking side to side with the music, and then we began bumping our backsides together and laughing with each bump. Here in the middle of church, a 50-something woman and a 75-year-old grandmother were bouncing off one another like little giggly girls. I want to play with abandon! More play! More fun! More! More! More!

# SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

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Cynthia Winton-Henry

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

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

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

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