

THE JOURNAL OF Creative Aging

# SAGE-ING

with Creative Spirit, Grace & Gratitude



A PUBLICATION OF  
THE OKANAGAN INSTITUTE  
NUMBER 16, SUMMER 2015  
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



# The Journal of Creative Aging

EDITED BY KAREN CLOSE

NUMBER 16, SUMMER 2015  
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## SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

A PUBLICATION OF THE

### Okanagan Institute

1473 Ethel Street, Kelowna BC V1Y 2X9  
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Cover image by Jeff Stathopoulos: Naramata  
artist, Marianne Meyer, shares her work

## FROM THE EDITOR

The arrival of summer 2016 completes our 4th year of publication. This is a proud moment and we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of you who have been part of our Sage-ing journey, both as contributors and readers. Sage-ing is about opening ourselves up to new ideas and experiences as we continue to grow and learn. Sages give consideration to which values and goals bring vitality and energy to their lives and how they can impart these intangibles to future generations. Our mission is to be an *easel for any form of artistry undertaken out of personal intuition and imagination intended to impart wisdom*. Creating is an essential life giving process, a kind of time machine, that manifests enduring connections. The Journal's publisher Robert MacDonald suggests: "Properly aware that much can and does go wrong, sages are unusually alive to moments of calm and beauty, even extremely modest ones, of the kind that those with grander plans rush past." In the tapestry of humanity every thread counts. We hope the Journal is beginning to weave and evolve a legacy of intergenerational curiosity and caring.

*Sage-ing With Creative Spirit, Grace, and Gratitude* is an invitation to look into yourself, share and record your own special uniqueness and build meaningful connections into the future.

Karen Close, editor

## On the Map: Arts & Health in BC



When "art" and "health" collide the resulting possibilities are almost endless. In hospitals, classrooms, community centres, parks and cultural spaces, more and more British Columbians are embracing the notion that the arts have a role to play in health, healing and wellbeing.

Following a province-wide survey of arts & health activity in BC last fall, Arts Health BC has just released a final report presenting a summary of the OTM survey findings, as well as a directory of the submitted initiatives. An online map has also been created that plots the initiatives on a Google map of BC and provides links to various websites with additional information. (Although the survey is now complete, it is not too late for BC-based arts & health initiatives to be added to the Google Map. Profile summaries can be submitted online at: [www.artshealthbc.ca/on-the-map](http://www.artshealthbc.ca/on-the-map).)

On the Map: Arts & Health in BC is a project of Arts Health BC, a provincial not-for-profit promoting engagement with the arts for health, healing & wellbeing. Learn more at [www.artshealthbc.ca](http://www.artshealthbc.ca)

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## CONNECTIONS

written by Derryn Yeomans,  
May 8, 2015 for Mother's Day

She is my daughter.  
I am her mother,  
but she is a mother too  
and has a daughter  
who has only known me  
as her grandmother.

She is my daughter.  
I am her mother,  
but I am a daughter too  
and had a mother  
who she knew only as  
her grandmother.

My granddaughter  
also knew my mother,  
called her G-G, great grandmother,  
a title to which I aspire,  
although I will be very old then.

I knew my grandmother,  
only through family heirlooms,  
stories, black and white photographs,  
her headstone in a prairie cemetery.  
I am older now than she ever was.

My mother knew her grandmother,  
only through family stories, postcards,  
letters and embroidered handkerchiefs  
sent from "the Old Country", "Overseas".  
She is buried in Britain, we're not sure  
where.

What a gathering it would be  
if a Time Machine could magically  
bring us all together; to meet, laugh,  
share our stories, reach beyond our roles.  
As women together, I think we would be  
friends.  
After all, there are connections.

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## 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;
- Article to be attached as a word doc 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 on the equinoxes and solstices.
- Email the article and photographs to [karensageing@gmail.com](mailto:karensageing@gmail.com)

# PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST AT AGE 75

## Barry Rafuse



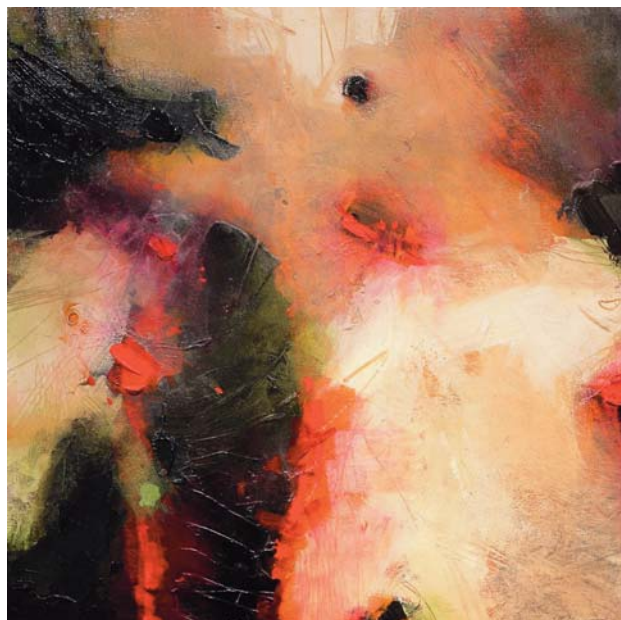
Art was certainly in the family. My mother was a talented wildlife artist who painted until she was 95. My sister and brother were also creative. In high school, I took a correspondence course in drawing and received a good mark; perhaps that gave me confidence to continue painting. When I first became aware of the importance of being creative, I was in the RCMP, stationed in a small prairie town where officers ate and breathed police work. I suppose painting was therapeutic and a good way to find balance in policing.

Louise and I were married in 1964, and in 1968 we moved to Prince George, British Columbia. This was a location where we encountered long, cold winters, but it was also a great place to establish a career in BC Corrections and raise a family. In my early thirties I sought out art courses through night school and the Emily Carr College of Art. At that time, I took watercolour, but I knew little about the medium. Other students had experience. At first I felt overwhelmed, but then almost immediately, I got caught up in it. I loved the freedom of the medium and was impressed by how the water and colours mixed. Although I was painting representationally, I was full of curiosity about how I could interpret a flower or a mountain differently. I welcomed opportunities to take my subjects into semi-abstract interpretations.

I continued taking more art courses. As I learned, I became more of a serious artist. At one time, we had an art gallery in our country home. As I developed more advanced paintings, gallery owners suggested I enter juried shows and it all just seemed to gain momentum from there. It wasn't my plan, it just evolved. I was soon being asked to give courses on weekends even though I was still a full time administrator in the correctional system. Being creative became my driving force. It is fun to be creative and when you get good results you think 'ahh well, this is cool'. I was not motivated by a need to sell or to be a successful artist – I simply found relaxation and inspiration through painting.

TENDRILS acrylic on canvas - 36"Wx12"H





When you obtain a result that you like, and you look at it and realise 'yes I created that', it feels good. When others like my work and choose to interior decorate their homes with one of my paintings, that is a compliment. If I receive a compliment from an artist who already understands art, it is meaningful.

Meaning in an abstract painting is harder to articulate, but there is an inner pleasure or jolt that you can feel. Over the years I've developed an analytical eye, and I can determine when a painting has become a success. It could be the proper use of colour, or it could be an effective use of textures. Mystery intrigues me and I am happy when a painting draws the viewer in. Energy is very important in a work. I'm drawn to a painting when you can appreciate the artist's brushwork, or their unique style. In my work I am very influenced by the four seasons and weather conditions. I also find semi classical music influences me and I

think that what I'm listening to can influence the painting. I don't play an instrument, but I love music. These are all different energies that affect my work. Often, if I'm waiting for things to dry, I'm in and out of the studio I'll apply a layer and then I'll go outside and prune the grapes or watch a bit of television. Sometimes a painting just requires a time-consuming process. I might work on two or three paintings at a time, but generally I try to focus on one work until completion.

There is a skill in knowing when a painting is done, and knowing when to stop. Sometimes, I can think it is done, and then several weeks or months later, I will view it differently and make changes. Every painting has its own story you have to stay with it until the story is told. The choosing of a title is challenging and I dislike finding titles. I will often show the painting to a family member, and they will come up with some excellent titles. When I'm teaching, I ask my students to determine what it is they want their painting to say. An artist needs to determine what their painting is about.

At 75 years old I am very comfortable with who I am. I have had a good life. I have come to feel comfortable calling myself a professional artist. In earlier years, I was concerned about how my paintings would be received by the public – perhaps it was a little insecurity. I have reached the stage where I care less about how my work is received, particularly my abstract pieces. Abstraction is difficult to understand but it is also extremely challenging to do, far more difficult than painting realistically. The fulfillment of being creative is satisfying. The challenge of learning something new continues to excite me too. I welcome getting better. New products always intrigue me. I enjoy the accomplishment of mastering something, but I'm still wowed by the surprises that just happen on a canvas. An important part of being a senior artist is giving workshops and sharing my skills with artists who are still developing. When I was designated as a SFCA, Senior Member of the



Top: DEEPNESS OF GREEN acrylic on canvas - 24"x24"

Above: THE MYSTERY acrylic on canvas - 24"x48"



MOLTEN SEA acrylic on canvas - 48"x48"

**Abstraction is difficult to understand but it is also extremely challenging to do, far more difficult than painting realistically.**

Federation of Canadian Artists, I felt privileged and honoured. This position requires that I jury exhibitions and take on more of a leadership role within the federation. I welcome these responsibilities. That I was in the police force and the correctional services is surprising to many, and I'm often asked if painting was an escape. I don't feel that, but do get lost in the painting process and I do go off into another world that can be relaxing.

When I first started painting I don't think I even knew abstract work existed. Moving to it was a gradual change. For example, I would paint a tree in a very loose, dramatic way and purposely leave out the detail. I was wanting the painting to be somewhat mysterious. As I started taking chances and moving more and more into abstraction, I realised that's where I wanted to be. If I'm painting a flower, I'm happiest taking some of its colour, its shape, its texture, and making a new design and doing something

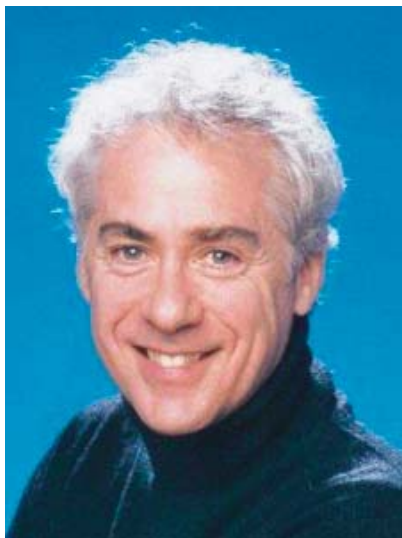
that is a fresh, new approach. In many ways, I like to take people on a journey when they look at my paintings. I like to open viewers' minds to new ways of seeing. I had a solo exhibition at the Salmon Arm Art Gallery several years ago, and my paintings were all abstract. I was influenced by the many forces of nature, and I purposely used patterns, colours, and designs from the everyday things that many people would never notice. For example, I am intrigued by the beautiful fall colours and patterns on decaying fall leaves, or the textures and patterns created when metal deteriorates. I find beautiful abstract designs in rock formations and in bark. These things were included in the solo show, and it was well received by the public. I like people to read what they want into my works and have the paintings be a journey of discovery according to the viewer's own experience. There's joy in that for me and for them.

**Barry Rafuse** was born in 1940, in New Westminster, B.C. He is largely self-taught, although he has studied at Emily Carr College of Art & Design and with other well known artists such as Anne Meredith Barry. He is retired and currently resides in Vernon, B.C.

Barry has had his work exhibited in solo and group exhibitions at the Vernon Public Art Gallery, Armstrong Art Gallery, Prince George Art Gallery, Williams Lake Art Gallery, Salmon Arm Art Gallery, and through the FCA (Federation of Canadian Artists) in Kamloops and Vancouver, BC.

He has received many awards through the FCA and since 2014 he is a Senior member of Federation of Canadian Artists (SFCA). Barry's work is in many private and public collections throughout Canada. [www.artefunktional.com](http://www.artefunktional.com)

# WHAT I DO FOR LOVE



## Jeff Hyslop

“Point me toward tomorrow  
We did what we had to do  
Won’t forget, can’t regret  
What I did for love..”  
...From *A Chorus Line*

## INTRODUCTION

When Jeff Hyslop and I met recently his wisdom and enthusiasm for sharing was contagious. This Canadian musical theatre actor, singer, dancer, choreographer, and director is perhaps most famous for his roles as Jeff the mannequin in the children’s show *Today’s Special*, and as the title role in the Canadian travelling production of *The Phantom of the Opera*, but it was his role in the Canadian touring company production of *A Chorus Line* that I speculate unconsciously formed him into the sage he is. Imagine him, choosing a career shift to embrace the role of a very acrobatic dancer, singing ‘I Can Do That’, while incorporating several back flips and no-hands cartwheels. Today this is the vibrant creative energy he is sharing with Kelowna youth. He has been in Kelowna this spring working with a local theatre group for youth. <http://www.bumbershoottheatre.com> He is helping to mentor the director and assist with a program to encourage young people to look at important life considerations through involvement in theatre. The current play, its first run recently completed, was *The Giver* and Jeff played The Giver. You might know the story from the 2014 film with Jeff Bridges (The Giver) and Meryl Streep (Chief Elder). Following a calamity referred to as The Ruin, society is reorganized into a series of communities, and all memories of the past are

The giver reflects



held by one person, the Receiver of Memory, called The Giver. Since the Receiver of Memory is the only individual in the community who has the memories from before, he must advise the Chief Elder, and the other Elders, on the decisions for the community. This role demands all the understanding of a sage, someone who knows himself, human need and human folly, but still has the love to guide Jonas, an 18-year-old boy who has been selected to replace him. Jeff Hyslop is the role incarnate, on and off the stage.  
~ Karen Close

Almost a year and a half ago, my best friend’s





The giver supports

**“My name is Jeff Hyslop, I am 63 years old, I have a titanium right hip, osteo-arthritis in both big toes, and if you can, try to keep up with me - here we go, 5,6,7,8!”**

wife, Sandy Reimer, asked me to teach an adult Jazz class, at the downtown YWCA in Vancouver, BC. I said sure! As I was belting-up with my radio-mic, (Madonna style) to teach in this amazingly beautiful large space, I asked Sandy, head of the club, what I should say, for my opening remarks, and more importantly, what if no one showed-up for the class? She said, in pure Sandy honesty, “you’ll think of something, just be yourself”. I turned around and out of nowhere, there were 45 eager adult students, who had been quietly filing-in, ready to take a jazz class, with Jeff Hyslop. I believe it was the packed studio “audience”, that catapulted me to centre floor, where my opening remarks began thusly, “My name is Jeff Hyslop, I am 63 years old, I have a titanium right hip, osteo-arthritis in both big toes, and if you can, try to keep up with me - here we go, 5,6,7,8!” We were a hit!

Backing up a few years - when I came off the road with an injury, during the National Tour of ‘The Producers’ - I came home to my family, sequestered in Winfield, BC at the time. Little did I know the bond I would develop with the Okanagan.

My time to become “one” with my home province had arrived! All these many years touring the world, and now, being given the opportunity to adjudicate for Theatre BC, thanks to Robb Mowbray, Kiwanis Festival, - to do workshops in Nanaimo, Victoria, Terrace, Nelson, Prince Rupert, Prince George, Fort St John.....and to perform again in my hometown - Vancouver. Finally, came a rather important adjudication “gig” - The Ozone Festival, that year in Vernon, adjudicating 8 straight play finalists, but especially the Kelowna entry of ‘Memory of Water’. I meet the amazing Tracy Ross, in an amazing ensemble cast of that production, and something sparked. She had already launched her dream to develop and train young talent, by offering an outlet to both see and participate in “quality” theatre, for all ages - ‘Bumbershoot Theatre’. Tracy asked me to provide this workshop. It was a Sunday morning, while she drove from Kelowna, to pick me up in Vernon, in the midst of “tech” rehearsals for a production of ‘Grease’ I was directing at Powerhouse Theatre, that solidified our future. We’ve never looked back.

My modus has always been that whoever asks me first, gets my attention immediately - no job too big or too small. Tracy simply showed up and asked me to come to Kelowna, and work with her “troupe” - I did, and the connection was born. We have done many a workshop since, but finally this year, she asked me to play the ‘Giver’, in Eric Coble’s adaptation of Lois Lowry’s award-winning novel ‘The Giver’, and finally to perform on the Bumbershoot stage. A talented young cast, a strong director (Tracy) and a beautiful play, became the gift that literally brought me back from the overwhelming grief, of losing my beloved mother just months earlier. Through the 6 weeks of rehearsals, it became apparent, that I was a “giver” of sorts in real life, downloading my experiences and work ethics/techniques



the giver instructs

to the cast and Tracy, from a 54 year career. More importantly, it revitalized my own belief in my art, my craft, my ability to communicate and impact life, through my God given gift for performing, and ultimately faith in myself.

I call 'The Arts' a "soft" calling, where the presentation of song and dance and drama impact the observer, both audibly and visually. Usually, in the span of a normal 2 hour live performance, an audience leaves a darkened auditorium, concert hall, or Broadway Theatre, humming a tune, thinking about the author's message, quoting a Shakespearean timeless verse, whatever it may be. And for that brief time,

each has forgotten about their own daily struggles in life, and in turn can wake-up the next day with a clearer, fresher, perhaps more optimistic approach to the challenges ahead.

Just when we think the road is getting tougher, when we're tired and can't wake-up and face life's ongoing challenges in the same way we did 20 years ago, is when we have to look to what we want to achieve, and dig our heels in even harder, and keep telling our story. We all have one, and if just one person "hears" you, wherever that may be - in a day, a week etc..., we validate our human-ness, our *raison d'être*, our belief that life is worthwhile even when no one seems to be listening.

I am absolutely reborn - my enthusiasm for my craft has never been stronger, and I have hope that the youth in the Arts, will be able to carry our wisdom forward, for the next generations coming furiously on our heels. We can do it - believe in yourself - keep telling your story.

<http://www.bumbershoottheatre.com>

**Chief Elder in Bumbershoot's *The Giver*:** "It has been a fabulous opportunity to get a chance to work with Jeff and Tracy on this show. After watching her work magic with the young people who are my middle school students and my own daughter, my hope is that the contagious passion and extraordinary talent that Tracy brings to her shows comes through in this production... and hooks you into more fabulous "Bumbershootness".

# FROM BEHIND THE LENS



## Jeff Stathopulos

A photographer is an observer. Through the lens of a camera they interpret what they see in a way that resonates. For some, it's simply about reproduction: they see an image and scramble to capture it as closely as possible. For others, the image is a starting point, an opportunity to critique and assess what is before them, a way to present the image so it reflects what their mind sees.

I was asked to participate in an art showing this week, of works by artists in their later years. The goal was to capture candid images of people whose style and attitude transcends their age.

In other words, great looking folks who'd passed the halfway mark in their lives, and still believed presentation was an important part of delivery. I spent weeks before slinking about different events: the farmers market, vintage car shows and the waterfront paths looking for people who might reflect our ideals of aging. Could I find the quiet strength and fragile grace of

Audrey Hepburn in her last years, the carriage and debonair of Cary Grant as he stepped through his sixties and seventies?

While I found very few who fit the elegant and stylish bill, I found many fascinating people and if I had the time and audacity to ask, I'm sure each would have an amazing story to tell. My thoughts were that these were daytime outings in informal settings and most people wouldn't feel the need to be styled when picking out organic beef or emu oil.

I must confess my take on stylish baby boomers had more to do with discretionary income, free time and shopping prowess than anything else. I thought capturing images of the people at this event would be like shooting pictures on safari: more about reproducing the image in front of me rather than trying to understand and capture the essence of the spirit behind.

As the day came closer I started to think more about what I might expect. On one hand, I wanted there to be people who had embraced their inner style and would show up every bit the diva or divo. On the other, I was nervous I might not be able to capture the essence of their style when confronted by it.

The Kelowna BC venue called Arte Functional, a

Just For Fun





gallery space in The Factory, was a sea of textures and sensory experiences. Along with this active art gallery, the building housed other design and production companies that created flooring, walls and kitchens; each in their own right a creative endeavor. The floors were exotic woods, wide planked and of different shades and a smooth grounded feel that only quality wood and tight fit will deliver. There was liberal use of concrete, metals and plenty of curves to offset the angles. Large visual presentations adorned the walls of different samples on both floors. Lighting, both natural



and electric coaxed out the contrasts. Interspersed were pieces of creative art that ran from oil and acrylics, to sculptures, metal creations and pieces made from hand carved bone. Between rooms on the ground floor was a small kitchen that hid a well-used espresso machine, plates of appetizers and subtle lighting that made you feel as if you were going through a passageway from one world to another.

Guests began to arrive. Each brought a new element to the venue: a glimpse of fishnet; arms adorned with bangles and bracelets; bold polishes; not so hidden tattoos; a flash of white hair crowning tanned faces and a pink chiffon 'princesses' dress matching the polish and lipstick of the princess. I found myself walking between floors and rooms with more images than time and ability.



A small group wanted to walk across the way to do a quick shoot at the Kelowna Art Gallery with a large piece created by the Arte Funktional proprietor and her son. So off we went: a stylish group of ladies, an elegant gentleman and me behind the lens. As we walked along the street, I trailed hoping some separation would help me capture what lay within the fashion, a whiff of who these people were behind the clothes. Style was one thing, attitude completely dif-

Top: Naramata artist, Marianne Meyer, shares her work  
Middle: savour  
Above: joy Is In The Air

ferent... or so I thought.

One of the great benefits of shooting candid rather than posed images is that you get to see people when their guard is down and experience those small moments when the people they really are, come rushing out for a



Top: Let's Dance  
Middle: Seize the Moments  
Above: Forever

second or two.

You get to talk to people in a way that breathes honesty and vulnerability, it's difficult to keep one's guard up when pirouetting, jumping and doing a Bollywood number in an art gallery amongst people you barely know.

With our impromptu shoot done; we headed back to the main event. This time, I had a chance to talk to my entourage and get to know them a little better. I realized these weren't just costumes or showpieces; they were extensions of who they really were. I saw trepidation, boldness, sexiness, elegance, teasing, and old-fashioned modesty all there at the same time.

As we spoke more, a quiet confidence and sureness emerged that I hadn't noticed earlier: qualities only age and experience bring about. This was a group of women who were comfortable with where they had arrived in life, their feelings about the world and themselves, and a confidence that they belonged exactly where they were.

As I walked beside the princess, I was enchanted by the absolute joy she saw around her. I asked if she was this way every day and she said, "Every morning when I get up, I ask myself, where are the treasures, where will they be today?" And with that she dashed off across the walk, pink fairy dress floating in the wind to stand beside an exotic yellow convertible. "Could you take some shots of me in front of this car, I always loved yellow cars."

I realized at the end of the evening that creativity isn't only about being talented, and aging isn't only about getting old. Creativity is mostly born from curiosity and humility; a willingness to know something besides ourselves and to experience things for the first time, even if we've already been there.

Aging as a word, is just the physical manifestation of time on our bodies.

Creative aging is what happens when we embrace the people we are and will become each day; when we look out at the opportunities before us, when we find ways to give expression to the person we are inside, for the benefit of the world around us.

Born and raised on the coast, **Jeff Stathopoulos** lives in Kelowna, BC with his wife Tanya, their two university-bound daughters and canine kids. Beyond art and career, they travel extensively, garden without surrender and read insatiably. Art for Jeff, whether it's photography or the written word, is a medium to isolate perspective of everyday things; a way to interpret and see them anew, unrecognized - as if for the first time. Jeff can be reached at [j.stathopoulos@icloud.com](mailto:j.stathopoulos@icloud.com).

# OPENING TO FEAR

## THE ART OF DARING GREATLY

**Lisa Lipsett**



“I have been absolutely terrified every moment of my life - and I’ve never let it keep me from doing a single thing I wanted to do.” -Georgia O’Keeffe

Much like being lost in a dark forest or unexpectedly finding yourself bobbing in the middle of the ocean, drawing and painting over time puts us face to face with our fears revealing their many disguises and forms. If they seduce us they can easily limit our creative growth and cause us to even block or abandon our creative practice altogether. However if we can find a way to carry on nonetheless, our strength, resilience and capacity for awe, love and trust in our creativity are nourished.

In other words creating over the long term requires a courageous commitment to vulnerability so that we may, as author and social researcher Brene Brown says, dare greatly. The courage to be vulnerable involves balancing fear with opening our heart.

“Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, courage, empathy and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability and authenticity. If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path.” -Brene Brown.

Natural disasters, war, famine, violence, alienation, poverty, environmental destruction, economic instability and the predicted “end of the world” bathe us in anxiety and fear. We live in a culture of fear.

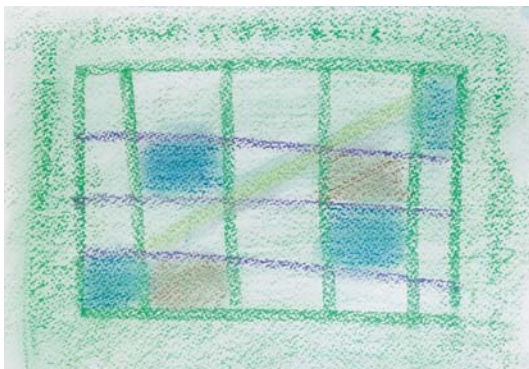
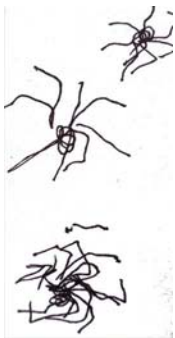
Being afraid to create is much the same as fear experienced in daily life and akin to the fear we sometime feel when in the wild. Fear devours our energy if we let it.

Painting is not only way to explore fear and vulnerability in general, but also helps us move through our unique personal limits. For example, after years of abandoning my creative self, when I first began to draw and paint, fear of imperfection and self-exposure steered me away from creating recognizable images. Instead of accurately representing, I wanted to flow with the colours and revel in the moving rivers of line and hue and kind of hide. Yet over time, spontaneous creativity paradoxically led me back to the fear of clear shapes and beings I originally felt so exposed by. By layering colour over colour, chaos eventually became beautiful starbursts, and faces, then wings filled large sections of paper. In time I was led back face-to-face to my fear of being seen. I had no choice but to embrace and be embraced by my work.

When working through a fear of nature in general or a more

Bottom: tension and fear

Bellow: spiders- maybe overlay so crawling on text??)



Fear of large open spaces: the blank page terror—how can I ever fill it? Fear of quiet stillness: fear that there will be nothing there Fear of the dark: the dread of browns and blacks Fear of closed-in places: fear of staying in the lines, is the page too small to hold me? Fear of being seen by a creature: fear of exposing self in images Fear of getting lost: fear of not knowing what to do next Fear of trusting self: fear of having no plan Fear of being vulnerable: fear of disappearing into the art Fear of being devoured: fear of going crazy Fear of pain: fear of opening a wound and not being able to close it Fear of death: fear of losing self in art-making Fear of unpredictability: fear of letting go Fear of being alone: fear of being abandoned because of images created Fear of having to change plans: fear of difficult transitions Fear of making a mistake: fear of making an ugly mess Fear of intimacy: fear of losing self Fear of coming back to civilization: fear of coming back to regular life.....



quiet and stillness **large spaces** darkness closed-in spaces **being seen** getting lost **trusting intuition** having no plan revealing self being vulnerable embracing impermanence being soothed **being alone** difficult transitions **making a mess** making mistakes intimacy **wild beasts** pain unpredictability death **coming back to regular life again**

Top: fear block

Middle: push/pull

Above: open to fears

specific fear of say spiders, snakes, thick dark forests, or deep water, we can experience spaciousness through painting because we invite the source of our fear into our lives in a safe way. When we open to, and give our fears a place to reveal themselves, we also uncover inner resources. Painting becomes a way to explore, giving fears an arena for expression without direct consequences. In this instance there is a therapeutic aspect to painting.

The following are a few of the many fears I have encountered while painting. Each has a corresponding nature-based anxiety in red. I find it fascinating how creative fears and nature fears are really one and the same. Which of these fears have you experienced in your art or while in nature?

When in the grip of fear whether while painting or in a wilderness setting, the question to ask might be, “Am I OK, fully alive and present in this moment?” Our mind may be scrolling horrible scenarios yet at the same time our body could be saying, “This is so peaceful, this feels so good.” What is important is not what could happen, or what has happened in the past but rather what is happening in this moment. Resting our mind on our hand strokes, on our breath, on a colour, on the shape and form on the page while painting help to keep us fully in the present moment. Art making becomes transformative when we can face our fears head on. It enlivens, balancing fear with love if we let go and trust the process. Soon new habits, fresh thinking and a renewed full range of feelings develop. We come to know a separateness between fear and ourselves. Our painting practice can be a safe container for our exploration.

“We have a word for fear of the wild which is sacred. That word is “awe” (from which we also get the words “awful” and “awesome”). Awe is about chaste fear, healthy fear. Not a fear that freezes us or shrinks us into non-action or addiction

or defensiveness or denial, but a fear that invites us to stretch and grow and trust.” Matthew Fox

Look at how just a simple rewording or rethinking of the earlier list of creative-nature fears reveals many opportunities for opening and growth. Fears transform into challenges to stretch into and embrace. Through drawing and painting we have the opportunity to open.

However, sometimes it is not working with a particular fear while painting that seems important, but rather, even more debilitating, can be the fear of creating that appears even before we pull our paints out. This apprehension is what creativity author Steven Pressman calls the enemy of creativity- resistance in all its trickster guises. Whenever we set out on a long-term course of action to do some good for ourselves, whether creative or personal, we bump up against this equal and opposite destructive force. According to Pressman there is hope found in a commitment to the daily habit of creating even when we are afraid. This leads us to mastery of our craft

and the acceptance and preparation for resistance. It is not that resistance disappears, but rather we have a plan to address it so it doesn't have a chance to gain a foothold. Then we are free to experience higher realms. Pressman states: "when we sit down each day and do our work power concentrates around us, we become like a magnetized rod that attracts iron filings. Ideas come. Insights accrete". Fear softens by daily doing that builds energy, habit, insight and momentum.

"A ship entering a harbour with swelling sails is not doing so on its own but has surrendered to the great power of the wind." —Soesu Yanagi

So like sailing we get stronger over time when we create regularly. Also to best work with fear, letting go of our expectations and agendas while painting leaves us open and vulnerable to where the paints lead. We feel exhilarated and enchanted by the unpredictability of the experience. We are also humbled by a mysterious process we cannot control. There is inherent grace and beauty in letting go to what is trying to be formed through you. We let go of shaping things in our image and open to naturally arising images that shape themselves. We open to the wildness of creativity and no longer take fear so personally.

"The feelings that move us—the frights and yearnings that color our days, the flights of fancy that sometimes seize us, the creativity that surges through us—all are born of the encounter and interchange between our life and the wider Life that surrounds us. They are no more ours than they are Earth's". - Push-Pull: Opening to Fear

**There is inherent grace and beauty in letting go to what is trying to be formed through you. We let go of shaping things in our image and open to naturally arising images that shape themselves.**

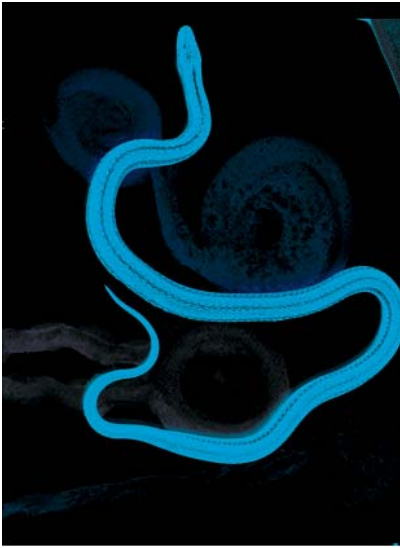
### **David Abram Activity One: Open to Your Fear**

Give yourself a month to explore fear using drawing and painting even though strong fears need much more time to soften. This will be simply a good start. Be loving and realistic with yourself as you dive into this exploration. Quiet down, feel your feet on the ground, and drop down to your breath. Open to times when fear was alive for you. This could be in nature, as a child, in your creative practice, witnessed or experienced violence, in intimate relationships, when seeing the news..... Take time to record all of these. Now pick one experience that seems manageable in the time that you have. Write down everything you can about this one fear- when, where, why, how, who, what.... and feel it in your body. Give each hand a chance to write. Now set an intention to give form and colour to this fear.

Do a drawing by closing your eyes and using both hands at least some of the time. Go slowly and take your time with this. Now paint. Close your eyes to choose the colours and apply the paint. Maybe turn your page every minute or so to see things from a new perspective, maybe begin small and focused then expand out. Or begin around the outsides of the page and move inwards. Maybe add another page and ask the question- what came before? And then a third page that answers- what comes next? What feels natural as you explore this fear? Remember stay with the feeling and let your hands lead.

Step back and take some time to reflect on the process and the image you have created. How does it look? Have you learned anything new? Complete:





snakepaint

“I noticed” and “I wonder” statements. Maybe give the image a chance to speak. Express gratitude.

## Activity Two: Nature Connection and Fear

For session 2 continue your exploration of one fear. Begin by getting quiet and grounded. When you feel ready, review all that you wrote, painted and drew when you explored fear in the last session. Open to what needs more exploration. Maybe you’re curious about an “I wonder statement”. Maybe there is a particular form that calls out for more depth or complexity. Open to an intention for this session and record it with each hand in turn.

Now I invite you to take your painting supplies outside to a sit spot. Settle in, regroup and then open to what draws your attention. It could be a texture, sound, pattern, plant, movement, the wind, a dead leaf, water drips, ants, icicles..... What draws you in?

Spend your time drawing and painting with this attraction. Explore it fully with eyes open and closed, using both hands. How does it smell? Feel? Sound? Look?

When you feel done complete “I noticed” and “I wonder” statements. Then ask the being or a particular colour/form on the page, if it has anything to share. If it could speak directly to you what would it say? Record this with each hand in turn. Record any new insights then express gratitude with an offering or words.

### Resources

Art & Fear: Observations on the Perils (and Rewards) of Artmaking David Bayles & Ted Orland 2001.

Daring Greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent and lead. Brene Brown 2012. Here is her video talk to creatives at the 2012 99U conference <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-JXOnFOXQk&sns=em>

Beauty Muse: Painting in communion with nature. Lisa Lipsett 2009. More strategies and insight into working with fear and vulnerability

The War of Art: Breakthrough the blocks and win your inner creative battles. Steven Pressman 2002, Black Irish Entertainment NY

Artist **Lisa Lipsett**'s work focuses on the transformative potential of hands-on art with Earth in mind. Visit [www.creativebynature.org](http://www.creativebynature.org) to see Lisa's courses, books, blog and fine art to inspire drawing and painting with Earth and heart.

# IN GOOD COMPANY

## Carmen Venturi



Every Tuesday, when scheduling permits, I attend heArt Fit at the Rotary Centre for the Arts. I've been doing so for a year, and enjoy being with people who are experimenting with their artistic expression. It is a public place to share creativity. HeArt Fit is not the solitary act of painting or making pottery in my studio. How did I get there?

In my journey of discovering my artistic "voice", I have taken on new mediums and tried to wrestle them to the ground. Maybe wrestling isn't a good metaphor, as it implies that the paint or clay are fighting back. That is never the case as those materials only exist as potential. I may never call myself a master in my many attempts, but I have been comfortable enough to feel I could dance without looking down.

I started to paint in oils after my then boyfriend bought me a carrying box full of paints. I was acquainted with famous artists through our extensive home library. My aunt had attended an art school and her work hung in our house. My father, a doctor, had a multitude of hobbies; most famous of which, was extracting silver from x-ray solutions to make beautiful jewelry and articles for the house. He tried pottery, glass blowing, wood-working, boatbuilding, metal work, engineering medical devices, and painting. He never missed an opportunity to create. He never threw anything out. He reused and repurposed before it was fashionable. Long passed away, I take his creativity to heart.

I married that boyfriend and followed him around the country. We ended up in Newfoundland, where I applied myself to painting. Growing up on the Blind River in beautiful Algoma, I had developed appreciation for the intersection of land and water. Newfoundland fulfilled its watery promise

Rightr Northern Peninsula Newfoundland





with wharves, lighthouses, coves, beaches, and the people inhabiting those spaces. When I became pregnant for my first child, the smell of turpentine and linseed oil was stomach-turning. I gave oils up and took up watercolours.

There is a lot of debate about whether it is easier to paint in watercolours, oils or acrylics. Growing up in a French Canadian family we used to sing this short verse, which said something about the common view of watercolours at the time.



La peinture à l'huile,  
C'est bien difficile,  
Mais c'est bien plus beau,  
Que la peinture à l'eau

Or, loosely translated means:  
Painting in oil  
Is very hard  
But it is far more beautiful  
Than painting with water



Despite what we used to hear, watercolour technique is not easy. Removing slip-ups are impossible. Good quality paper, brushes and paint are essential to getting the breadth of expression you are aiming for. With no formal training, I purchased books and tapes to guide my efforts. I took workshops. I sold and donated paintings to fundraising auctions. I was commissioned for portraits and for gifts.

Painting is a solitary act. After the passing of my sister from cancer, I could not return to my

basement studio, so I became a Community Development Worker with a health promotion pilot project. At the same time, our family business was having financial difficulties.

This situation eventually forced a move to BC where I took an evening pottery class. My immediate reaction to putting a hand in clay was so sensual, so right. I wondered why I had waited so long. I was learning to dance all over again. For the next 10 years, I immersed myself in pottery. Mastery in clay is a lifetime pursuit. There are many steps in making something beautiful and useful: shaping, turning, drying, trimming, adding-on, imprinting, bisquing, decorating and glazing. Each step has its secrets, its pitfalls; the biggest being the heat and time in the kiln.

Top: Tournesols

Middle: Tenmoku Dishes

Above: Platter with Red Flowers



Evening at Lake Matinenda

Unlike painting, where the act of applying paint is final, the chemical bonds of the clay and glaze can be fickle with startling results. As I became more knowledgeable of the craft, I started using a more painterly approach to decorating my work. The form of the object became less important. The clay became the canvass to brush and to colour. With technique, colours survived the intense heat of the kiln. Unbeknownst to me, I was getting ready to paint again.

Life was about to change once more.

Our consulting business, in which I had a part, was laid to rest. My husband started driving to Penticton for his new job. I no longer had the daily company of my constant companion. This caused me to look for something that I was missing; people. Though I don't mind my own company, I love being around others. I saw a poster for heArt Fit at the Rotary Centre for the Arts.

My first visit was a cautious one even though the welcome mat had been laid at my feet. I sat and watched. I saw someone I knew from our hiking club. I saw people laughing, engaging each other, dancing awkwardly but with abandon with their paints, loving every minute. They gladly and simply put their works up for others to discover. Perspective is everything. Young and old got the same treatment. That was a year ago. I've bought acrylic paints and canvasses. I've loosened up my style from observing others working freely. We are encouraged to be spontaneous. I try.

I will probably always paint representationally, as that is where my heart really lies, but I continue to experiment and open up my heart to creativity. I think I'm finding that voice.

Carmen Venturi [carmenventuri77@gmail.com](mailto:carmenventuri77@gmail.com)

# MY HOME RIVER IS A ROAD FULL OF STORIES

## Harold Rhenisch



This is the second in a series of articles inviting our readers to join Harold on a pilgrimage through the land he loves.

There is power in knowing the names of your home. I come from a place, but without the names it was never home, and so I could never be myself.

I wound up talking about orchards instead, and looking up from clouds of organo-phosphate poisons, to hills of grass. Fair enough. I grew up on one of those orchards, and worked on many passionately when I was a young man, but then I started walking out into that grass and started to see that it had a story far more powerful than the stink of poisons that I called home.

That ruined me for the orchards for which my valley, the Smalqmix Country, is now famous. It was once known for the storied rock monsters of its gorge, the salmon that collected among them, below its falls, and the trail it opened up to the obsidian mines of the north: so many stories!

These spirit animals lurking in the river are similar to the one named Coyote Rock and now flooded a few miles upriver. These waters are Washington's preeminent steelhead stream.

My first home in this country was on an old Mexican rancho, that had been split up to sell as fruit land before World War I. It went bankrupt. By the time I was walking in the dust and wind of this story in 1962, it was a series of orchards only a decade old. I used to watch scorpions mate on the gravel

that we called our front lawn. They're not there anymore. Instead, there are Ambrosias. They are very sweet.

I used to think that the land changes, that it is being developed, sophisticated, and enriched by human cleverness. I just miss those scorpions now, and I'm troubled that the land that gave me identity, morally belonged to someone else. It had been exempted by a man named Frank Richter, before it was legally open for exemption. That was a standard way of doing things in 1863, sure, but it doesn't erase that it was done. Richter

Similkameen Gorge





cobbled it together out of the old Hudson's Bay Company horse ranch, although it really was a part of a settlement at the bottom of Blind Creek called Terrabasket. The water that grew the first, wild Ambrosias, on that old rancho, had originally been piped through Paul Terbasket's pastures. When he started growing apples there, as the Hudson's Bay Company men had taught his family, and which they used to sell to the traders, he was even thrown in jail for using that water, even though the Similkameen Fruitlands' Company, heirs to Richter's old ranching partner R.L. Cawston wasn't even farming the land *or* using the water.

Looking over Frank Richter's second ranch, in today's Richter Pass, towards the sacred mountain of Chopaka, above the Lower Similkameen Indian Band Reserve of the same name.

That's the way the law was in those days, but I don't like it, and I don't like that my deep sense of identity with the land is scarred by this old hurt. I didn't know these legal and ethical wounds when I was two years old, of course, and poking at a rattlesnake with a stick because it was a heck of a lot of fun when it struck back out at me, and I didn't know it when I was learning to be a man in the world



by pruning winesap apple trees in the snow, at my father's side, and then sitting down on the bottom step of a ladder with a cup of thermos coffee mixed with milk in my six-year-old hand. I didn't know that my land wasn't really my father's, or mine, or even Cawston's, who gave the town its name, or even Richter's. I didn't know that my childhood had been stolen from me, long before I was born.

It's not that the land wasn't ours because of a shifting understanding of legal boundaries. No one would dispute our legal ownership of it. It wasn't ours because the land is not yours until you tell its stories to tell your own and walk its land forms to trace out your own face and drink its water to speak to your heart. Those stories include Richter's story now, and the story of the Ambrosia apple, but they include a lot more.

Frank Richter's third ranch, at Upper Keremeos. My father bought this farm, and this house, in 1969. I took this image in 1970, with a Kodak Instamatic Camera.

Naming it has helped me. Take the Smalqmix Country, for instance. It's called the Similkameen Valley these days, although that's not its name. That name was given to it by American gold rush miners storming north out of the Yakama War in private armies in 1858, bristling with guns and three months of ammunition. The name of the valley and its people, Smalqmix, kind of clanged on their tongues. As they broke north through Princeton and passed up the old ochre, flint and obsidian trail of the Tulameen, they liked the sound of that good Chilcotin-Carrier name better, so changed things for the sake of

Top: Richter Pass  
Above: Inglewood



The Enloe Dam

**These rocks are reminders that people have inherited energy from the land. In the stories of these rocks, they are the scat, or droppings, the ancestor of the Syilx and the Smalqmix used to leave on his trails, just as his descendent, coyote, lupis latrans, leaves today.**

a rhyme. That way it didn't sound like a gargle in the throat, although that's just what it is: a gargle in the throat, not a roar of water in a torrent but a coastal river that was born on the other side of a pebble that is the source of the Skagit River of the Washington Cascades, yet unlike its rushing and roaring sister followed a slow, leisurely route through the grassland, among spade-footed toads and dwarf shrews, and a different path to the sea. As for the miners, their name might have been good for a song or two, but I don't want to live in a country that was named by men who went north for gold, shooting any of the land's

people they could get a bead on. That's something that needs to be healed. I'm old enough now that I want to honour the land that gave me breath and bones and vision, with names that speak of it as it is, moving energy from the sun to the earth in its own unique way, rather than names given in plain disregard that there might be more to a land than just the first moment one sees it on one's way through to the gold camps on the Fraser, which, in 1858, by the way, was in the middle of a very ugly war.

The Smalqmix Country is an ancient road. Nch'i-Wàna salmon, the huge salmon of the throat of the land now known as the Columbia River, came as far north as a mid-river spur of bedrock called Coyote Rock. Below it, there were three permanent villages of the Smalqmix, at the mouth of the river, where it joined with the Qawsitkw, the Okanogan River these days, in what a bunch of homesick gold miners in 1859 called Oroville, Washington, after their old gold camp in California.

Coyote rock lies under the Enloe Dam now, built in 1903 to provide power to upriver mines. As for the name, Coyote Rock, heck, there are Coyote rocks all over the place on the Columbia Plateau. There are fields of them at Lone Pine, below Grand Coulee Dam. Houses are even built in their shade. There are a couple on the ancient spiritual monolith now called Peach Bluff in Okanagan Falls. One of them looks down over the Meyer Family Vineyard, where pinot noir grapes turn deep purple in the sun. These rocks are reminders that people have inherited energy from the land. In the stories of these rocks, they are the scat, or droppings, the ancestor of the Syilx and the Smalqmix used to leave on his trails, just as his descendent, coyote, lupis latrans, leaves today. If you want to know what's going on in the coyote world, just bend down with a dog's nose and have a sniff. You'll know.

Okanagan County's Enloe Dam on the Similkameen River is filling with silt. Debates are underway about whether to dismantle it, or refit it for



Chopaka Mountain

increased electrical production. At the moment, it is an insurance liability. The railroad in behind ran up to the roundabout in downtown Keremeos, B.C. until the big flood of 1973 washed out the covered bridge south of Cawston.

The trail through my country was important. It led north to the old obsidian-pebbled stream beds of Anahim Peak, in the West Chilcotin, an outlier of the great Rainbow Volcano. Out of this black volcanic glass, people from as far south as San Diego, as far east as the Buffalo Country, and perhaps as far north as Tete Jaune Cache, made the cutting blades that kept them alive

for 6,000 years on this land. The route picked up ochre and flint in the Tulameen, and oolichan fish grease, a culinary staple and delicacy, from Bella Coola. These trade goods were carried down through my old orchard to Celilo, on the Nch'i-Wàna, and salmon and parrot feathers from Mexico were carried back up. It was that road that the miners of 1858 were following on their rampage.

This is the view of the sacred mountain from the American side of the line.

An estimated 10,000 men came north with guns that year, firing on the Smalqmix and the Sukwnaqinx (today's Okanagan) to the east. It's unknown how many men, women and children who lived on this land died in the onslaught, but we do know that the land was fought for at rifle point the whole way, with many skirmishes and many tragedies, all because people didn't know where they were. They were on the road. They thought they had to take it, when it was there to be walked together.

**Harold Rhenisch** has been writing about the Okanagan for over thirty-five years. His work is based on literature, ancient prayer, myth and spell-craft. After twenty years in the Cariboo and on Vancouver Island, and after two long journeys on the German section of the Camino, he has returned home. Harold lives in Vernon, where he writes the deep ecology blog, [www.okanaganokanogan.com](http://www.okanaganokanogan.com)

Harold may be contacted at [rhenisch@telus.net](mailto:rhenisch@telus.net)



# RETIREMENT'S FORCE

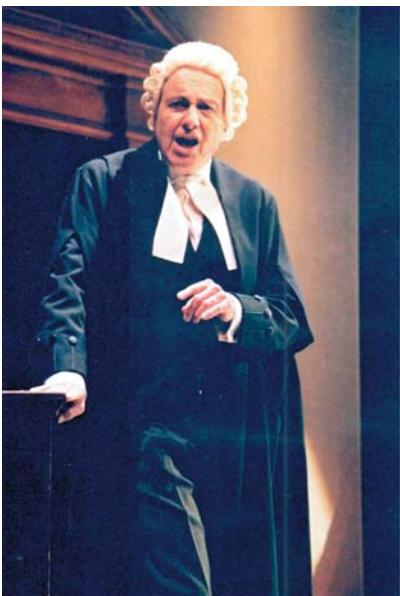


## Carl Hare

Age does not weather, but custom can stale  
 Our infinite variety. The yoke  
 Of our employment need not be the yoke  
 Of our retirement. We make ourselves the leash  
 That constrains both work and play, stifles thought,  
 Hinders the imagination. Age fights  
 Against the body but can beat fruitlessly  
 Against the mind and its rich resources  
 Despite illness, decay and death.

Below: The Rabbi and Zalman, in *Zalman, or the Madness of God*, Saydie Bronfman Centre

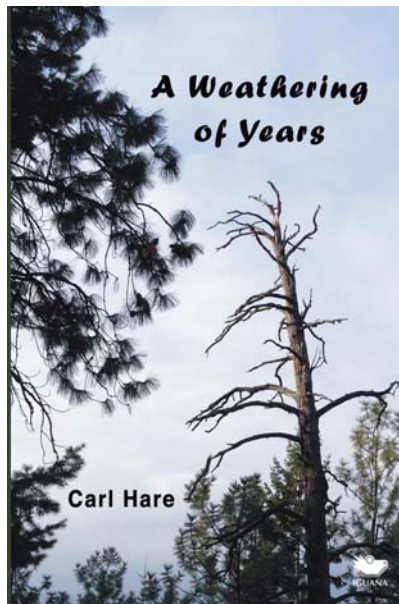
Bottom: Defence Lawyer, Witness for the Prosecution, Western Canada Theatre Company



My profession throughout life has been the stage –

To portray in the flesh imagination  
 Bringing to life the infinite variety  
 Of who and what we are in our muddled,  
 Muddy world. The drive to act, the impulse  
 To direct, and the driven need for all,  
 To create the whole vision of the world  
 Within the script and then its sharing with  
 Others in a hallowed space. And with these  
 To teach, train others in such disciplines.

And then retirement and coming here.  
 Little changed to start with—still performing.  
 Still helping others on the side. But then—  
 An old impulse that slumbered through the years,  
 And started in the dying decade of the  
 Past century, awoke, stretched its muscles,  
 And shoved past the other drives to conquer,  
 To gain ascendancy. To begin with,  
 It was not much different from what before  
 Had occupied my time. First, the creation  
 Of a play, *The Eagle and the Tiger*,  
 But with one crucial difference: a play  
 Composed in *poetry*. And during its  
 Inception, another hint: a Christmas  
 Tree Decorating party at a friend's,  
 One done each year. But this year, suddenly,



Top: A Weathering of Years cover  
Above Clara and Carl on stage together in Gunhild and John Gabriel Borkman, Rotary Centre for the Arts

Twenty minutes before going, the need  
To write a poem on it. Delivered.

And then an avalanche of poems—poems  
In memoriam or in praise of persons,  
Poems that explored the mysteries of craft,  
Of form, of what could be best expressed.  
And then, the major work: an epic poem,  
*On the Breast of the River of Time*,  
Which only now will see the light of day.  
And following that, poems set to music  
By Malcolm Forsyth, a commission from  
The National Arts Centre for his major work,  
And now in process a picture book of poems  
For younger children, a chapbook,  
And coming out this summer, a collection,  
*A Weathering of Years*.

Now eighty-three, my mind still teems  
with thoughts,  
Images, exploration in word, sound.  
An experiment with Book One, *Odysseus*.  
Of the epic: how can a literary work  
Be shown on the web, first as a text,  
Then heard as an audiobook, and then  
Seen and heard? *The Clara Poems*, written  
For my late wife, starting with the sonnets  
I wrote for our anniversaries.

Her short stories, collected, noted,  
Edited. Then, perhaps, a musical  
Started long ago. And...?

Perhaps the secret for this activity  
In retirement is that what transpires  
With the imagination is not confined  
To a job and then a lack of job.  
It is always active, always drives,  
Always sustains. It always lurks in dusk,  
It can be lured into light, or lure you  
Into light. Just let it do so; live with it;  
You will find a happy cohabitation.

**Carl Hare** was awarded the Rutherford Gold Medal in English Honours, 1954; taught at Victoria College, 1955-56; graduated from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art with Honours in 1959; acted in England, then returned to obtain his MA in English in 1960. He has acted professionally in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Quebec and was Artistic Director of Company One. He has taught at the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Victoria, Concordia University, and the University of Alberta, as well as at the National Theatre School of Canada, created the Theatre Department at the University of Victoria and was Chair of the Drama Department at the University of Alberta. For the Canada Council he was the first Chair of the BC/Yukon Division of the Explorations Programme and has been active in a number of its committees. He was also on the Board of the Dominion Drama Festival, a BC member of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, and one of the founders of the National Screen Institute—Canada, as well as Theatre Alberta. He also was presented with the Sterling Award for Outstanding Contribution in Edmonton.

# FINDING THE LIGHT

## Suzanne Valois



I met Rhonda in my Arts for Health class . She was and still is dealing with chronic pain. As a CMA she was a professor at the University of Ottawa up until 2013 when her chronic pain made it impossible to continue teaching. In 2014 she found herself in my class offered through the Ottawa School of Art, having read the course description and found it resonated with her:

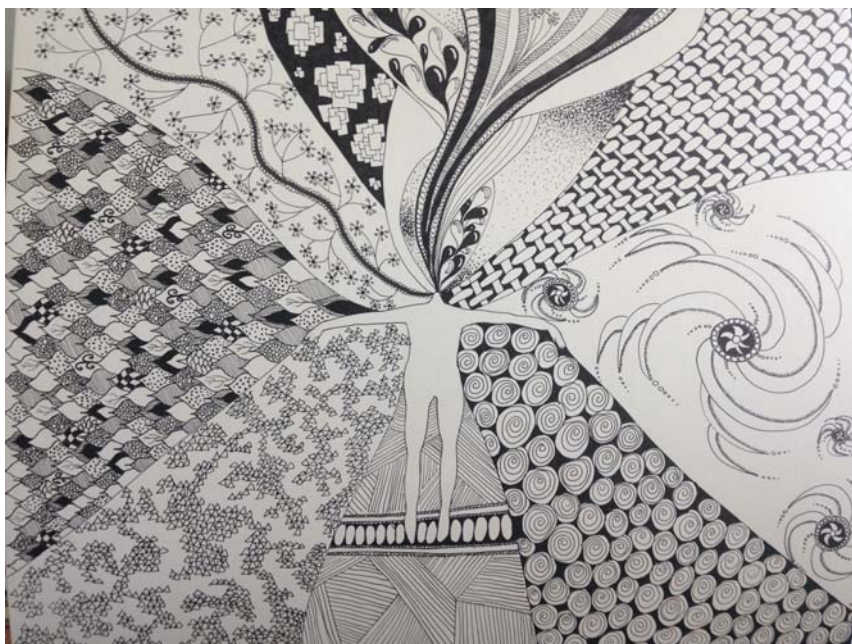
Traditional and alternative medicine is increasingly recognizing the health benefits of engaging in creative activity. This course is designed for those who are seeking a gentle approach to art making in a relaxed environment. Intuitive painting, Zen drawing and more are explored. These are contemplative and meditative exercises with an emphasis on the calming aspect of art making, rather than the technical. Participants come to relax and to de-stress. ‘

By the second class we did an exercise called *I Want*, where participants were asked to write the words *I Want* 100 times and as they wrote out the words to be aware of everything that the words *I Want* implied for them. After completing the exercise, and some group discussion, I asked everyone to cut out the words and build them into a 3 dimensional construction that would represent what had been the predominant thought that stuck with them when repeating the words *I Want* over and over. The 3 D construction that Rhonda produced really struck me in its capacity to embody the mantra *I Want*.

The repetitions of the cut out words and the way they were arranged one behind the other and colored felt like the ebb and flow of water. The whole construction was mounted on a boat like shape that further added to the

3d construction frontview  
3d construction side view





Top: Zentangle  
Above: Ropes

reading of the artwork. (photo frontview) It could also be read as wind moving through reeds of grass.

Both impressions echoed the closeness that Rhonda said she feels to nature. The finished artwork resonated with the never-ending dialogue of wants and needs and illustrated the constant push-pull of the attempt to satisfy our spirit.

Unbeknownst to her, Rhonda was using the same strong visual language to make her statement that marks the work of several well-known contemporary artists. That is when I realized that this person had a lot of untapped artistic creativity. Having

taught countless students over my 30 years of teaching, it was abundantly apparent to me that Rhonda had a very strong innate visual sense. She had a sensibility and sensitivity to put what she felt into a visual format that spoke volumes.

I shared my thoughts with Rhonda and through the following weeks her interest and excitement about making art grew. If she missed a class she would work on the themes at home. Each week she presented to me the work that she had done and each week she came more and 'more out of herself'. It soon became apparent to her that making art resonated so greatly with her that she decided to enroll in the art certificate program of the school.

There were lots of difficulties for Rhonda as she faced some of the strong emotions that surfaced during our sessions.

More importantly though, experiencing these difficult emotions through her work allowed Rhonda to work through them, to see for herself what she was holding inside and to realise that these emotions needed to be heard and addressed.

Particularly telling of the changes that were taking place were the self-portraits that she did. The first drawing of herself looks like an old woman. Rhonda is an attractive 40 something year old and so it amazed me that this is how she saw herself. The portrait had quite an impact on her as well. In her last self-portrait, by the end of the course, she appears as a young radiant woman. The difference attests to a new found energy and enthusiasm for life that Rhonda directly attributes to finding her voice through art.

All of our life experiences shape us and indeed Rhonda's accounting background informs her immersing painting style. It is fascinating to watch her set up her art materials with the fastidiousness of an accountant. Her meticulous attention to detail, along with her calculating placement of objects, people and animals within her landscapes create an altered reality.



Left top: Field  
 Left above: Sunset  
 Right: Couple

Her intent is to explore the notion that our reality is perhaps not always as it seems. Added to this, is the light that dwells within her paintings. The journey that her chronic pain has taken her on, from professional career woman to finding solace in artistic expression has made her realize that now she sees that within our reality there is an underlying light that radiates. (photo field). (photo image 3)

Although Rhonda still deals with chronic pain, life has opened up to her in very unexpected ways through an introduction to an art and health course.

**Suzanne Valois** is a certified expression arts facilitator, artist and founder of The Art of Being Human, [www.theartofbeinghuman.ca](http://www.theartofbeinghuman.ca) incorporating creativity and wellness as an approach to a more insightful and balanced life. She has been teaching art and art for health, in institutions, notably the National Gallery of Canada, in Canadian and International schools and privately for over thirty years working with children and adults of all ages and abilities. She also teaches physicians, residents and medical students strategies for integrating the creative process into their professional work using VTS (Visual Thinking Strategies). As founder and past chairwoman of Arts Health Network Ottawa, the first community partner of Arts Health Network Canada, she is a committed advocate and educator of the arts and health movement in Canada and has presented her work at the Canadian Medical Education Conference and the Michaele Jean Foundation's Art for Social Change.

# OVER 65 AND MAKING ART IN THE OKANAGAN



## Renata Kerr

There seems to be a lot of talk of Creative Aging, or Sage-ing, these days. The concept is building momentum worldwide. For those unfamiliar with the term, Sage-ing describes the act of approaching aging as a journey of deepening wisdom, continued learning and expanding possibilities.

To me, this approach to aging is a natural extension of living life in the moment, filled with gratitude and awareness. It involves an intense curiosity. As an artist, I rely heavily on intuition and spontaneity in my paintings. My work involves trusting myself and the process of creative spirit. I find that this way of working helps me to maintain my sense of self and my well-being throughout the aging process. I believe that anyone who honours their creativity and allows it to manifest itself authentically – be it through painting, music, writing or other disciplines – is well on their way to cultivating a rich and meaningful life. Creative expression is healing, and is vital to healthy and productive aging.

Because of my interest in the Sage-ing concept, I am eagerly looking forward to an upcoming exhibition of senior artists, all 65 years of age and older. The exhibit, entitled *Catch the Light – Luminescence + Art*, is being launched at the ARTE Funktional Gallery in Kelowna, BC, under the expert curatorship of Carolina Sanchez de Bustamante. It will kick off the initiative for the 2nd Annual Creative Aging Day in Kelowna. The participants are well-established and well-respected Canadian artists including David T. Alexander, Robert Bigelow, Leonhard Epp, Ann Kipling, and Mary Smith-McCulloch. Each has exhibited widely throughout North America, Europe and beyond.

What is interesting to me is that, for the most part, these artists do not approach their work any differently, now that they have reached a certain age. Certainly, their experience affords them a certain confidence, allowing them to experiment and make bold strokes, knowing intuitively that their work will guide them in the right direction. Still, they are not content to rest on their laurels after having achieved a certain status; rather, their innate curiosity keeps them engaged in the process of creating. Their eagerness to learn new things has never diminished.

As well as their own passion for learning, they also enjoy sharing that knowledge with others. They continue to be involved in teaching, whether it be through mentor-ship, giving workshops or by lecturing in a formal

**Creative expression is healing, and is vital to healthy and productive aging.**



Kootenay-Blues-Once-Again-monoprint-  
20Wx16H

academic setting. It has been important to all of these creative individuals to pass their wisdom and experience on to others - a true legacy for future generations.

The following are some thoughts from the artists, in their own words:

### David T. Alexander

I grew my first beard recently and it turned out to be white and some friends said I look like other people they knew or saw. I drew the line when one friend suggested I look like Kenny Rogers, kinda. Aging has never been much of a consideration and Kenny Rogers is much older anyway.

I see a different person in the mirror about every 10 years and am mildly interested at how my features have changed. I know that because of aging my art too looks different at certain times throughout almost 50 years of art making. The changes have happened and have been accepted by me as, I think, I change my mind and try to learn something new all the time. The constant in my art life has always been change and I think that it is the best for me. The constant for me is that I can be found making art, every day and thinking about it as well in my spare time. It is what I do. It's a lifestyle and I feel privileged to be able to partake in it and I can't take it for granted.

Experience, as a daily event regardless of being large or small, is the consistent window to my understanding of my work and existence as an artist.

Time, wisdom, analysis and worth of influence allows an artist to make brave moves that make their work relevant. The artist who does not quit is given more time and hope to create.

David T. Alexander studied at the Vancouver Art School and at Langara College before graduating with a BFA from Notre Dame University. In 1980, he moved to Saskatoon to obtain his Master's degree while researching in New York, London and Paris. His international exhibitions have allowed him to explore the world, giving lectures along the way.

His signature landscapes and waterscapes called "Wet" represent his trajectory of forty five years in painting and drawing using striking colours and spontaneously dribbled application. David's art is in many public, private and corporate collections throughout the world.



Crossroads-acrylic-15Wx20H

## Robert Bigelow

I am who I am and I do what I do because the person I am does what I do. As an artist I feel that the greatest challenge is to know thyself. We live in a world that is artificially programmed by the mind controllers - social engineers with an invasive agenda. They shape our thoughts, beliefs, actions and in-actions; they are able to do this because they control the mass media in its entirety.

The arts (visual arts, music, theatre, creative writing, etc...) give us a platform to oppose this drift into compliance. The arts provide a refuge for free-willed individuals who are unwilling or unable to comply with mass indoctrination and acceptance of conventional behaviour. With the right orientation (noncompliance), art provides us with a full spectrum vision of infinite choices. We should never allow ourselves to be satisfied with the limited choices dictated by the status-quo.

My research and work originates from a higher source within myself, my mind control centre is internalized. I am one, not the many. The crowd within has been purged. I can go deeper, I have greater clarity and encounter more unforeseen opportunities in the spirit world than would be possible in the physical world. I would much rather be misunderstood and offer quality expression than to plagiarize the commonplace and be validated for it.

The practice I have adopted is automatism. When employing automatism, or intuition, as the mechanism to create art we have to clear our head of all preconceived notions altogether. We have to allow the hidden hand to direct us, we have to become a willing partner in this tacit agreement of non-interference as the image is extracted from the beyond. When the image becomes what it wants to be, then it is finished. This is not an exact science and there are no step-by-step instructions as to how the process unfolds. Over a lifetime I have been exposed to a vast selection of roads to go down and I have always chosen the one that I most resonate with.

Robert Bigelow was born 1940 in Los Angeles, California. He graduated in 1967 with a BFA (Major in Painting) from the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles. He taught painting, drawing and lithography in Western Canada from 1967–1971 at Simon Fraser University, Capilano College and the Vancouver School of Art (Emily Carr) in Vancouver, BC and was a guest lecturer at the University of Calgary in Alberta.

Robert worked as a printmaker from 1971–1978 for prestigious American print houses such as Gemini G.E.L., Tyler Graphics, Cirrus Editions, Petersburg Press and the Tamarind Lithography Workshop. In addition to collaborating on print editions with major artists of the day, Robert worked closely with Robert Motherwell during a position as Motherwell's Connecticut studio manager from 1975–1978.





Behind-the-Moon-web-454x600

Returning to Canada in 1978, he worked until 1995 as Associate Professor and Associate Dean at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Concordia University in Montreal.

Robert's works have been collected by museums and corporations throughout North America.

## Leonhard Epp

As well as being an outstanding potter, Leonhard Epp is best known for his expressionistic figurative ceramic sculptures, which focus on actions of individuals within the context of global existence. Despite a strong sense of critique of social existence, Epp modestly positions himself to "hold the mirror" and articulate his concerns without being overtly righteous.

The central focus of his work is the description on excesses of contemporary culture presented through the portrayal of themes of solitary over-consumption and self-gratification that are subversive to historic and cultural values. The artwork is executed in a satirical tone that mixes a critical attitude with wit and humour.

In his artwork, Epp explores the boundaries of social narrative, leaving us with a critical reflection of ourselves that is not easily dismissed or forgotten.

Leonhard Epp is a senior Canadian artist born in Germany in 1932. He graduated as a Sculpture Major in 1960 from the Vancouver School of Arts. Epp was a professor in sculpture and ceramics at Vancouver School of Arts from 1962–1972 and at Kelowna Okanagan College from 1974–1976. He lives in the countryside in Falkland, BC.

He has had one-person exhibitions at the Vernon Art Gallery, the Kamloops Art Gallery, the Kelowna Art Gallery, the House of Ceramics in Vancouver and Bau-Xi Art Gallery in Vancouver.

Leonhard's work can be found in various corporate, public and private collections in Canada.

## Ann Kipling

Ann Kipling works exclusively on paper (in drawing, printmaking or with ink, pencils, pens, pastel and watercolours). The lines of Kipling's drawing capture something of the essence of life. Her mark-making process reveals energy, concentration and compulsiveness which expresses her inner life and vision.

Kipling explains: "Drawing is exploratory. It defines and clarifies a visual idea. It is also the delight in mark making the magical connection between things seen and described, the direct encounter. When I am drawing from the figure or in the landscape, I am fascinated by the change, movement, energy,



Falkland High Country -pencil-drawing-  
19"Hx25"W

and transformation of form in a seemingly static situation.”

Ann Kipling was born in Victoria, BC in 1934 and studied at the Vancouver School of Art in 1955, and graduated with honors in 1960. Kipling has lived for the last thirty-seven years in the countryside, near Falkland, BC.

She has had one-person exhibitions at the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, the Kamloops Art Gallery, the Kelowna Art Gallery and the Vernon Art Gallery. Her work has been included in exhibitions at the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, the Winnipeg Art Gallery and National Gal-

lery of Canada in Ottawa.

She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate, Emily Carr University, Vancouver, recognizing her contributions to the Canadian artistic landscape. In 2004 she was awarded the Audain Prize, British Columbia Visual Arts Award for lifetime achievement.

Ann’s works have been collected by museums and corporations throughout North America.

## Mary Smith-McCulloch

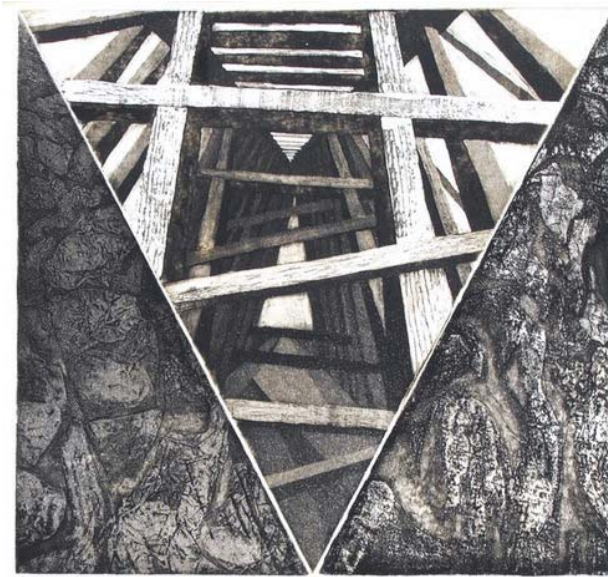
Other than my own reflection in the mirror, I have not observed the impact of time on my artistic viewpoint or art practice.

My work explores and investigates the relationship of archetypal forms and structures present when man intersects with the land. I continue to focus on two areas of investigation, one, my continuing interest in western civilization and its layers of history and two, the Okanagan Valley where I reside. I use my etching press as my primary tool for making my prints whether they are monoprints or intaglio based.

Mary Smith-McCulloch was born in Ardrishaig, Argyll, Scotland. She completed her D.A. (Printmaking), Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow, Scotland, 1964 and her Dip.Ed (Art Education), Glasgow, Scotland, 1965. She now resides in Kelowna, BC.

From 2005 to the present she has been Professor Emeritus, Department of Creative Studies, Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies, UBC-O.

Mary’s work has been exhibited extensively in many solo and group exhibitions throughout North America, Europe and Australia, and her art is in many public, private and corporate collections throughout the world.



Under-the-Trestles-Etching-aquatint-  
18.5Wx17.5H

*Catch the Light – Luminescence + Art* is on display until July 24, at ARTE Funktional, located in The Factory, #2 – 1302 St. Paul Street, Kelowna, BC. The gallery is open Monday to Saturday from 10am–4pm. For more information, please visit the gallery’s website at [www.artefunktional.com](http://www.artefunktional.com)

As part of the 2nd Annual Creative Aging Day on June 19, ARTE Funktional will be presenting an outdoor painting demonstration. Senior artist, Barry Rafuse, will mentor and paint with 19-year-old emerging artist, Anna Anderson, a student at the University of Victoria. The two artists will meet for the first time on that day, and will team up to paint a large abstract canvas together. As well, the public will be encouraged to try their hand on a large collaborative painting which will be set up nearby. I’m very excited to be part of this creative event and to be

facilitating the group painting. This promises to be a fun and innovative experience, one which will celebrate the important act of sharing knowledge and creative spirit.

After graduating from the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) in the 1980s, **Renata Kerr** had a successful career as a graphic designer in Ontario and Europe for 25 years, specializing in corporate design. Since moving to Kelowna, BC in 2009, she has rediscovered her love of painting and the opportunity it provides for creative expression. She is an Active member of the Federation of Canadian Artists (FCA) and continues her artistic journey by participating in various courses and workshops given by prominent Canadian painters. [www.renatakerr.com](http://www.renatakerr.com)

**ARTE**  
funktional

[www.artefunktional.com](http://www.artefunktional.com)

# UNDER THE RAINBOW



Top: she harvests the grapes  
Above: she weaves the vines

## Annabel Stanley

I love hiking, my husband says hiking is code for a long walk – my dogs love long walks!

It is thanks to this passion that I found a special vineyard I now live on. About 8 years ago I drove up Bartley Road in West Kelowna to hike the McDougall Rim and I saw a most magical old barn and a house surrounded by 2 acres of Vineyard up for sale”BY Owner”.

Upon enquiry I discovered an elderly couple who had loved and lived there for over 30 years but the labour full days were catching up on them and they needed to move to a less demanding residence. Initially they posted the acreage with a realtor but his customers were wanting to rip out the grapes and change the valley’s agricultural charm so they withdrew and decided to choose their buyer. This how I met Fred and Mieke Somer. Mieke is a talented artist and paints beautiful watercolours, she was diagnosed with M.S. in her early 50’s but her determination to continue to move her body as best as she is able finds her still painting in her 80’s.

My knowledge of grapes and a wish to continue Fred’s legacy of producing grapes and my husband, Grant’s, talent for winemaking (Currently the winemaker at 50th Parallel and formerly of Quails Gate Estate Winery) got the thumbs up and so we scabbled together every penny we could find and our offer was accepted. We rented the house out for 4 years before we were able to move in but in the meantime I came up every day to work the vineyard- Pruning, shoot positioning, lifting wires, watering, spraying etc until finally harvesting every year. Mieke and Fred are welcome visitors because really it is now “our” Vineyard and I value their advice and friendship.

I also weave sculptures from the vine canes giving workshops on site and sharing my creativity.

## From a participant:

“Annabel is such a loving, unique, real and naturally beautiful young woman and she glows in this setting where the original owners planned everything, perfectly in accordance with sun and views.

I love hearts that symbol of universal love and was very excited to be in this workshop. There were 8 of us. 5 people were making the globes and 3



three of us were making hearts. Each globe and heart became individual and unique. I imagined comparing what I was doing to life. When we were all sitting around forming our beautiful sculptures, I thought of the days when women got together and to knit or spin or weave. I thought of that feeling of comradeship that comes even when no one was talking. I loved the feeling of all of us being together in this amazing, peaceful, creative setting. I imagined the original owners feeling our energy joining with the joy Annabel and her family have found in this beautiful spot.” Rose Sexsmith

Fred and Mieke have become a little less mobile, but when I have time I love to visit them at The

Dorchester to share news, bring them raspberries from their old garden, elderflower cordial from the tree that Mieke planted, and wine and to thank them for the legacy I am lucky enough to be endowed with.

**Annabel Stanley** is a local natural Sculptor, her materials include vine canes, Dog wood, Willow, Moss and other materials to give a natural vibrant effect. Her work can be viewed on her website [www.annabelstanley.com](http://www.annabelstanley.com) or she can be contacted 250-769-1206

Top left: Under The Rainbow  
 Top right: they passed on their dreams,  
 Fred and Mieke Somer  
 Above: Vine weavers with heart



# OKANAGAN MEN'S SHED

## Ed Bownes with Art Post



The Okanagan Men's Sheds Association (OKMSA) is a special community for men – what? I needed to know more, and this is what I found out:

Men's Sheds is described as: "A community-based, non-profit, non-commercial organization that is accessible to men and whose primary activity is the provision of a safe and friendly environment where men are able to work on meaningful projects at their own pace in their own time in the company of other men".

However, before I get into the really good stuff about it, let me share a few details about me at this sage-ing stage of my life, so you will see the connection and optimism this group generated in me. I am one of the numerous "later life" men in Kelowna, many of whom moved here with their wives, or on their own, leaving behind a very busy life, friendships, commitments, busy-ness, etc. to take advantage of the unique lifestyle and gorgeous Okanagan landscape. You know, "on golden pond" kind of thing.

Along with this alluring concept sometimes comes a darker side of life that envelops many men – a very private onset of being without their usual sense of purpose, a sense of aloneness and inactivity; sometimes depression, apathy around not finding suitable options or activities of interest, lack of confidence, avoiding getting involved in some meaningful way, not having their comfortable workshop or "toolkits" where they could fix or make things or just putz around or hang out with a friend.

Having lived with my wife Edna for 48 years, I can tell you I am conscious of how easily women connect and share their stories so readily and honestly. It is also a known fact that women tend to live longer, in part by being able to utilize the warmth and connection with other women, minimizing the internal stress and some of the harmful "darkness" mentioned earlier. For me, changing or repurposing something or developing some way to craft a thing of beauty and enjoy a sense of accomplishment is vital to how I feel at the end of each day and encourages me to look forward to the next.

Synergies and common links to interests, activities and opportunities relative to Sage-ing and Creative Aging appear to be ever-growing fodder for a healthier and happier life in the Okanagan. We are experiencing and enjoying the benefits that come with awareness, and an engagement that stimulates our creative juices. That came most recently for me with my introduction to Men's Sheds. Through my connection with heART Fit, a collaborative and mutually supportive, spontaneous process painting group, and in preparation for Kelowna's 2nd Annual Creative Aging Day on June



Top: coffee meeting  
Above: building cabinets

19th, I was introduced to Art Post who has been actively working to launch Men's Sheds in Kelowna since 2012. It's wonderful when a person can simply be connected to an organization or persons who help facilitate the rejuvenation of spirit, purpose and wellness in a man.

Art and I spent a couple of hours in my garage workshop where he shared how he got involved and how the organization has evolved to date. He was initially inspired when a family member in Australia, who had found himself alone, was put in touch with Men's Sheds Australia; he was able to find new purpose. Often for a man the question arises, "what am I going to do when I have to move to a place where there is no workshop?" Art was prompted to act and reached out to international sheds for information, guidelines, start up operating plans and approvals. In July of 2013, OKMSA received registration as a non-profit society in BC and today has about 15 active members in Kelowna. In July of 2014 the organization applied for a Federal New Horizons for Seniors Grant to establish a pilot Men's Shed in Kelowna. The grant was approved for start up mid March 2015. OKMSA has participated in a UBCO webinar, with UBC MD&S Network and UMB on a national Men's Sheds project. They have developed their own web site with a registered domain

[www.mensshed.ca](http://www.mensshed.ca) and are currently involved with UBCO students in development of an improved web page.

Amazingly, Men's Sheds is alive and well in Ireland, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, Manitoba (Canada's first Men's Shed) and now Kelowna. In fact, Art and Wade Bottorff just participated in an international "men's health research initiative" conference in Winnipeg that brought together a number of Canadian men's groups including OKMSA. Researchers and experts from participating countries discussed key components of new research into previously unexplored aspects of the health and wellbeing of men, with emphasis on the transitions through aging and isolation. One outcome of this conference was an increased awareness of these issues and the need to support the development of a shed operation in Kelowna, and hopefully other future places in BC. Kelowna and the Okanagan have one of the highest densities of seniors in Canada with a corresponding incidence of isolation, depression and suicide especially among senior men.

Art and his friends at Men's Sheds have a clear vision of what's needed to attract and support those men in our community who would benefit from such an organization. Their goal is to be able to show a dedicated facility in action, some place where men can be seen working together on projects, having great coffee discussions, sharing stories and mentoring others, learn-



**Top:** scarecrow project  
**Middle:** workshop at Hawthorn  
**Above:** Christmas project

ing how to use new tools, even learning to cook or simply to be in the company of other men for friendship, fun and maybe even to discover a new side of themselves.

OKMSA has been fortunate and are grateful to this point to have had access to two seniors facilities for meeting spaces or workshop areas. Hawthorn Seniors Residence and The Branch 55 Seniors Centre have been generous.

Men’s Sheds participation in community events has led to a developing awareness and interest from senior levels of Government and Health Services, resulting in a donation from Interior Health, a newsletter by the Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors, a meeting with MLAs for the Central Okanagan, a conversation with the Senior’s Advocate for BC, participation in the Better at Home program and two student projects at UBCO in the fall term. On June 19th, Men’s Sheds will be present and available for conversation at the 2nd annual Creative Aging Day at the Rotary Centre for the Arts. Creative Aging Day and Men’s Sheds have a common social community focus - Explore, Connect and Create.

Ladies, sometimes a gentle push in the right direction could mean a world of difference to your man, so don’t be shy in suggesting they reach out to the Kelowna Men’s Shed Association.

Check out their web page and read the links to the other Men’s Sheds around the globe.

[www.mensshed.ca](http://www.mensshed.ca)





# PROFILE

## WHEN PLAYING SCRABBLE IS NOT ENOUGH

### Karen Close

Max turned 95 May 26th, 2015. Happily he is sitting in the garden at Cottonwoods Care Centre in Kelowna BC sharing his drawings with a nephew visiting from Toronto.

Max has a number of health complaints, but in his early nineties he decided to become proactive. At that time a particular discomfort was constantly being cold. He was gaining quite a reputation for his interior winter gear, when he read about dopamine, the magical chemical in the brain that can make you feel and do happy things. Max decided to try and kick start his dopamine and thought playing scrabble might be the answer. With determination he gained quite a reputation for his scrabble skills, and to his surprise soon found that he could enjoy sitting in shirt sleeves while he played. The realization that he and his brain could improve his emotional health and physical discomforts stimulated his curiosity. As he pondered what else might bring him enjoyment, he recalled that in his fifties he had enjoyed oil painting. It was time to see what he could still do; he picked up a pencil and started sketching. Quickly he became engaged, and found genuine pleasure in quiet hours with just a pencil. This was a startling revelation for a former salesman and ardent conversationalist.

Soon Max moved to Cottonwoods where he was fortunate to meet Kellie Schonfeld, a young woman eager to start an art program for residents. Max still claims to be the scrabble champ at Cottonwoods, but he is proudest of his coloured pencil drawings which Kellie has hung along the main hall. There have been both physical and artistic challenges for Max on this new path. He has glaucoma and colour blindness, but his way of seeing gives a vibrancy to his drawings.

He is animated as he talks about what he is creating and recently has moved into conceiving his own abstract compositions.

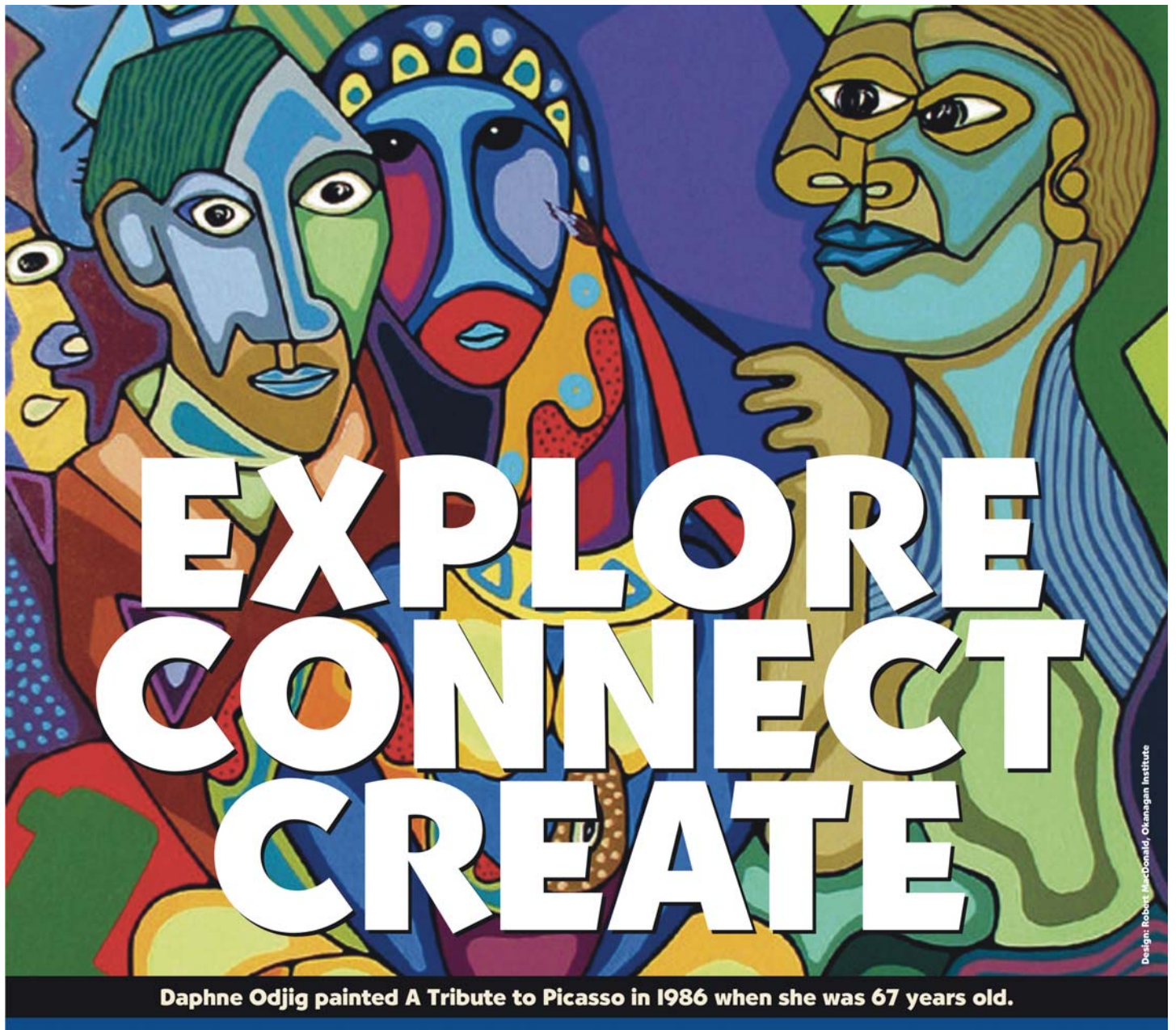
Max's enthusiasm for making art has found an admirer in nationally recognized 95 year old artist Daphne Odjig, also a Cottonwoods resident. Max and Daphne visit and share recent drawings with each other. They have creative practices that make them perhaps two of the happiest residents in the Care Centre.

Left, top to bottom:

- Max and his nephew
- The marks he is making intrigue him
- Mountain vista
- We have something to share

Right: Inside The Boundaries





Daphne Odjig painted A Tribute to Picasso in 1986 when she was 67 years old.

**Creative Aging is a growing movement  
across Canada.**

For more information: [www.creativeage.ca](http://www.creativeage.ca)

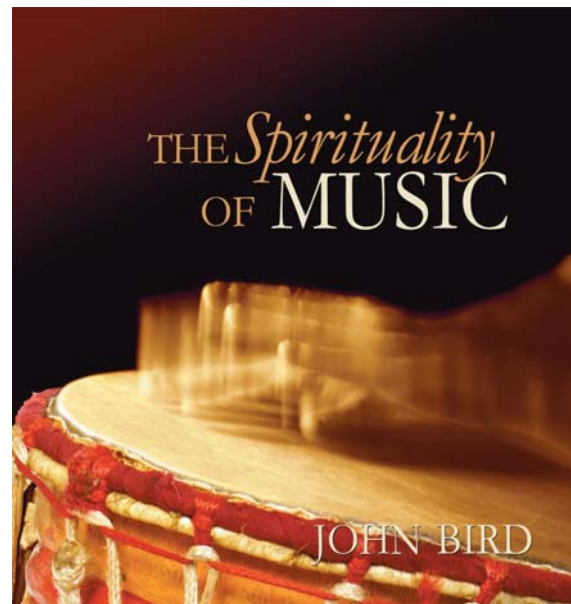
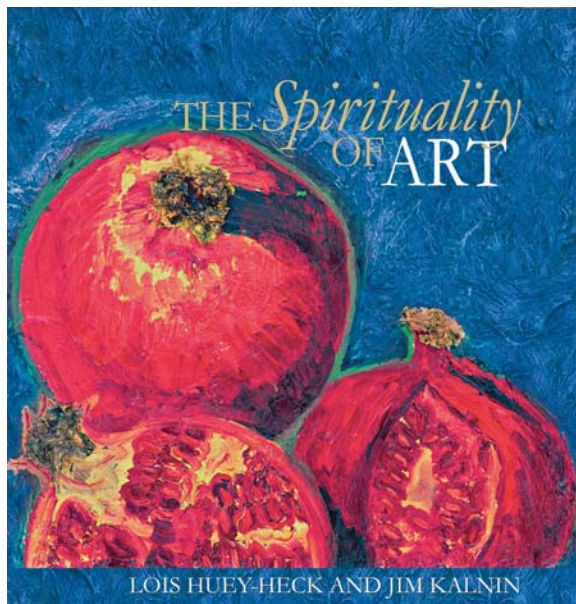
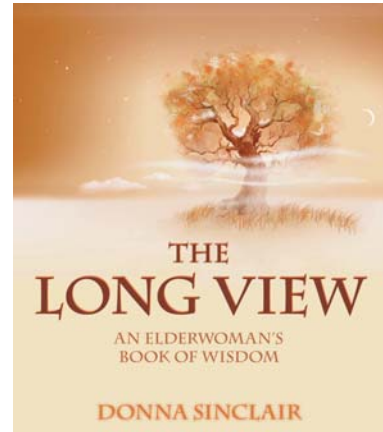
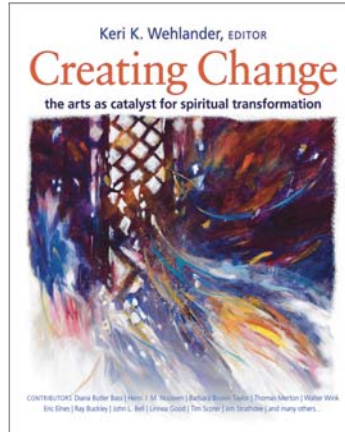
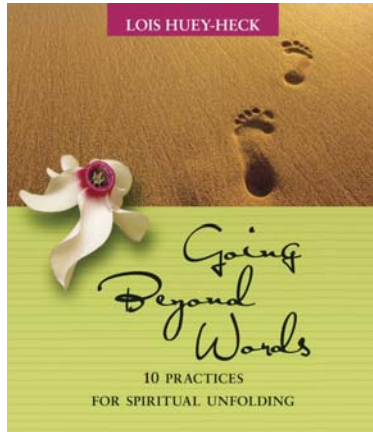
**In Kelowna celebrate Creative Aging Day  
June 19th, 2015**

*"A day-long celebration of your creative life."*

Join us for interactive exhibitions, performances, displays and discussion. Creative Aging is an invitation to harvest the bounty of your life's experience and celebrate the power of the arts to transform, engage, and bring meaning. [www.sageing.ca](http://www.sageing.ca).

# Creative Aging Books

FROM WOOD LAKE PUBLISHING



Wood Lake Publishing's mission, undertaken through publishing, is to retrieve, reclaim, and renew the Christian tradition of living radical and inclusive love. It is committed to continuing its 30-year history of bringing readers and faith formation practitioners unique and accessible resources that nurture, inspire, and challenge.



# SAGE-ING WITH CREATIVE SPIRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE

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

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

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

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