PaperWorks Journal

The Sonoran Collective for Paper and Book Artists Spring 2017 Volume 17.1

Theme for Spring: The Mind of an Artist: Exploration and Discovery

"The more I'm spontaneous--relying on intuition--the more [my work] will be an exact expression of myself."
--Tim Mosman at December 2016 PaperWorks presentation

Understanding the Emotional Echo in My Art

By Stephanie McInroy

Although my work is a visual metaphor for my life, I don't necessarily use symbols or colors to codify specific emotional states, like using blue to represent sadness, or red to signify anger. My process is more about creating a physical manifestation of an experience in my life that is ongoing or intrusive.

My work doesn't contain repetitive colors or shapes that viewers can easily ascribe to certain feelings. And yet, when I look at my art, I see the vestige of my emotional life. When I choose to examine my own work—to "read" its message—it is a familiar feeling and I often smile, recognizing that I revealed something I thought I was keeping to myself.

These visual clues that all of a sudden become obvious to me are, as I said, not really "textbook" examples of emotions that I can often identify in others' work. They are simply personal to me, just as my dreams are personal and unique. I can now converse with a piece of my art and let it speak to me. Sometimes my art speaks more loudly than at other times, but it always does. In some cases the volume often has to do with my desire to hear something again. When I feel or observe either chaos or calmness (minimalism) in my art, I realize it is emblematic of emotional anxiety or a state of calmness happening in my daily life.

My work before my training in 1991 as an art therapist was also consistently personal, subconscious and subtle. It's just that I did not know then that it was an echo, that it was mirroring and repeating back to me my emotional life, and that those art pieces that seemed so unrelated were not. The meaning of the work was always there, like a shadow it could not be shaken.

So while people say I should, I don't often work in a series. Each piece is a complete story and to try and stretch that story into another piece or series rather seems like trying to repeat or direct a dream. Dreams are better left to the subconscious—to roam and invent in ways that are unexpected, unpredictable and boundless.

Anxious Times I

Quieter Times II

Additional image on Page 7

The Helping Hand: Knowledge, Applied With Love

By Krista Neis and Marla Perry

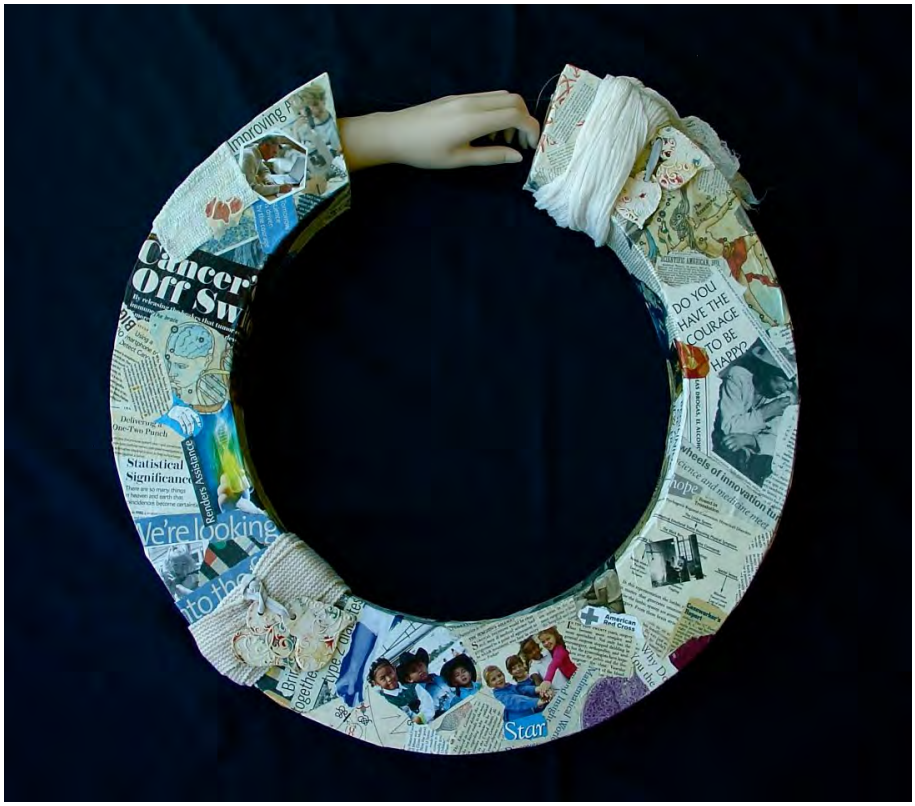
In fall 2014, The University of Arizona Medical Center South Campus gave a mannequin hand to 14 artists, and asked that each provide a work of art for three-month display in their Behavioral Health Center Pavilion Gallery. We were asked to engage with the theme "helping, overcoming obstacles or challenges."

For my sister and me, inspiration came from the many people--from medical professionals to neighbors, family and friends--who were committed to accompanying and caring for a dear friend, Tara, a young mother, on her yearlong journey with cancer.

We worked side by side to put together our homage to Tara's dedicated team of caregivers. Historically, the accretion of homespun remedies, early scientific experiments, advances in materials and technology, sophisticated instruments, labs and research struck us as a way to approach what was to become "Knowledge, Applied with Love."

With a concept, but still nothing tactile to hook it to, I took the hand to Beata Wehr and asked her advice on moving the project along. She gave me several ideas, from shapes to consider to recommendations for glues and final finishes.

Back home, we briefly considered a life preserver as armature. Then a neighbor became engrossed in the story we were trying to tell. He estimated and built the circle base to just the right dimensions. (See Page 3)



The Meditative Practice of Mark Making

By Linda Kern

I spent the last five years drawing with graphite and enjoying the process of getting lost in the nooks and crannies of everyday objects or recording delicate details of nature's remnants. A quiet environment and keen observation skills were my solace. The world may be chaotic and noisy, but drawing always brings me to a calmer state.

What's next, you ask. Now I enjoy the meditative practice—mark making. My go-to mediums are sumi ink and water color.

There is no grand plan, final outcome, or object in mind; instead I let the resulting image direct me. Occasionally, the marked paper or fiber is set aside overnight, then the image beckons for additions or subtraction. Generally the inclusions are handcrafted objects (fiber, wood, metal, paper), decayed or worn over time. The materials seem to possess a mysterious history and untold stories, allowing the observer to fantasize about a journey to their present condition.

The Helping Hand continued from Page 2

I sent Beata a note:

'From used bookstores, we've uncovered plenty of medical reference articles and photos from books and magazines to tear up. An 1871 Peterson's magazine floated our way, and at the upper right side of the circle, we started with these fragile papers that were tiny print health notices to readers.

'We used three different bandages: upper right is cheesecloth gauze (representing 1800s), a stretchy Ace bandage (20th Century), and a square of recently developed hemostatic wound dressing, upper left. All sides look like the front--decided not to try for using words as art or treating the surfaces differently.

'The colored photos of children at the bottom are there because you advised a counterpoint of attention opposite the hand, and I think this worked. Chronology goes clockwise from old technologies in upper right to more recent at left. My sister is a nurse and knew just how to wind the bandages. I don't think we need an artist's statement other than to say we work in paper. What do you think? Thanks for getting us focused!'

Dada Turns 100! Dada Lives!

By Margaret Suchland

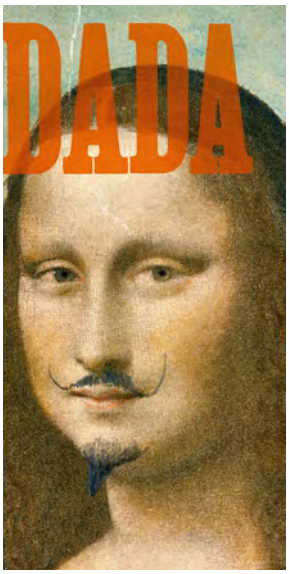
2016 marked the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Dada movement in Zurich, Switzerland and in the celebration of the first Dada journal publication, Cabaret Voltaire, on May 15, 1916.

Briefly, Dada was an artistic and literary movement that began in Zürich, Switzerland. It arose as a reaction to World War I and the nationalism that many thought had led to the war. Influenced by other avant-garde movements--Cubism, Futurism, Constructivism, and Expressionism--its output was wildly diverse, ranging from performance art to poetry, photography, sculpture, painting, and collage. Dada's aesthetic, marked by its mockery of materialistic and nationalistic attitudes, proved a powerful influence on artists in Europe and New York.

Some key elements on Dadaism:

1. Dada was the first conceptual art movement where the focus of the artists was not on crafting aesthetically pleasing objects but on making works that often upended bourgeois sensibilities and that generated difficult questions about society, the role of the artist, and the purpose of art.

2. There is little agreement on how the word Dada was invented, but one of the most common origin stories is that Richard Huelsenbeck found the name by plunging a knife at random into a dictionary. The term "dada" is a colloquial French term for a hobbyhorse, yet it also echoes the first words of a child, and these suggestions of childishness and absurdity appealed to the group, who were keen to put a distance between themselves and the sobriety of conventional society.



Marcel Duchamp, L.H.O.O.Q., 1919, rectified readymade, pencil on reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa

3. Dada artists are known for their use of readymade objects--everyday objects that could be bought and presented as art with little manipulation by the artist. The use of the readymade forced questions about artistic creativity and the very definition of art and its purpose in society.

4. Dada is the groundwork to abstract art and sound poetry, a starting point for performance art, a prelude to postmodernism, an influence on pop art, a celebration of antiart to be later embraced for anarcho-political uses in the 1960s, and the movement that laid the foundation for Surrealism.

Sophie Taeuber, Untitled (Composition Dada, Flat Head), 1920. Oil on canvas on Board

Artists today continue to be influenced by Dadaism. I'm personally attracted to their use of readymade objects and their practice of collage. I often reinvent a found object into a new identity in my artist books and have practiced and enjoyed the art of collage for many years. In making a collage, it is the randomness, playfulness and the unexpected results found when joining unrelated materials that excite me.

Sources: DADA by Leah Dickerson/National Gallery of Art Exhibition/19 February-May, 2006

Calligraphy...As a Path

By Nancy Volpe

The tools—without full attention, become another 'doing' in this art form. The attention and mindfulness of the act of brush into ink and then onto paper, makes the act itself the art and the mark becomes the trail. Slowness is essential—not necessarily the speed of the slowness, but the scrutiny of each precise step. This is the path—this is the practice—this is the art!

From traditional calligraphy characters to abstract paintings to age-old imagery, full attention is the key. As in all meditation and mindful practices, there is quietness and a coming home that leads to a simple joy.

The Children of Dragonfly Village: Art and Hope

By Dragonfly Village staff with Mary Ellen Palmieri, PW liaison with Dragonfly Village

Dragonfly Village provides transitional housing for homeless and low-income individuals and families. The goal is to help people who have a difficult time helping themselves or who have been unable to do so. Residents have the opportunity to participate in activities that will facilitate their transition to permanent housing such as budgeting, earning a GED, and searching for and holding a job. Residents may receive these services for up to two years. Dragonfly Village is part of the Amity Foundation, which focuses on rehabilitation of clients who seek to overcome drug and alcohol dependency.

Children of Dragonfly residents attend school in the Tanque Verde School District and spend some of their after-school time at Dragonfly Village's community center, where they have enjoyed success with school projects using various art materials and supplies over the past year. This has been made possible by the support and generous donations of Paperworks artists. Formalized art classes are in the works at the Dragonfly Village Community Center as well; progress and results will be shared with us as they occur.

The Mind of an Artist

"Creative people can draw parallels between diverse ideas and things, connecting seemingly disparate notions to come up with something else." --Sas Colby, 2014 PW workshop leader.

"I found I could say things with colors and shapes that I couldn't say any other way--things I had no words for." --Georgia O'Keefe

Young artists at Dragonfly Village. Left: "My Grandmother's Flowers" by a 12-year-old girl who remembers a visit. Right: "How I Feel When I Get Up in the Morning," by an 8-year-old boy who does not like to get up.

Paper Surprises Within

By Gretchen Bierbaum

The cover of an altered book should announce to the viewer that there will be paper surprises within. There are many opportunities to carve, paint, fold and glue pages together. I usually create a window with a view of the art on the next page. The most compatible medium for book pages is collage. Layers can be added and subtracted (decollage). Many types of paint do not work on book paper, therefore, I can "paint" with pieces of paper using glue that is archival and does not make wrinkles. I drill holes near the edges of a hardcover where I attach embellishments to add another dimension to the book.

Why I Became an Artist

By Natalia Lebed

Since childhood I wanted to be an artist because I felt that the world of art was magical, attractive, and much more friendly than the world around us. Life being full of surprises, I became a mathematician. However, I soon realized that it didn't matter what difficult circumstances life presented you with, you have to be true to yourself and so I started my new journey – my passion in art.

In my artwork, I try to create a new universe, where people are more beautiful, friendly, and kind to each other. My intention is to capture as many different emotions as people have in their lives and even more, because emotions play a huge role in every decision we make. In particular, I try to capture the powerful language of feelings and the magic energy of life.

In our world of computers and high technology, I use contemporary forms and methods to reveal our inner spirit and true motivation to seek a better future. In my opinion, despite society's advanced level of technological achievement, human beings are still the driving force of everything.

Of course, I live in the real world and communicate with real people, but my art comes mostly from my imagination, dreams, and vision of things. It is my hope that our inner lives, surrounded as they are by high technology, will yet be able to thrive.

Young Lady, Natalia Lebed

Guest Artist Natalia Lebed has exhibited at Dragonfly Gallery, donating a portion of her proceeds to Dragonfly Village. Please see related article, Page 5.

Exploring the Creative Mind Through "Creativity Interviews"

By Helen Walthier

"What is your creative inspiration and process?"
"Do you have routines, exercises or practices to enhance your creative process?"
"What are the major influences that have impacted your work?"
"How do you deal with a creative block?"
"What were your biggest creative challenges and rewards?"
"What advice would you give to young Creatives or artists?"

I conduct Creativity Interviews. These are key questions for the numerous interviews I have conducted over the past few years. They are good questions for every creative person, I believe.

Meeting with notably creative people from a wide variety of professions in their "Creative Space", typically a studio or office, we explore their experiences as creative individuals. We discuss what inspires them, how they deal with setbacks, and how they have grown in their creative pursuits.

These fascinating interviews include conversations with people as diverse as an F-15 fighter pilot instructor, a chef, an urban planner who worked in the Middle East, architects, and numerous visual artists working in a variety of media.

Quieter Times I, S. McInroy (See Page 1)

These conversations reveal common traits and experiences among many of those interviewed. All of the interviews have been enriching and inspiring. They discuss techniques to open the creative flow, and how to address the challenge of a creative block. I hear stories of economic concerns and the glass ceiling. I also hear about the joys of professional recognition and the profound gratification of a creative breakthrough.

Many of these creative individuals describe tenacity, optimism, and often had childhoods rich in creative experiences. However, some overcame repressive or non-supportive childhoods to blossom under their own power. Their stories show journeys taken over the decades that resulted in rich, creative, powerful lives.

At our best each of us is on an expanding creative journey. Knowing tricks of the trade, exercises, and practices can help us to grow more quickly. These people share their stories, techniques and experiences in the interest of helping my students understand their own creative process.

In addition to the Creativity Interviews, I have done broad literature research on the nature of creativity, creativity-testing theories, and exercises to enhance individual creativity. My goal is to share these fascinating lessons with my graduate students, fellow artists, and others interested in developing a robust creative life.

Helen Walthier, MLA is an Instructor of graduate students in Landscape Architecture at the University of Arizona, and offers Creativity Workshops. She has provided Guest Critiques at the University of Colorado, Denver in graduate Landscape Architecture; and she is a practicing artist.

Define Inspiration: Exerting an animating, enlivening or exalting influence

By Deb Hilbert

Inspiration is a funny thing—you never know when it's going to pop up!

I was all set to attend the Women's March in Tucson, on Jan 21, 2017. I had contacted a few friends and made weather-tentative plans to be a part of an historic global women's event.

On the Thursday leading up to the Women's March I read an engaging article in the on-line version of the *Tucson Weekly* written by a recent transplant from Brooklyn to Tucson, who moved here after falling in love with the desert. He wrote about his concern for a fellow musician who had incurred a head injury and concussion and consequently racked up mega medical bills since he had no health insurance. It took no more than an hour to decide that I wanted to help in the effort.

The article invited Tucson folks to attend a benefit concert and sale for Travis Ray Dent, the proceeds of the show and sale going toward payment of the medical bills. My heart was so moved that I quickly contacted the show organizer, Joe Novelli, and asked if they would accept an artist book about the nature of music for the sale. Response was quick and positive—YES, that would be fabulous!

After committing to this project—the book had to be finished and delivered by 6 pm Saturday night, (just two days from Thursday!) I set to work. A recent Creative Circle meeting taught me how to make simple prints carved from Speedy carve material so I set to work and carved a few music motifs.

The Nature of Music

Next, I scoured the 'net to find inspiring quotes related to music and a marriage was made. I decided on a hard cover with accordion folded text block and collaged each page, front and back, with my new prints and quotes.

Meanwhile, I was experiencing a mini mental crisis because by Friday night I realized that I would in no way be finished in time to attend the Women's March. I said a prayer for steadfastness, and feeling renewed, carried on with my task. I felt simultaneously sad, that I would not have the opportunity to attend the March, but very happy and peaceful with my decision to help a brother in need.

On Saturday night, my husband and I attended the benefit concert and sale to raise funds for Travis. Joe, the organizer, was thrilled with the addition of the handmade artist book for the sale, and I was content in the knowledge that reading a random article in the paper had spurred me on to create a new book.

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