

LINES from the League



Letter from the Executive Director

Among the principles that supported the formation of the Art Students League in the summer of 1875, our founders pledged to work for “the attainment of a higher development in Art studies.” As our 140th year is now underway, we continue to pursue that mission with new and evolving programming focused on those who are intent on a career in art.

The League’s professional development initiatives attract new students and emerging artists from around the world. These programs have grown while the League continues to maintain a core offering of affordable studio art education—in the words of the founders—“within the reach of all who are thoroughly earnest in their work...”

The Model to Monument program provides seven selected League sculptors with nine months of training in the public art process to install their monumental sculptures in Riverside Park South and Van Cortlandt Park. This partnership with New York City Parks gives the students an important “boot-camp” experience that qualifies them for future public art commissions, showcases the remarkable talent of League artists in the Parks and in the media, and serves the larger public as befits our role as a major New York cultural institution.

Seeds of the League places League artists as teachers in underserved public schools and New York City recreation centers, and provides scholarships to high school students for summer study at the League. While benefiting 400 young people each year, Seeds also provides teaching experience for emerging artists at the League.

The Teaching Assistant/Monitor Program launched last year also provides teacher training by expanding the traditional role of monitor to that of “instructor in training.” We now have 18 TAs covering 22 classes. The program has been getting overwhelmingly positive reviews from both the TAs and the Instructors.

The Residency at Vyt has now hosted more than 275 artist-residents, who have come from 24 states and more than 30 nations. Some are emerging artists; others are college professors who teach art. These residents speak quite highly about their time at Vyt and carry their experiences with them as they travel the world. Vyt has also helped the League forge partnerships with accredited institutions, including the Columbus College of Art and Design, Syracuse University, the School of Visual Arts, and the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing.

Exhibition Outreach, our longest-running professional development program, shows the work of 200 League artists each year in two dozen exhibitions. League artists have sold more than \$100,000 in work through representation by Exhibition Outreach at the annual Affordable Art Fair.

Of course, all these programs serve to augment the League’s ongoing studio classes—available seven days a week and taught by a wide array of professional artists. I hope you enjoy reading about several of those instructors, including two I personally studied with, as well as personal reflections and profiles of current and former students, in this issue of *Lines from the League*.



Ira Goldberg
Executive Director

Editor

Denise L. Greene

Senior Editors

Helen Dwork
Julia Montepagani
Barbara Szlanic
Thomas Tacik

Copy Editor

Sharon Fass

Design Director

Lilian R. Engel

Designers

Lizabeth Buckley
Mark Tatum

Director of Individual and Planned Giving

Denise L. Greene
denise@artstudentsleague.org

Director of Communications

Ken Park
kpark@artstudentsleague.org

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Executive Director

Ira Goldberg

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Cover image: Pamela Manché Pearce, *Flemish Madonna/American Quilt*, mixed media, 12 x 6 in.

From the Editor

Are artists born or made? That is a question often asked; and Sherry Camhy would probably answer that she was born to be an artist. She was the bane of former League Executive Director Rosina Florio's existence as a little girl until she was hired to teach here. Silya Kiese's path began in childhood with slight curves on the road to fine art. Grace Knowlton might say she was genetically programmed to fall in love with the smells of clay and crayons. And Nicki Orbach, who meandered to the League from science and a succession of boring jobs, might simply answer "yes"—that artists are born **and** made. These artists chose a career in which only five percent of those represented in museums are women and at a time when women were expected to serve their husbands and children. I hope their stories offer inspiration to all women who want to walk a different path.

Each issue of *Lines* introduces you to students, alumni, and teachers who arrived at the League through a circuitous route. From Germany to France; film to anatomy; a PhD in religions to law school; from observing nursing rats to observing lizards; they come to the League. Some start with art and have it scared out of them or they scare themselves with thoughts of starving, but the allure of making something by hand and using it to communicate with others wins out. Mixed media is a common theme in this issue: rock, stone, metal, wood, paper, glass, and glitter. From these complex and varied journeys have come a diverse faculty and student body—all united by a shared desire to create.

Some of our contributors come to us from places of profound pain. Pamela Pearce shares her story of heartbreak and healing, with humor. Marck Webster, a retired New York City policeman, had to be shoved through our doors. Pamela's journey into art re-established a connection to her husband and welcomed her into a new community. Marck used his art to benefit research toward a cure for breast cancer. Unfortunately, many of us have experienced a profound loss, and we are grateful these two people have shared their stories of recovery through art.

This issue introduces "How to See What to See," a series of articles on perception and looking at art. Leonid Gervits enjoyed the National Academy Museum's Anders Zorn exhibition this past spring and writes about Zorn's purpose of preserving and passing on traditions of realism in European painting. He also gives insight into Zorn's compositions. Nicki Orbach covers perception from the points of view of the artist and the art lover. She has long been interested in the exploration of visual perception and how artists manipulate what the viewer sees.

If you have a story to share, I'm here at denise@artstudentsleague.org.

Until the next issue,



Denise L. Greene
Editor

Afterlife

Pamela
Manché Pearce



As my late husband Barre said: “We opened the door, and there was terminal brain cancer and ten months to live.” Calling it a nightmare is too kind, because a nightmare is something you wake up from and everything is OK and back to normal. Neither one of us ever went back to normal.

I was my husband’s primary caregiver in nine different treatment locations. Each day led to a worse one. We learned the alphabet according to glioblastoma: acute nausea; ambulances; anesthesia; auras; bedpans; bedsore booties; begging; blindness; brain surgery; bruises; catheters; chemotherapy; commodes; constipation; dementia; diarrhea; diapers; disinhibition; dry-mouth; fevers; gurneys;

hallucinations; headaches; hospital beds; Hoyer lifts; hysteria; incontinence; laxatives; leg braces; muteness; nausea; paralysis; physical therapy; radiation; rages; screaming fits; seizures; sobbing; speech therapy; sprains; sundowning; terminal diagnosis; UTIs; violence; walkers; wheelchairs; and meds from Ativan to Zoloft.

Barre died, as they say in obit-speak, “peacefully, at home” surrounded by a loved one: me. The nurses, aides, hospice volunteers, minister, delivery people all stopped coming. Golf buddies, former classmates, last minute goodbye-sayers disappeared.

People offered rushed phrases: “At least he’s not suffering anymore; you’ll have no trouble finding a new husband; you had a

great love for 12 years, some people aren’t so lucky; your memories will last you a lifetime; you don’t have to take care of anyone now, you can relax and have some fun; you have such good memories to comfort you; are you feeling better yet?”

I lived in an isolated house at the end of a long dirt road, my driveway, upstate, in rural Garrison. I was afraid at night. My days were a blur of food shopping, sorting documents, administration, housework, car maintenance, and home repairs when all I wanted to do was sleep. Sunday afternoons opened a crevasse of dark memories and endless time.

My after-bereavement group snack was a whole cake or pie from the nearest



“The first class was an out-of-body experience, but entering the League...I felt embraced. I loved the worn mosaic tile, the barefoot model... the smell of linseed oil, and the battered easels.”

supermarket. I ate it with a plastic spoon in the car until I felt sick. I devoured frozen meals in front of the TV: breakfast with Matt Lauer, lunch with Dr. Oz, and dinner with Katie Couric. At 11 p.m., I went to “The Office” for milk and cookies with lead characters Pam and Jim. During the night, standing barefoot in the kitchen, I’d eat practically anything there.

On our wedding anniversary, I cursed Barre out and smashed all our china against the door to his home office. My long golden mane fell out and clogged the shower drain. My eyebrows and lashes vanished. From the back, I looked like Friar Tuck and from the front, like Bette Davis in *The Virgin Queen*. I got fat. The mirror was scary.

Years earlier, I had explored taking a collage class at the Art Students League. One day, something came in the mail from the League. All I saw were the words: “Sunday afternoon” and “collage.” I threw it in the garbage. “He’s been dead only three months. It’s too soon. I can’t talk to people I don’t know. I’m not an artist. I don’t have the energy. It’s too far away. Who are you kidding?” I took it out of the garbage. In and out. In and out. It was a sign—the bird that signals land to sailors lost at sea. I called the school, and (in a cold sweat) enrolled.

As I bought the supplies on the beginner’s list—a new ruler and a new 8" x 8" stretched canvas—I felt something shift. They were new. For me.

The first class was an out-of-body experience,

but entering the League building I felt embraced. I loved the worn mosaic tile, the barefoot model—wrapped in a bright kimono—who dashed across the lobby, the smell of linseed oil, and the battered easels.

Meeting my instructor, Mariano Del Rosario, was like water finding water. His studio was both relaxed and serious. My outsider widow status vanished in an environment with so much human variety. A woman in a paint-streaked lab coat sliced a Chinese newspaper into strips, while a teenage boy with headphones glued neon cotton balls onto a map of Florida. Nearby, a white-haired woman with a dancer’s fine posture stretched purple fabric onto the wire skeleton of an iris.

Getting to class each week wasn’t easy. I missed train after train as I sat in the car crying, listening to Chet Baker’s soulful voice and trumpet on “Time after Time.” The words, “the one I rush to see” and “so lucky to be loving you,” played over and over as the 10:24 left the station; then the 11:24; then the 12:24. I’d leave and drive that long, dirt road to an empty house that no longer felt like home.

When I did get to class, the emptiness filled for a little while. I liked the projects and the other students. Sometimes the monitor, Giuseppe, would give me a little welcoming hug or Mariano would pat me on the back and say, “That’s looking good.” They never knew how much they got me through another week.

My weekly shopping routine began to include Home Depot for tool boxes and brass upholstery nails, the beauty salon for old magazines, the Dollar Store for hair nets. “Looking forward” were forgotten words in my vocabulary. I hardly realized it, but now I was looking forward to these errands, Sundays, and to eating my lunch in class, not in front of the TV.

Mariano encouraged me to try new things. “You could burn the edges a little,” or, “Yes, those broken egg shells do make a great background.” I experimented and watched my risks pay off. Crazy things often worked. I dipped feathers in Halloween-store blood, found imitation barbed wire in a dusty millinery supply shop, and learned to use a drill. I had a place to go and something to do that I cared about. Any week I got to class was a better week all around. How could cutting and pasting make me feel so good?

My first assignment was to make a collage in color. I knew in a flash—instantly,

—that I would use the iconic pictures of children in red dresses from a catalog of the great American folk portraitist Ammi Phillips's work. I used his other portraits in collage after collage. I made a whole series. I tried to guess what his sitters were thinking. What were their dreams, hopes, inner lives?

Barre had loved colonial and early American furniture and decor. I, who'd always wanted to live in Marie Antoinette's lingerie drawer, learned to appreciate the clean lines and quiet elegance of his favorite period. Phillips's sitters would have felt at home in our house, writing a note at our tavern table, or relaxing in one of our wing chairs.

It took me time to realize that I was keeping the husband I'd lost close to me with those images.

Cutting, pasting, and arranging pieces of paper, scraps of tulle, sequins, Mexican lotto cards, bits of Brillo, paper doilies painted black, or whatever, some part of me was moving forward with each piece I glued down. Bit by bit, snip by snip, I was coming back to life.

Even my most critical friends gave me lots of support, "You've always collected so much useless garbage. Now you can do something with it!"

To my amazement, the more I got involved with making art, the more things happened. I joined the local art center where I showed and sold my work. In the gallery, my collage experiment with a 1950s 3-D Valentine, gold string, upholstery tacks, and fake jewels was the star piece. Its pop-up cupid pranced through a sparkling field of pretend rubies amid canvases of the Hudson River with trees, and trees with the Hudson River. My work sold for big bucks just minutes after the gallery doors opened. When I saw the red dot, I felt I was falling through space. I was astonished that anyone would pay so much for something that had been such fun to make, and I was thrilled that my art would be looked at over and over again in someone's home or office.

Then, on a wonderful afternoon, I watched a bidding war for one of my mixed-media pieces at a live auction. The paddles lifted faster, higher, faster, as the auctioneer's head swiveled back and forth. Combat began between a red-faced dandy in a too-tight shirt and a lady wearing white gloves and pearls. She may have whispered her bids as if they were family secrets, but she worked that paddle like a warrior. "Sold!" from the podium gave way to thunderous clapping. I was dazed.



The League's Exhibition Outreach Program chose me for a show of women artists at The Grace Institute, where underserved women learn employment skills. I was invited to talk about my work to a group of earnest, dressed-for-success students. When I was introduced as an artist, I was filled with a great sense of pride and a feeling of spiritual territory expanding inside myself. I told them that it had taken me 63 years to get there, and that they should never, ever give up on their dreams. My passion was contagious. They let their professional demeanor slip as they cheered and applauded me wildly. I felt high, someone new, whose existence I had never imagined before.

Not long afterward, I drove that long, dark country driveway for the last time. I

now live right where I dreamed [of living]: two blocks from the Art Students League. My sunny apartment has plenty of room for me to work and maintain my beloved junk collection. And there's lots of wall space waiting for collages.

I haven't gotten over Barre's death. I never will. I wouldn't want to. Yet here I am, with deep places to fill with more beauty and creative acts, now that art is at the center of my life. 🌟

pamelapearcestudio.com

Artwork by Pamela Manché Pearce
Page 5: *Madonna in Gold*; Opposite page: *Pinned Angel*;
Above: *The Many Hands of Mary* Ruthven

#Hooked

Saks Afridi

I'm a self-taught graphic designer who then studied advertising at the Academy of Art in San Francisco. I have no fine art training, except for my time at the League. About a year ago I was comfortable, with a great job in advertising as a Creative Director. I loved advertising (and still do), but I saw my future and knew exactly what it was going to look like. My passion is making things that matter, and I didn't see advertising as the way to do that. So I saved up, quit, and joined the League. In June 2013, I woke up and told my wife, "Today is the day I'm going to quit and become an artist." Her response:

"Well, it's about time. Go for it!" A great life partner is everything. My wife is a great source of inspiration as well. She's a stand-up comedian and always has interesting takes on life situations.

Oscar Garcia is my mentor. I love him. He's very open-minded, a can-do guy, and has taught me a lot. With him, nothing is impossible and everything can be figured out. I love people like that. I'm honored to be his student. As far as artistic influence, this may sound

boring but Banksy and Jeff Koons have had a big impact on me. Years ago, when I saw their work, a voice in my head told me, "You were meant for this."

My background is digital media, and so I can't help but think of ideas in the form of an app or a social movement. At the same time, I love building things and there is nothing more rewarding than seeing a sculpture or installation come to life; the sweat and tears are visible in the work. Because I'm involved in multiple projects that range from sculpture to product design to game development, my influences are from all over. I can't draw very well. I'm learning every day. I wish I had been forced to learn when I was young. To be able to put down on paper what you have

in your mind is a priceless skill. Millions of people can't express themselves visually, and they are handicapped because of it. Sadly they don't even know it. Drawing should be mandatory in high school, just like English and math. Wouldn't the world be a much better place if everyone could draw well?

My inspiration mostly comes from the news, and my mediums are whatever the idea demands. In my case, that's mostly sculpture, installations, and digital media. These all sound very different, but at heart it's all about the concepts behind them. Most of my pieces have a message, and messages have a habit of being medium agnostic. With the #Hooked installation, Dr. Robert Lustig was the inspiration. He wrote a book called *Fat Chance*, which got me thinking about sugar addiction and its similarities to tobacco addiction. Collaborating with illustrators, designers, and 3-D artists around the world makes my work better. I find sharing and talking about my ideas and works in progress to be very helpful. Even if they're half-baked and I look like a fool as I'm saying it, I don't mind. Hearing myself talk about them really helps me with clarity. A lot of artists prefer to keep their ideas to themselves, as though someone will steal them. I find this stifles creativity and progress. It's better to be open; be vulnerable. 🌐

www.saksafridi.com



Artwork by Saks Afridi
Directly above: #Hooked, 2014, mixed media installation in the League gallery; Top left: #Hooked (detail)

Park McGinty: On Multidimensional Light Art

As told to Julia Montepagani



My path to art

Early on, art was a casualty in an interior war between desire and fear, with fear (prudence?) winning out. University teaching seemed like a good launching pad for a steady income and creative pursuits. I got a PhD in History of Religions at the University of Chicago and then taught at Lehigh University. I had a plan for being able to write and do my art while I taught, the theory being that, inasmuch as academics have so much time off, including summers, I would create my novels and my art “in my spare time.”

Ho ho. There's way less spare time in academia than most people suppose. In addition, I was desperate to live in New York City. Eventually, I left university teaching and went to Yale Law School. For several years I practiced corporate law on Wall Street. Talk about no spare time. My next bid for spare time for art was to teach law in New York City. By the time I had done this for a few years, money that I had saved and some

more that I inherited finally freed me to do art full time.

Being a sensualist, however, instead of immediately attacking writing and art, I started collecting things that fascinated and astonished me: minerals, fossils, meteorites, butterflies (yes, dead ones) and other amazing insects colored gold and silver. Arranging them to maximum visual effect started consuming a great deal of my time and constituted a wonderful informal training for my particular kind of art.

Visiting friends in Prague in 2009, I was struck by the kinship I felt to the contemporary art on display throughout Central Europe, and I quickly signed up for courses at the Art Students League. Mostly, I studied with Bruce Dorfman, who was magnificent in combining respect for each person's own inner artistic logic with rich and encouraging intelligence and delicate and sensitive questioning.

On making art with only one hand

When I feel somebody edging up to the issue of my having only my right hand, I normally have the strong (and you would be surprised how sincere it is) impulse to beat them to the punch and say, “You know, it's remarkable how much you can do with only two hands.”

We all could use more hands (I was born without most of my left forearm), but we all work with what we have, which includes the stupefying complexity of the human brain. Yes, it would be enormously

easier if I had both hands. My work consumes substantially more time than if I had both hands, and it is considerably messier than it would be otherwise. But, ultimately, I figure out what I need to do, and do it. When I encounter problems working with materials, I'm completely sure I'm going to find some solution.

My inspiration for an individual piece of work

My art is a dance between my materials and me. I find materials whose given beauty seizes me and makes me want to turn them into something much more beautiful still. Mostly, I work without a plan because the interaction of things always takes me in directions I hadn't expected. Each gesture closes off possibilities, and soon you're in an exceedingly complex, three-dimensional puzzle wondering where that imaginary (and very vague) beauty went.

You work until the piece stops reproaching you for not having finished. Initially, you didn't know what it should look like, but now it's clear that this is what it should look like. Any other addition will detract.

The best reaction anyone gave my art was a friend's remark on seeing it for the first time: “That's just rude!” she objected. “I didn't give you permission to make me feel that way.” I felt completely successful in that moment. 🍷

parkmcginty.com



Artwork by Park McGinty
Above: *From the Depths* (detail), 2010; Left: *Magical Mountain*, 2011, mixed media, 36 x 36 x 5 in.
PHOTOGRAPHED BY DEBORAH WINIARSKI

Beginning Again

Lori Sanford



My first introduction to art was from the *World Book Encyclopedia*. In the volume for *P*, under “Painting,” there were reproductions of Hopper’s *Early Sunday Morning* and Sargent’s *Madam X*. I thought these paintings were fantastic and would stare at the images wondering how anyone could produce such magic.

I became an artist because my father, who was an accountant, would bring back huge pads of paper with financials on one side and blank paper on the other. It was a special thrill for me when my father would come home with four or five pads, each weighing about five pounds. Someone gave me a set of Venus Paradise colored pencils, and I spent hours drawing on the blank side of the pads.

Always with a pencil in my hand; I traveled everywhere with my pads and colored pencils—through the interminable hours visiting relatives in Brooklyn,

sitting in the back seat of the car on the BQE, going from Brooklyn to Queens and back again, every Sunday. There was one corner with a streetlamp near a row of brownstones that I always looked for, imagining Hopper standing there with his easel painting this iconic New York scene.

I cut classes in high school and spent my time painting posters and decorating boards. Trigonometry was terrible, but Mr. Groeler (the art teacher who was a real artist because he lived in Greenwich Village) gave me an award in art class, and I was accepted to FIT. It was a shock to see the professionalism of the program and the expertise of the students (they had all gone to the High School of Art and Design). Miss Ishakara, the draconian drawing teacher, yelled at me and I stopped drawing and painting for 20 years!

Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain, a course with Betty Edwards, brought me back to art. Suddenly, I remembered how to see and began to draw again. After the experience with Edwards I couldn’t stop drawing or painting, as if making up for lost time. But there never seemed to be enough money or time to put into my goal of developing into the best artist I could be. Taking class with Joe Peller at the New York Academy of Art made me feel depressed, because I could only afford to attend one night a week. He changed my life, however, with an opening in his Saturday class at the League. I was thrilled. Finally, an affordable place to work,

teeming with creativity and like-minded people of all different ages and backgrounds.

I am grateful to the League for so many things—the teachers I studied with and learned so much from: Peller, Mary Beth McKenzie, Sharon Sprung, Cornelia Foss, and Henry Finkelstein; to Maddie and Richard, who are the first faces we see when we enter the building; and the League office staff, who always take the time to make new students comfortable by advising them about classes and teachers. Over the years I’ve developed friendships and found a true artist community; friends I’ve met at the League who will meet and discuss each others work and projects. The Portrait Project [see *Lines from the League*, March 2014] is an outgrowth of the camaraderie that exists at the League. A friend who is a dancer goes to ballet class every day and works at the barre alongside stars and the newest corps members. The League is my barre as I strive to get better each day, soaking up the knowledge and history that bubble over in the hallways and studios of this phenomenal institution. 🌟



Artwork by Lori Sanford
From left: *Waterfront at Socrates Park*, 2013, oil and pastel, 20 x 16 in.; *Summer in Maine*, 2013, pastel, 12 x 16 in.

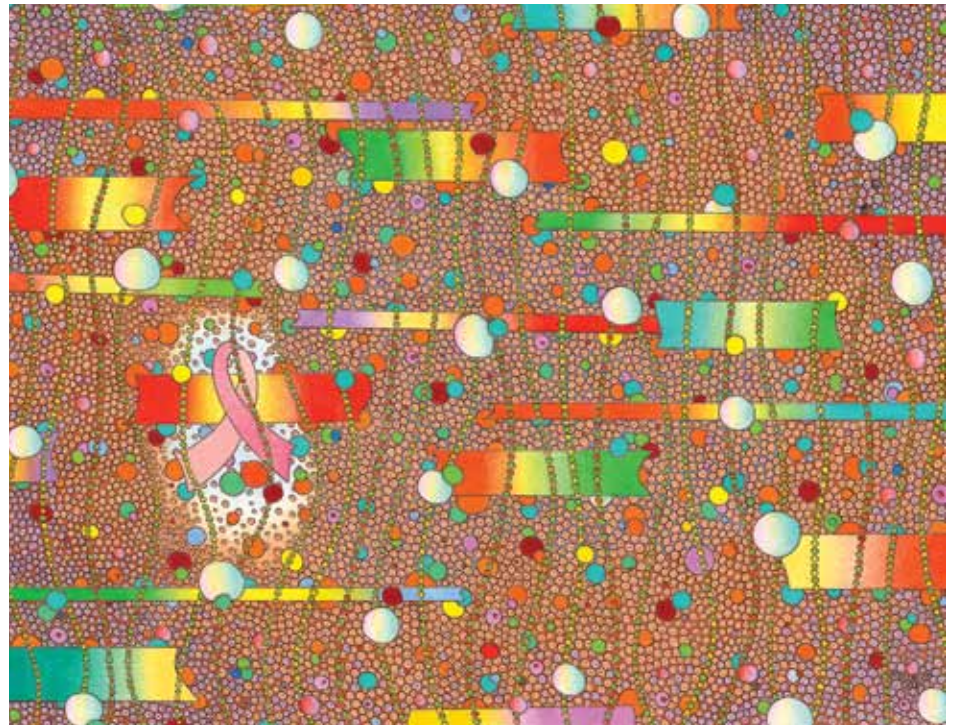
The Psychedelic, The Grateful Dead, and The League

Marck C. Webster

During my time as a police officer with the NYPD, I must have driven past the Art Students League hundreds—perhaps thousands—of times, but never passed through the doors. In 2012, while strolling down 57th Street with my girlfriend, stopping to relive (and sometimes embellish) cop stories that had occurred on particular corners, I pointed out the wonderful architecture and storied history of the Art Students League. I told her that I had never been inside. She literally pushed me through the front door and followed me in. Standing in the lobby, feeling the spirit of the likes of Jackson Pollock, Norman Rockwell, and others, known and unknown, I was hooked. I enrolled in Richard Barnett's drawing class where I have come to work outside my comfort zone with figure drawing, an experience that has made my own style of drawing more precise and meaningful. I still feel somewhat dwarfed each time I enter the League. The amount of talent in one institution is second to no place, and I'm proud to have recently earned membership.

For the first ten years of my career, I was fortunate enough to be assigned to the Midtown North Precinct, which encompasses the theater district, Times Square, and neighborhoods from the East Side to the Hudson River up to 59th Street. Imagine all the ammunition (pardon the pun), I was gathering to help create art after this glorious career came to an end in 2006. It truly was, as veteran cops say, "a front row seat to the greatest show on earth!"

Since my early teens, I have been enamored with the psychedelic poster artists of San Francisco in the 1960s. The work of Stanley "Mouse" Miller, Alton Kelley, Victor Morosco, and Rick Griffin hypnotized me, just as the music of that period did and still does. I would sit at the drawing table that my parents had bought me for my sixteenth birthday listening to the Grateful Dead at ear-splitting decibels through giant suction cup headphones, doodling with my Crayola pencils for hours. I still use that drawing table every day, and employ the same technique—although the headphones have become earbuds and the volume is way down. The



Grateful Dead do still appear on my set list shuffle, just not exclusively, and Prismacolor has replaced Crayola. A certain amount of "realism" has been introduced into my most recent work, but the exploding colors set my work apart from the norm.

A little background on the Pink Ribbon picture: It was inspired and created back in 2008 when my wife, Magee, was battling breast cancer. I used to bust her chops because whenever she shopped, if there was an item with a pink ribbon on it, she would buy it: motor oil, cheese, chewing gum, whatever. I would always say that she was a sucker for a pink ribbon, so when I completed this picture it only seemed right that I should name it "Sucker for a Pink Ribbon." Magee found a lovely group of women at a local charity called Hewlett House, an advocacy group for people battling all types of cancer. We decided that I would donate a print and that proceeds from the sales of any additional prints would go directly to them. When it came time for the actual presentation to the president of Hewlett House, Geri Barrish (a three-time cancer survivor and a wonderful woman), I thought that the original title might be a bit offensive to some potential donors, so I shortened it to "Pink



Artwork by Marck C. Webster
From top: *Beads of Love*, 2009, 18 x 24 in.; *Selfie*, 2014, colored pencil, 14 x 27 in.

Ribbon." Ms. Barrish liked the picture, which hangs nicely in the 300-year-old Hewlett House, but commented that the title lacked something. She, being the master fundraiser, came up with the idea of a renaming contest. So it went; at a local grammar school there was a contest which was won by a sweet little third-grade girl who came up with the name, "Beads of Love." I like it, and every following print became "Beads of Love"—but it will always be "Sucker for a Pink Ribbon" to me. 🍌

www.marckgraphicks.com

Nick Andors

A Frozen World With Julia Montepagani



Julia Montepagani: When did you know you wanted to be an artist?

Nick Andors: In seventh grade we had a class project to create an image of two flowers using pastels. My teacher showed me how to render the leaves to create shadow. Following his lead, it turned out to be my favorite piece up to that point. I remember thinking that this is what I was meant to do with my life.

JM: Where did you study? What was your background training?

NA: My parents were very encouraging and sent me to art classes outside of school. Though I dreamt of becoming an artist, I lacked discipline and the drive to cultivate my craft. It wasn't until my early twenties that I started pushing myself by attending Hunter College and attending the League. The curriculum at Hunter catered to a more modern approach than interested me at the time. I couldn't wait to graduate so I could focus all my energy at the League. After studying with different teachers, I read articles written by Dan Gheno and found that his artwork really spoke to me. When I found out he was going to be teaching at the League, I did whatever I could to get into his class, and have remained.

JM: What is your medium and why? How does your medium speak to you?

NA: Graphite and pen and ink. I really enjoy playing with line and love the simplicity; just a pen or pencil and paper, and no worries about color. And though mixing paint can be a hassle, lately I've been gravitating toward oil. I love how much freedom it allows. One can paint in a transparent or meaty way, or combine both approaches. I also appreciate how forgiving it is—it's nice knowing it's not a one-shot deal. Since you can't plan



League painter Nick Andors recently wrote, illustrated, and self-published the dynamic graphic novel, *A Frozen World*.

mistakes, when they happen and end up working out they seem more precious. Of course, a lot of the time those mistakes stay mistakes, and make me want to fling my canvas out the window like a Frisbee.

JM: What or who is your inspiration?

NA: Other artists, movies, athletes, or just everyday life; looking at master paintings and watching Michael Jordan highlight films. I think it's the infinite potential of the human spirit that drives me most, but I can also see the drunk on the corner with no teeth and become inspired to create another character to draw.

JM: What was the turning point or significant event in your artistic life or life in general?

NA: There was a year or two when every day I would plan to practice drawing, and then never would. At night I would lay in my bed and regret having wasted another day. It finally dawned on me that if I kept it up, one day I would eventually be on my deathbed, and I wouldn't be thinking about how I wasted another day—I would be thinking about how I wasted my life. I realized if I ever wanted my dream to materialize, I was going to have to discipline myself and focus my energy.

JM: What keeps motivating you to make art?

NA: I have a very specific vision. Not in the sense of knowing exactly what I want to create, but knowing what I'm capable of. I feel like I'm still on the steep side of

the learning curve, and the idea of the possibilities of where I feel I can go motivate me to keep pushing.

JM: You studied primarily figure painting at the League. Where and how did you learn to draw comics? How has figure painting aided your ability to draw comics (if at all)?

NA: When I was younger I'd copy drawings done by my favorite comic book artists, but I've primarily honed my skills by drawing from the figure. Drawing from life forces you to learn the human form in ways you wouldn't when drawing something that doesn't move. I'm now able to draw people from my imagination. This has given me a lot of freedom in setting up my compositions. It has also helped me break away from being overly influenced by other comic book artists, which is inevitable if the only way you learn is by copying them.

JM: What was the inspiration for *A Frozen World*? Can you describe its creative development?

NA: My inspiration comes from growing up in New York City. I was always fascinated with the grittier aspects of urban life; also the architecture and the idea of so many people living on top of one another, each with their own story to tell. *A Frozen World* basically isolates those elements and magnifies them.

JM: You self-published and self-marketed this book. Can you describe what this process has been like for you? How did you figure it all out?

NA: Since I knew my ideas were edgy, I didn't want anybody telling me what I could or couldn't do. If the opportunity presented itself to work with

an established publisher at this point, I'd seriously think about it. Publishers have important connections, including distribution, and they also provide you with a certain degree of recognition just by being affiliated with them. I just started working on an 18-issue comic series. I'm taking my time with it, because one thing I've learned from creating *A Frozen World* is that when you don't rush things, and you allow them to grow, they develop wrinkles and nuances that can't be forced. 🍷

www.afrozenworld.com

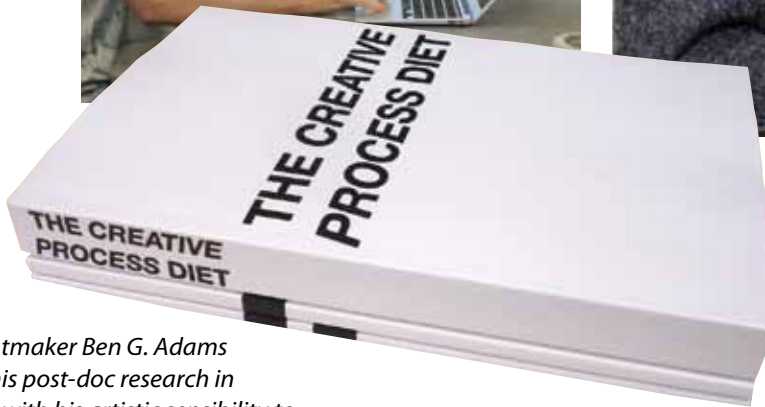


Artwork by Nick Andors
Opposite page: *If the Walls Could Scream*, 2014, oil on canvas, 12 x 10 in.; This page, from top: Character sketch, 2008, ballpoint pen on paper, 8.5 x 11 in.; *Waking Dream* (page 8 of *A Frozen World*), 2014, Sumi black ink, 16.5 x 12 in.

Ben G. Adams

The Creative Process Diet

As told to Julia Montepagani



Artwork by Ben G. Adams
Clockwise from top left: Ben writing in class at the League, PHOTO BY LILIAN R. ENGEL; *A Whole World You Can Go Into* (pendant 1 of 2), 2013, etching in felt releasing epoxy painted frame, 13.5 x 11 x 1 in., PHOTO BY MEL EVANS; *The Creative Process Diet*, 2014, print-on-demand book (Unboxing Press)

League printmaker Ben G. Adams combined his post-doc research in psychology with his artistic sensibility to create the book, *The Creative Process Diet*.

I began to fall in love with the idea of becoming an artist in 2009 while working on my dissertation in clinical psychology at Columbia University. During three years as a post-doc, I began to ask myself what I really cared about and what I really wanted to create in this world. I wanted to write something that would retain the rationality and the beauty of academic writing, but that would also be accessible to a general audience and integrate my interest in topics that tend to be viewed as unscientific, such as shamanism. Puzzling over how to accomplish this feat led me to think about the idea of approaching the book as an art project. I admire artists who work with words, such as Jenny Holzer and Ed Ruscha, and it occurred to me that I could approach the creation of an entire book-length narrative with a similar mindset. My intention was to solve the dieting riddle. People

often say that “diets don’t work,” yet my own experience revealed that when certain conditions were in place, dieting not only worked but was actually completely effortless and took me to some amazing spiritual heights.

At the League I met with Bill Behnken and told him about my idea. As I babbled on, he began to give me a full demonstration on how to do an etching. My method for creating the text began with creating a set of two pendant etchings in which I organized all of my ideas for the book into a completely wordless, image-based language. As I released myself into that process, my mind cleared and the basic structure of the book began to form. This structure was very much inspired by the basic processes of printmaking; in printmaking there is always a dialectic between the highly technical and methodical aspects of the art form and the more abstract questions about what it is that is going on within

the psyche of the artist. The technical side of this dialectic may at first appear to be quite mundane and boring, yet the technical stuff is actually the very thing that grounds the psyche and that opens it up to all of the mysteries of the infinite. This dialectic is what *The Creative Process Diet* is all about. It provides a very specific, detailed dieting technique that in one sense is very mundane and rote, yet taps into the deepest wells of human spirituality and unleashes unprecedented magic and personal transformation.

The book itself consists entirely of text, but I think of it as a piece of printmaking-based conceptual art. I did most of the writing in Rick Pantell’s weekday morning class and in Sylvie Covey’s Saturday class. Each of these instructors had a unique way of creating a nourishing studio environment by continually exposing me to new ideas, and providing the emotional support I needed to be able to sit on top of this egg for two years until it finally hatched. 🐣

thecreativeprocessdiet.com

The Power of Truth:

Anders Zorn's Show in New York

Leonid Gervits

Like remote stars in a night sky, great artists may be long gone but their beautiful light keeps reaching our eyes, delivering feelings and thoughts, and making us celebrate their marvelous lives again and again. The light from one such star reached New York City in recent months. A retrospective of Anders Zorn at the National Academy Museum, on view February 27–May 18, 2014, was a big event for artists and connoisseurs alike. Zorn was part of a great generation of European painters whose mission was to preserve and pass on the strong realistic traditions in European painting. In a time when the “subjective” realism of the impressionists was loudly celebrating its rise and proliferation across the European art scene, artists like John Singer Sargent (1856), Anders Zorn (1860), Valentin Serov (1865), Ignacio Zuloaga (1870), and Joaquín Sorolla (1863) were meticulously pursuing their “unpopular” mission of “objective” realism.

Real skill, however, was always valued. Zorn exhibited at the Paris Salon and was even awarded the French Legion of Honor. Despite his friendship with such prominent impressionists as Renoir, Degas, and Rodin, Zorn carefully preserved his own way to see the truth. He didn't try to please that broad range of Europeans who passionately promoted and supported Impressionism, but instead always went his own way; maybe that was a part of his peasant background. Also to this background we might attribute his ability to pursue a high quality of work, no matter what work it was—especially beloved to him was watercolor. Eastern European art education for children (in my own case as well) was firmly based in watercolor. In Zorn's case, we can see how fundamental watercolor skills could be. For a young artist in his or her early years of education, these skills can help with future oil paintings.



Anders Zorn, *Self Portrait with Model*, 1896

There is another thing we can learn from Zorn: elementary composition. Some of the paintings on view are so unsophisticatedly simple that they make us legitimately suspicious of whether the artist used photographs as a reference

for his work. Some of the compositions are “photographically naïve.” Nevertheless, one who is well-informed in European (particularly French) painting of that period has to admit that neither academic nor “popular” art at the time



Artwork by Anders Zorn
Clockwise from top left: *Une Première (Plate I)*, etching, 9.25 x 6.25 in.; *The Widow*, circa 1882–83, ink wash/watercolor on paper, 11 x 7 cm.; *Midsummer Dance*, 1897; *Söndagsmorgon (Sunday Morning)*, 1891, oil on canvas, 47 x 37 in.

was that reminiscent of the composition of the photographic lens. Rather, this element of the work is evidence of a strong artistic eye; the foreshortenings and close-ups in Zorn's figurative pictures are strong evidence of that.

And, of course, there is color—one of the most expressive and impressive parts of Zorn's creativity. The limited color palette the artist inherited from one of his early teachers strongly links the masters of older generations to Zorn and contemporaries like Boldini and Cormon. At the same time, such a palette obviously gave Zorn relative freedom to utilize his extraordinary talent in drawing and in depicting "realities" of the visual world: textures, light, air, and water.

Finally, we must observe the degree of "finishing" of each art piece. Zorn himself and many of his friends and

peers pointed out that his style was pretty loose, compared to that of his contemporaries. Despite this historical fact, today his works look very finished. This is "finished" not in a photographic or hyper-realistic way, but in terms of selectiveness of means and accomplishment of skills.

What would be a lucky concurrence for Zorn's brilliant career along with his natural artistic talent? His apparently natural charisma—maybe even "diplomatic" talent—which attracted many people from the time that he was a very young, emerging artist. His strong working philosophy came from a traditional Swedish farming family, who gave him the notion to always finish what was started (paintings, in his case). These qualities made Zorn quietly and fundamentally ready to make his own place on the European artistic scene. For us in the

beginning of the 21st century, after the parade of "isms" in the 20th century, the humble art of Zorn is a great example of what Leonardo da Vinci confirmed as a real talent of the artist: ability to seek truth. "Back to basics"—the slogan of many figurative schools during the last decades of the previous century—is fully complied within the unforgettable brilliancy that presents itself in the art of Anders Zorn.

And to the very end—listening to a violin concerto by Jean Sibelius and looking at his compatriot Anders Zorn's painting, one can feel the soul and spirit of Scandinavia: silver-clear, "coldish" appearance, yet very warm and filled with love. This is the corner of the earth that gave to world culture such stars as Ibsen, Andersen, Grieg, and Sibelius. They are not countless, but they were stars of the first degree and Anders Zorn is among them. 🌟

Visual Perception and Bonnard



Pierre Bonnard, *Workers*, 1920

When we draw from life, there is always the temptation to focus on the details and to try to copy what we see at the expense of forming our own aesthetic response. Pierre Bonnard stated that painting is “the transcription of the adventures of the optic nerve.” His art was the result of an initial attraction to something: “If this attraction, this primary conception, fades away, the painter becomes dominated solely by the motif, the object before him,” he stated. “From that moment he ceases to create his own painting.” This is probably why he did not paint from life. Instead he

Painted from his imagination, memory, and sketches, explaining that having the actual subject in front of him would distract him from his work.

According to Jack Flam, “Bonnard was interested in perspectival and structural contradictions and the difficulty we have identifying certain things within the painting. This slows down our process of viewing. He keeps things fluid and contradictions actively unresolved.” Bonnard’s work is generally structured with rectangles and different types of patterning. A painting “is essentially a flat surface covered with colors arranged in a



certain order," said fellow artist Maurice Denis. "The main subject is the surface," wrote Bonnard, "which has its color, its laws, over and above the objects." He believed that, "a painting is a series of marks that join together to form an object or work over which one's eyes may freely roam."

Bonnard said, "vision is variable." If we equate the picture plane to the retina, the center of the page would approximate the placement of the fovea (the part of the eye responsible for acute vision) on the retina. This would have the clearest view. The edges of the painting could approximate the peripheral aspect of the retina, where things are less apparent and harder to resolve and recognize. Bonnard also said, "vision is mobile." In order to see, one has to move one's eyes, so that different areas of the visual field fall on the fovea. This movement creates a visual rhythm and the illusion of a clear visual world. If you fixate on one central point and never move your eyes from that, this idea of a single fixation relates to how the retina works in terms of acuity. After this initial glimpse, one moves one's eyes from point to point. We subconsciously and automatically fixate on areas that attract our attention: areas that have visual weight (such as a bright, vibrant color) and areas that have visual

Above: Pierre Bonnard, *Cats on a Railing*, 1909, oil on canvas

contrast (dark versus light, blue versus orange, a regular shape versus an irregular shape, etc.).

Scanning a Bonnard painting, we are first attracted to bright colors and strong value contrast, which he usually places toward the center of the painting. Bonnard delays our perception of, let's say, his wife, Marthe, at the edge of the painting by not giving her that much visual weight compared with the center of the painting. As we make our way toward the edges, we are first not aware of Marthe being there; then suddenly she appears from the background. In a way, she is camouflaged since the difference between the figure and ground is minimized. At the edges of the painting, figure and ground are unclear and seem to merge into some type of weaving, "where patches of paint form and unform continuous colors and edges." This is also true of the tub paintings in which Marthe is camouflaged and seems to dissolve in the bathwater.

Bonnard was interested in investigating different aspects of perception and applied what he learned to his work. Even his procedure of not painting directly from life was based on his exploration of visual perception as it pertains to a two-dimensional surface. As noted earlier, he experimented with conveying foveal and peripheral vision, clarity and ambiguity, and influencing the viewer's eye movements as one views his painting. These eye movements, fixating and then scanning, help us organize his painting.

There are many ways to appreciate a painting. One way is by understanding some aspects of how we see. Awareness is the key. Instead of verbalizing or labeling what is seen on the canvas, try to relax and sense your eyes moving from one part to another. You are creating a rhythmic scan path that adds a sense of movement to the work. Try this as you create your own paintings. Feel your eyes move and sense the relationships among color, shape, space, pattern, etc. As we experiment with aspects of visual perception, we can think of Bonnard as a source of inspiration. 🌀

YOU CALL THAT ART?

There are many rich experiences waiting for us to explore in an art museum. We can appreciate paintings in so many different ways. We may not be aware of it, but most of us have specific viewing styles when looking at art. Some people look at a painting in terms of its accuracy. Did the artist paint objects or people to look exactly as they do in the real world? We can also appreciate the painting's narrative aspect or storyline. We can search for paintings that evoke some type of emotional response. These types of viewing styles are usually based on our current understanding of art at the time we view the work and are usually influenced by our personal preferences or perhaps preconceived notions of what art should be. We tend to judge paintings accordingly and walk by those we do not like or perhaps do not under-



Nicki Orbach

stand. The problem with just walking by, is that it prevents us from experiencing and learning something new from paintings that do not fit our preferences.

I was telling a friend that even though I am not wild about Bonnard's work, I have learned a lot from it. I lecture and write about aspects of his work that relate to his understanding of visual perception. She wanted to know, since I did not really care for his work, why I didn't just walk by his paintings. I thought the best way to answer this question was to relate my own personal experience. When I was a relatively new art student, I was very opinionated about my likes and dislikes. I would go to the museum with my teacher/mentor, Professor Montano, and as we approached an Ad Reinhardt black painting, I would walk by quickly and go into my diatribe: "You call this art?

The guy is a charlatan! Why is this in the museum?" My teacher would listen patiently and ask me to give the painting a chance.

I didn't realize it at the time but I was stuck in a rather limited and conventional way of seeing and appreciating paintings. This realization took a lot of self-observation. It occurred to me that my likes and dislikes could actually get in the way of seeing. I also learned I could appreciate something even though I did not like it. By appreciate, I mean using a type of visual perception and understanding that would allow me to be fully aware of and sensitive to aspects of a painting that I had never noticed before. We see within the framework of who we are: our personality, thoughts, feelings, desires, and expectations. Who I was, those many years ago, is not the same person I am today. The self constantly changes. After a couple of years of just walking by Reinhardt's paintings, I felt

I was at a point where I could give the black paintings a chance—this time viewing in a different manner, one that uses a different type of visual perception.

It is interesting to note that Monet once said, "I wish I had been born blind and then had suddenly gained my sight so I would have begun to paint without knowing what the objects were that I saw before me." This would have many implications. It would be as if you were seeing things for the first time, without reference to previous memories, experience, or thought. It is seeing without categorizing the experience, or putting a value judgement onto what is seen. It is also trying not to manipulate the experience of seeing in order to fit one's own needs and desires or to verify what one already knows. A viewing style such as this could even involve a type of heightened awareness and attentiveness that is not based on the rational mind. It would involve letting go of the ego and analytical thinking. This approach has similarities to some aspects of meditation and mindfulness. What if I just looked at an Ad Reinhardt painting without judgement clouding my vision? As it happened, one of the museums had an exhibit of his work. I went to the exhibit and watched everyone whiz by in the same manner I would have done years before.

This time, I went alone in order to minimize any distractions. I randomly chose a painting and planted myself in front of it. I lost track of time, but it felt as if I was there for quite a while. I just wanted to listen to the painting and encounter the painting without judgment, preconceptions, verbalization, or rational thought. I let my eyes wander and sometimes linger. I tried not to consciously direct my eye movements. I looked with a relaxed attentiveness and after a while I began to experience a different type of awareness. I began to see things that were always there but I had never noticed them. What I saw was very subtle but the effect was mesmerizing. The painting started to vibrate and breathe. Within the painting were subtle black squares that created a shallow space in which they moved. The

effect was hypnotic and meditative. This was one of the best experiences I ever had when viewing artwork at a museum. It is not rational or logical; it relates more to the subconscious and intuitive mind.

So, the painting that I originally would walk by because I did not like it, turned out to become a work I wanted to view time and time again. The next day I went back to the museum to view other aspects in a more conscious and directed way. I looked at the surface of the canvas to get a sense of how the work was created. I scrutinized the subtle color relationships, the edges between squares, the lack of brush strokes, etc. I was curious about how he delayed our perception of the squares. I could also use what I learned in these different viewing styles in my own work.

So, when it comes to Bonnard, I have learned to give his paintings a chance. I would not walk by his work because I am not that wild about his paintings. We will see later that Bonnard used the same idea of delayed perception of what is seen.

In conclusion, we can view paintings in a myriad of ways—and not just one way or not just in a conventional way. Some people have developed a viewing style in which they only attend to a limited number of things in relation to what they have been taught or due to their preferences. Also please remember that preferences can change. The challenge is to give the paintings you do not prefer a chance. Next time you go to the museum it is OK to acknowledge you prefer one painting over another. After you get that out of your system, try to view the work with a different type of awareness, one that does not involve thought or words. Paul Valery once said, "to see is to forget the name of the thing one sees." Try to look with an open mind and a receptive heart. 🌟

Centerfold: A man studies one of Ad Reinhardt's black paintings at the Museum of Modern Art; Photo by Emily Kneeter is licensed under Creative Commons 2.0 (Image cropped from original)

On my first day of kindergarten, I fell in love with those magical smells of clay and crayons. I didn't need anything more. Nothing more was needed to persuade me to become an artist; in fact, those delicious smells helped me realize that I was already an artist.

But what kind? Clay or crayons? Three- or two-dimensional? I haven't decided yet, and am carrying on with both.

But what did they mean by "learn to draw"? Doesn't everyone know how to draw?

During my graduation from Smith College in 1954, the speaker told us that our education would serve our husbands and children,

something I recalled when I had a show at the Smith College Museum some years later.

I moved to Washington, D.C. to be with a boyfriend. (We all make mistakes.) My first job was selling vacuum cleaners door-to-door—an education in itself—while taking

drawing classes in the evening. Being an ambitious college graduate, I soon moved on to a better job utilizing my drawing skills—forging signatures for a prestigious insurance company. However, I was soon fired for showing leadership ability on a test they gave to their employees.

So, on to my next job, at the National Gallery of Art. As employees, we were invited to show our artwork in the hall leading to the cafeteria, so I put in my best painting. The chief curator called me into his office and asked me who had painted my painting. I told him I did and he answered, "No, who really painted it?" I was the assistant curator of graphic arts, but the next week the chief curator called me in and dictated a letter to me; he watched me write it as fast as I could in longhand.

My next job was teaching art in public schools in Arlington, Virginia. My job was art helping teacher, which meant I was supposed to teach the teachers how to teach art by teaching the students. The teachers would excuse themselves and come back an hour later. Fine by me.

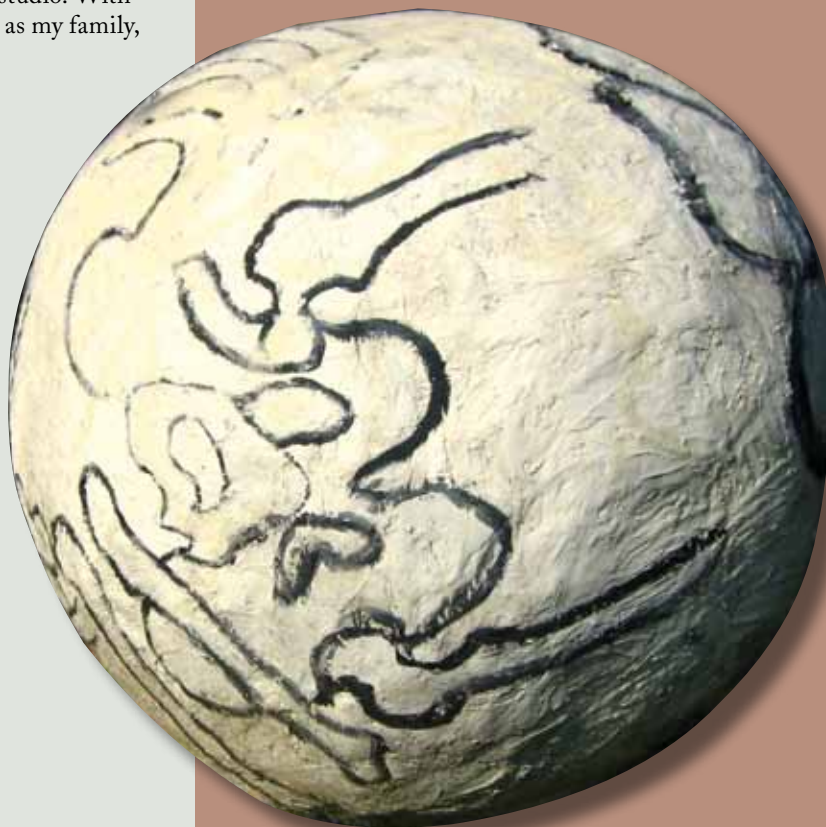
In 1960 I moved to New York and married a recently divorced man who had custody of his three little boys, ages two, four and six. Then we had two girls, completing the circus. We bought a barn and turned it into a house, which made a wonderful family home.

I was a young sculptor living in New York City, working in a large coal bin



behind a Catholic magazine on the Upper East Side. I joined a co-op gallery—one of the very first galleries in SoHo—and had a one-person show there. A curator from the Newark Museum came to the gallery and bought the whole show: five large concrete spheres, each measuring from three to seven feet in diameter. Hooray, I'd been discovered! Now, fifty years later, I'm still making large concrete spheres, as though for the first time; they look fresh and new, as well as ancient. How is that possible? It must be the magic formula, known as The Laying On of Hands.

Now everyone has left the nest, including my husband (divorced after 17 years), so I live here alone and feel cozy and warm in the animal space, which is now my studio. With my clay and my crayons, as well as my family, I have had a full, rich life. 🐾



Artwork by Grace Knowlton
Circa 2005, paint and plaster over
Styrofoam, 9-in. diameter (each)

Clockwise from opposite page, far
left: *Nude*; *Abstract*; *Hand*; *Bones*

NICKI ORBACH



In high school, I went to the New York Academy of Science lectures and one day met Ethel Tobach, the head of the animal behavior department at the American Museum of Natural History. As a summer volunteer, I worked with a graduate student at the museum, observing nursing behavior in baby rats. It taught me how to observe and very quickly record what I saw. When I was in college, I majored in animal behavior because I wanted to work at something I was passionate about. Another summer, I went to the museum's Southwestern Research Station in Arizona, and once more worked with a graduate student observing the behavior of lizards. I found out it was very difficult to get a job in this field and that I was not as passionate about it as I had thought.

The next couple of years found me at various jobs which I hated: an insurance claims examiner, a hospital lab technician, and so on. I always liked archaeology and had only taken a couple of classes in anthropology in college. Even so, I received a full scholarship for a PhD program at Arizona State University. I went...and quickly found out this was not for me. I came home feeling like a complete failure.

I always loved doing crafts, and a friend suggested I take a drawing class at the 92nd Street Y. It met once a week. My teacher there suggested I go to the Art Students League. I found my passion. It was great! Since my focus had been science, I had never drawn; so if I had to show a portfolio to get in, I never would have taken art. The importance of the League is making

art accessible to EVERYONE, not just those who want to be professional artists. Everything seemed to fall into place. It was as if invisible hands were showing me the way. I love the processes involved in creating a work of art—being responsive to the developing composition and always letting it guide me, experimenting with many mediums, from 3-D work such as fiber art, to 2-D work such as oil painting.

While monitoring for Robert Beverly Hale and Gregory d'Alessio, I discovered a gift for sharing what I learned with other people. I wanted to do art and teach, and went on to an MFA from Pratt, where I studied with Salvatore Montano. So now I have two passions which I take very seriously, creating art and teaching: helping people discover and experiment,



and following their progress. My students give me back as much as I give them. It is a special gift and a special partnership.

I now practice Zen Buddhism, which offers a very interesting set of inquiries into space and time, non-duality, emptiness, transience, and impermanence. My current body of work explores my passion. Rhythmic gestural marks are obscured by skeins of white pastel. The white varies subtly in contrast and hue. As one spends time with the work, without intention or expectation, some of the marks are revealed and then disappear again. There is an oscillation of space and a sense of meditative "emptiness." The paintings have not changed their physical properties but our experience of the work has changed.

Robert Henri said, "The object of art is



the attainment of a state of being, a more than ordinary moment of existence. In such moments activity is inevitable; its result is but a by-product of this state, a trace, the footprint of the state." 🌀

Artwork by Nicki Orbach
 Clockwise from far left on opposite page: *Indra's Net*, 2013, mixed media on burlap, 57 x 34 in.; *Heart Sutra*, 2012, ink and watercolor on textile panel, 30 x 52 in.; *Whispered Memory Installation*, 2011, mixed media, 8 x 5 ft.



Artwork by Sherry Camhy
 Above: *Birth of Creativity*, 2009, oil on canvas, 36 x 42 in.;
 Opposite page, clockwise from top left:
Me, Like My Mother, 2008, oil on old, found ASL board, 54 x 44 in.;
Xanteppe, The Golem (work in progress), graphite on paper, 6 x 4 ft.;
Chava, 2009, graphite on paper, 6 x 4 ft.

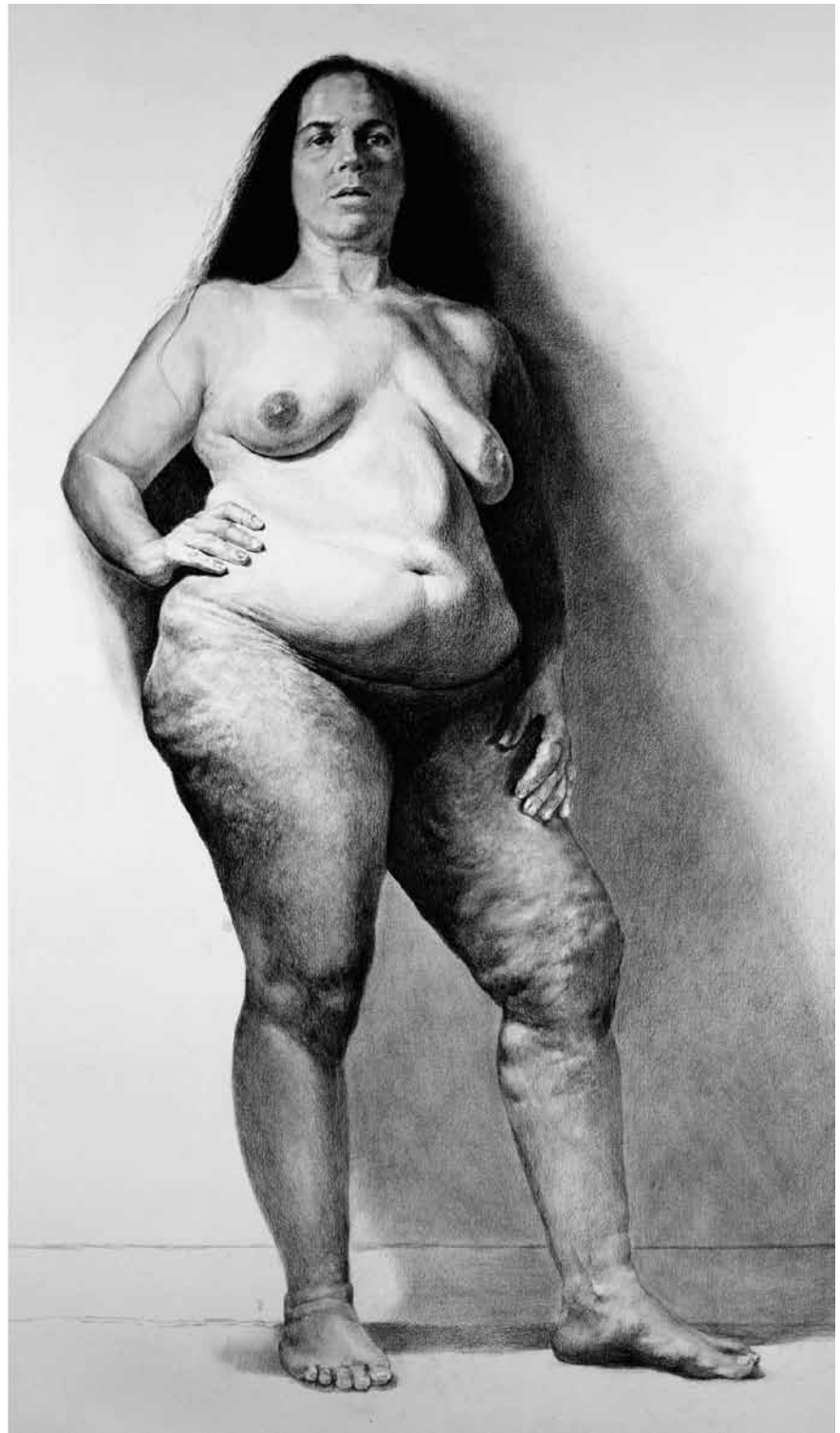
When I was a child, my parents often asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I always said, “I am going to be an artist.” But that was never an acceptable answer. My father wanted me to be a doctor just like everyone else in the family. My mother hoped I would follow in her footsteps and become a concert pianist, so every Saturday, I was sent for music lessons on 57th Street—one block west of the Art Students League.

Guess where my path took me? Every Saturday after my lesson, I found my way right up the front steps, in the door and directly to the second floor in time for Robert Beverly Hale’s famous lectures at the League.

I hovered outside the entrance to the crowded drawing studio, listening in awe. Inevitably, Rosina Florio, then the head of ASL, hearing that the “little girl” was back, grabbed me by the scruff of my neck and escorted me out the front door again. That became a weekly ritual.

Finally, Ethel Katz, “the children’s class” teacher, came to my rescue. She told Rosina that I should be allowed to stay. A compromise was reached. Since I was considered too young to draw from life, I would be permitted to listen to Mr. Hale’s talks but restricted to only doing still life drawings in Mrs. Katz’s class.

To make a long story short, many years later, Rosina Florio actually hired me to



teach anatomy in the very same studio where Robert Beverly Hale had taught when I was “that little girl.”

Robert Beverly Hale was my role model. He was an artist, anatomist, poet, and inspiring speaker. He had, by the way, defied his parents by refusing to finish medical school in order to instill a respect for the beauty of the body, spirit of the soul, and freedom of the mind in the hearts of countless numbers of human beings who attended his unforgettable lectures.

Two strong women, Rosina Florio and Mrs. Ethel Katz, were my mentors. They taught me that persistence paid. They taught me that a woman could succeed in the art world.

But I would have to be more qualified than anyone else and my artwork so strong that it could not be dismissed. Being a woman artist was then, and still remains, a challenge to be seriously considered, faced, and conquered.

So I followed their advice, attending

classes as frequently as possible, often drawing next to Nicki Orbach and Ira Goldberg, and eventually became Robert Beverly Hale’s class monitor. Then, when married with two young children, I steadily worked on my art projects in the attic while everyone was asleep. Reading about open juried competitions in an art magazine, I took a chance, entered a few and was shocked to find that I consistently won first prize, even in museum exhibitions.



“It is only when what
can be taught is
working in perfect
harmony with what
cannot be taught that
a work of art results.”

Harold Speed, 1873

Year after year, I applied to teach at the ASL and, each time, Rosina turned me down, briskly informing me of some qualification I was still lacking. Finally, having completed a master's degree from Columbia University Teachers College at night, the dissection course at New York University Medical School and one year of teaching at Montclair Art Museum, I was enjoying monitoring for Harvey Dinnerstein and happily working on a painting when Rosina summoned me to her office.

She announced that I had one night to make a very important decision. I could either remain a student or teach at the League but I could not do both. It was time to take the next step: to get a studio, to find my own voice and go for it. I was terribly scared but it worked!

As a young woman, I had had a “bucket list.” I wanted to be an artist, to have a studio, to have my artwork acknowledged and shown in galleries and museums, possibly even to curate exhibitions. I had wanted to spend my life studying, writing, and teaching about art; helping my students achieve their goals.

No one is more surprised than I am to look back and realize it has all come true.

“It is only when what can be taught is working in perfect harmony with what cannot be taught that a work of art results.”
Harold Speed, 1873. 📖

Sherry Camhy, *Woman* (work in progress), graphite on paper, 6 x 4 ft.



Nature inspired my creative journey. This marvelous, mysterious inspiration began in early childhood.

I was born in Hamburg-Blankenese, Germany, near the Elbe River. The daily experience with nature's infinite wonders—the humming melody of the wind, the light-streams of the sun, the colorful diversity of bird songs, and enchanting rhythmic river sounds—awakened the creative energy within my soul.

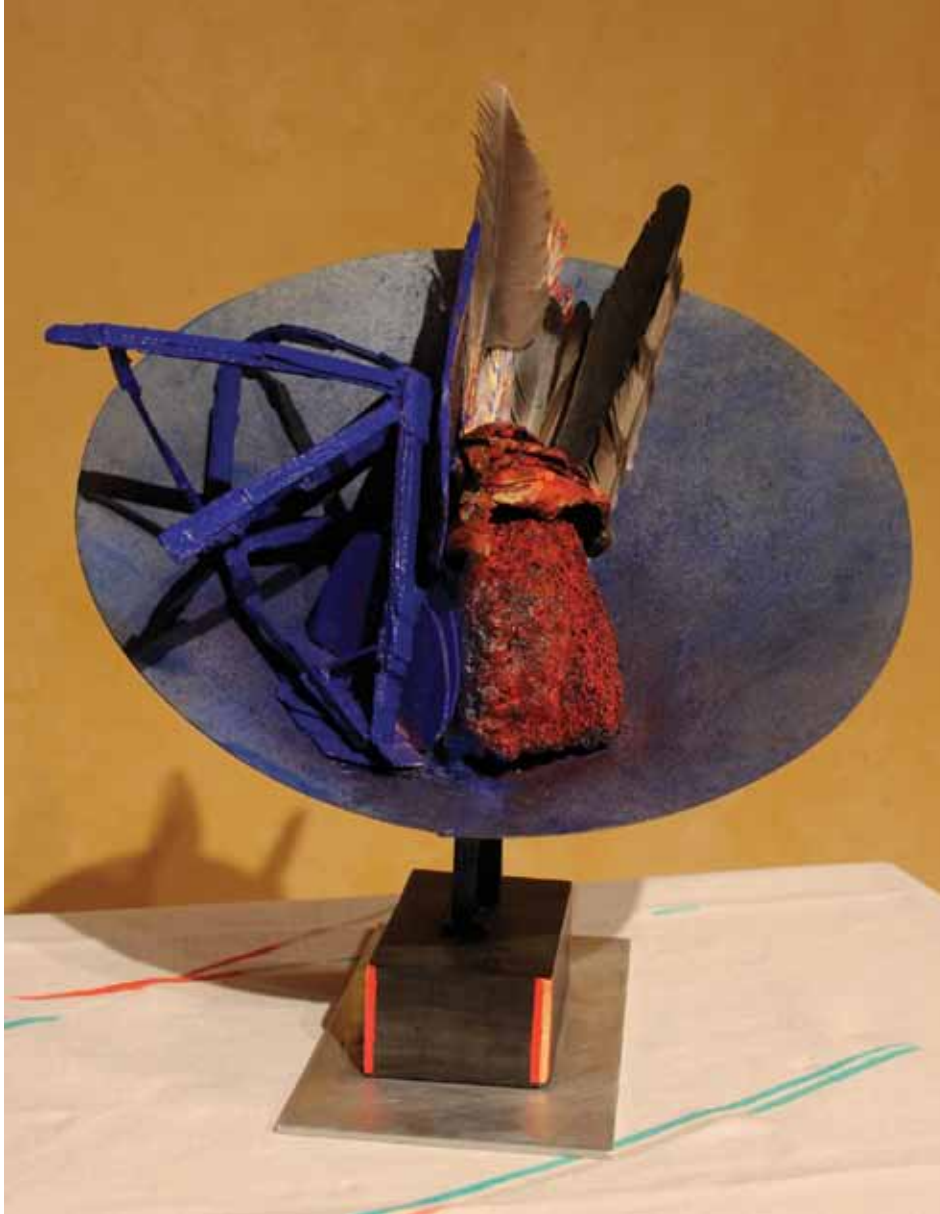
Since then, creative inspiration has accompanied me. I studied at a Rudolf Steiner School and then pursued languages and philosophy in France at both the Institut International de Rambouillet and the Sorbonne. Returning to Hamburg, I enrolled in a fine arts program. German art curricula then favored formalized training; encouragement of individual creativity was typical at that time.



Instead of pursuing the formal study of fine arts, I followed my “creative destiny” and worked on several documentary films. One of the productions took place in Paris with a focus on its increasing industry, architecture, and public light art—in particular, a spectacular sculptural light tower created by kinetic artist Nicolas Schöffer. Another production focused on the Bahama Islands, its enriching natural habitat and increasing tourism.

Curiosity then guided me to New York City, where I had family. New York became my home and again the mystery of creativity guided my interest toward the fine arts: this is how my significant creative journey began at the Art Students League.

I shall never forget the mentorship of Robert Beverly Hale who taught artistic anatomy. He used marvelous visual language and three-dimensional geometric



Artwork by Silya Kiese

Previous page, from top: *Magic Spheres*, pinewood and copper patina, 12 x 15 x 12 in.; *I designed the hat ~ yes*, photo of Silya Kiese with hat; Left: *Magic Flight*, steel, ebony wood, bronzed wing, found feather objects, 12 x 12 x 4 in., PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID REINHARDSEN; Opposite page from top: *Sunrise (Lamp Sculpture)*, colored glass, handpainted pinewood, 10-watt bulb, 20 x 5 x 4 in., PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID REINHARDSEN; *Blessed Sphere Lyrics*, magnets, metal, stone, wood, glass, color patina, 2½ ft. x 2½ ft. x 4 in.

inspired a magical “creative window,” and I began to experiment with kinetic elements originating from the motion of natural light and wind. I made gestures of movement caused by the wind; the encircling air activated correlated, discarded objects in nature—such as wood, rusted metal parts, and occasionally small pieces of rock—while the changing daylight illuminated the surface of the materials.

An exhibition on constructivism at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam rekindled my desire to explore creative projects in art making. Through László Moholy-Nagy’s abstract kinetic sculptures and installations, Sonia Delaunay’s innovative color composition in art and design, and Nicolas Schöffer’s soul enriching light art, the show exemplified the creative energy I wished to devote to art.

It may have been another “creative call from nature” as I then pursued my thesis studies in kinetic art and art history at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. This “creative destiny” guided my interest and passion in art to the West Coast where I taught interdisciplinary studio programs in drawing, sculpture, color and 3-D design influenced by Bauhaus and constructivist styles. I taught at Evergreen State College, Seattle Pacific University, and University of California, Berkeley. Seattle, surrounded by natural beauty, sparked a magnificent productive time where I developed art programs and taught inspiring topics.

When returning to NYC, the mysterious law of nature ignited “creative destiny” again, and I began to teach abstract sculpture, 3-D geometric construction, and combined materials at the renowned ASL, where I encouraged students to “shake hands” and bond with their individual creative spirit. My teaching fine art and other creative disciplines developed from an inherent respect for art, and for the study and process of art-making, if it is authentic and sincere, especially with regard to the selected materials, form, symmetry, and narrative. This belief grew from revising my artwork, experimenting, studying, and devoting time to research in history,

forms to capture and understand the relationship of simple to complex and mass to detail. Hale’s energetic visual presentations and enriching, soulful readings of William Blake’s poetry significantly inspired my creative process. Professor Hale stoked the flame of human imagination, and I’m certain that his unique gift for teaching interdisciplinary topics supported my survival as a new resident of New York City.

I had developed my ability to envision concepts and create artful lighting through my experiences learning about illuminate lighting design and setting up locations for documentaries. I started a design business, creating three-dimensional color patterns for textiles and constructing Bauhaus influenced lighting and tea lamps for the home and soul-harmony. The diverse textile patterns were presented at the Architects & Designers Building on the East Side.

I started a design business making haute couture hats. The hat I envisioned had to be wearable in all seasons, at once sporty

and fashionable. I selected an all-year-wear cotton and found professionals in the garment industry to hand-make a series of these stylish weather hats. I sold them to Yves Saint Laurent, Saks Fifth Avenue, Henri Bendel, and Bergdorf Goodman. Bergdorf Goodman offered an exclusive sales contract, meaning that the hats would only be made by them and that I, the designer, would receive a commission from annual sales. Well, my innate “creative flame” protested upon hearing that offer, and has remained a strong decision maker throughout my creative journey as a practicing artist.

My studies in fine arts and art history continued at the University of California, where a textile design commission funded my continued exploration of my interest in art. After completing my studies, I returned to the East Coast and lived in Rockland County, New York, near the legendary Hudson River.

So close to the Hudson, nature again

natural sciences, literature, philosophy, and music.

For the past two years, I have conducted workshops on inspirational writing at the Art Students League. I developed this writing adventure for people from all backgrounds to unfurl oft-hidden talent. These workshops inspire imagination and discovery, support explorative projects, and recognize creative talents. I guide students in exploring and examining the potential of word and text, and they utilize writing to create imaginative, energetic, and lyrical word associations from the depths of the soul.

My workshop introduces exceptional sounds from nature, visual fine arts presentations, and readings by well-known poets and writers. Discovering the talent for composition helps develop skills for important tasks, such as compiling portfolios or writing books, poetry, and statements on individual art works.

Writing, like art making, is a creative pursuit and requires self-direction, which makes students sound uniquely themselves. I consider self-direction a significant skill because, in time, students become aware of action and begin to show authentic solidity in their lives. Eventually, they become aware of the freedom of sacrifice, which implies service and work on social issues and environmental and human projects.

My aim is to create art that preserves the pulse of the beautiful; similar to revealing the depth of a poem or the voice inherent within an object of art. As all in nature is beautiful yet endangered. I develop concepts related to art and ecology and art and ontology, using light, glass, natural wood, stone minerals and diverse metals for contrast and structural stability.

My artistic philosophy is similar to that of light artist Nicolas Schöffer who aims to manifest the natural law that opens up the essential and nourishes elements of nature in human consciousness. His belief was that if you keep facing the light, the dark shadows will not cross your path. The vibrations of light in Schöffer's work inspire higher thought and ignite "loving nature within

humankind." He was aware that natural light-waves influence human consciousness and nourish and protect human perception, thoughts, and feelings while opening up the intuitive sense, the human mind, the imagination, and the inner self.

My passion has always centered on the visual poetry of light, on apparent motion combined with geometric, circular, and other structures which are the hallmarks in my abstract series in sculpture and lamp sculptures. As the flame of light moves, its constant rhythm has to be embraced by a concrete form, such as the circle or other complementary geometric forms. The circle inspires poetic rhythm and movement and thereby conducts a harmonic visual tangible



form, similar to grace, compassion, and understanding, as it transmits through nature and universal light and then awakens innate creative energy of light within the human soul. 🌟



Reflections on Silya Kiese

Talya Stein

Silya—

My artistic guru.

An amazing teacher, and guide for life.

Always looks straight into your soul.

She thinks a few seconds before she speaks, to figure out exactly the right words, and usually whispers so that you to lean in and really listen.

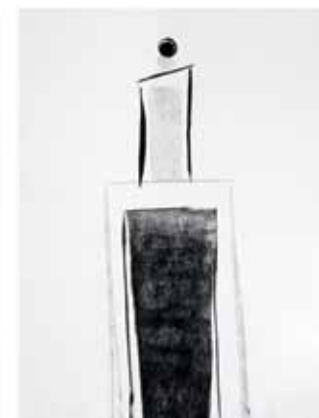
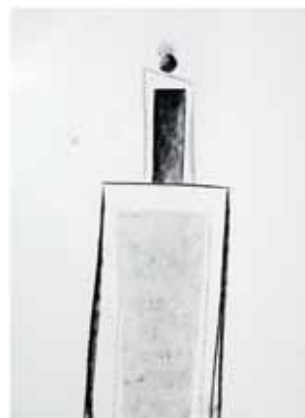
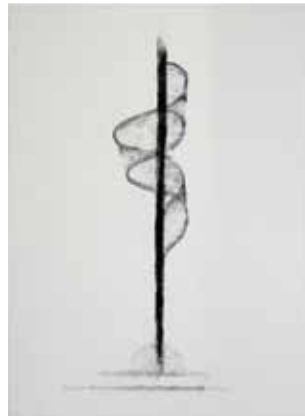
A true leader. Tough and soft. The best.

My background was clay sculpting; I studied visual design and became a graphic designer. I came to Silya after not making art for three years and she gave me the space and guidance to let it all out. I started off drawing with coal. Silya introduced me to wax sculpting.

Silya's alphabet in geometrical lesson is one that goes in deep. She creates energy in her class that is uniquely her own. There would always be interesting conversation between students and great encouragement to speak up.

I recently graduated from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts Interactive Telecommunication Program. Today I work as a physical computerist and make sculptures that move. Silya made me understand that art is my calling, that I have to dedicate my life to it, that I have to create. She's the most wonderful teacher I ever had. 🙌

www.steintalya.com/itp



Artwork by Talya Stein
Untitled works on paper, with charcoal
38 x 26 inches (each)

SEEDS OF THE LEAGUE

From June 10 through August 24, 2014, seventy-seven works of art were exhibited in the Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. These works were selected by a jury from a pool of more than 900 entries from elementary and high school students throughout New York City. Devon Rodriguez was one of the exhibited artists. This past summer we were able to award 64 scholarships to talented teens and pre-teens from NYC schools to study at the League. Devon was a Seeds of the League Jack Kamen Scholar who studied painting with Dan Thompson and Jon DeMartin for two summers. He also went on to win second place in the National Arts Club portrait competition. A resident of the Bronx, Devon graduated this year from the High School of Art and Design and will attend Fashion Institute of Technology before going on to the Rhode Island School of Design. We are pleased to introduce him in his own words.

Devon Rodriguez

High School of Art & Design
Teacher: James Harrington

The Art Students League
Seeds of the League Jack Kamen Scholar

Back in the '70s and '80s some students at my school (HSAD) painted scenes of the school which were phenomenal, especially for their age. They were so great that the school kept the pieces in their permanent collection and the works now hang in the lobby. During 2012, our school moved to a new state-of-the-art facility, which was only a block away. My illustration teacher, Mr. Harrington, asked me and a few others to paint "new school" scenes to contrast with the old ones.

I was so excited to take this offer. On my way back home, I sketched a bunch of compositions and showed them to him the next day. He rejected all of them. As I walked through the halls of my school, I noticed all of the teenage characters and observed their behaviors for inspiration.

I then thought of using the Art Spiegelman mural that's on the sixth floor, since it's very evocative of the new building. So, after Mr. Harrington finally approved my thumbnails, I gathered my friends as models and organized my photo reference, using newly provided technologies such as Photoshop (which wasn't available in the old days)—which added something new to the piece. My painting is basically a product of what I see at my school. 🌱

devonrodriguez.com



remembrance
MARILYN & BOB LAURIE



“WAKE UP!

Be aware, and savor every delicious moment.

NURTURE YOUR DREAMS

and the dreams of those you love.

CALL UP THE ENERGY

and creativity to break out of your box.

MAKE WAVES.

FIND TIME

to bond with friends and family.

HAVE THE AMBITION

to influence the future, the courage to stand up for your ideas

and the stamina to make yourself heard.”

From the writings of Marilyn Laurie

Bob Laurie was active in the things he loved through the end of his life. He continued to paint and take class at the League. He also worked to honor the memory of his wife, Marilyn, who passed away in 2010. Prior to his death in July 2014, Bob established the Marilyn Laurie Grant at the League to perpetuate his and Marilyn's love of the arts and their support of emerging artists. The grant will be awarded for the first time during the grants and scholarships competition in May 2015.

Bob Laurie about Marilyn

Marilyn has always written, often to clarify issues that did not lend themselves to quick and easy interpretation. She has also, apparently, never thrown any of it away. I have notes that, although not dated, surely must go back to her high school days, if not earlier.

All of her writings are characterized by her inquiring spirit. Seldom in haste to make a judgment, Marilyn preferred to examine an issue on all sides, which she recorded. I actually found a list detailing the “pro” and “con” qualities about me (which I will not share with you), obviously written before she decided to marry me.

This inquiring spirit survived and developed as she matured while entering the fields of philanthropy, industry and science, the arts, academe, medicine, and public relations.

Marilyn Laurie about Bob

From a 1999 letter from Marilyn Laurie to Max Horbund, then the President of the League's Board of Control:

The Art Students League has played a significant role in my husband's life for as long as I have known him...and before.

In his late teen years, it gave him confidence to choose graphic arts as the field to earn his living. Whenever he talked about it in the years that followed, it was always as a beacon—a place that represented unique ways to encourage creativity, an environment that offered support and generosity of spirit from both teachers and colleagues, and a hope to the kind of art he loved. It was a place he longed to return to and when we finally moved back to New York, he did. Once again, it changed his life.

From the writings of Marilyn Laurie:

I would like to think I changed a few things along the way. I'd like to think that I caused a fair number of people to care about the environment at a time when it was not an issue. I'd like to think I helped AT&T be more successful in the era when it was of great service to the world. I would hope I caused some people, who do what we do, to think that you can do it with integrity and with courage. I've tried to work with entities that I think make the world a better place, and I've tried to help them be more successful at what they do well. It's so important that what you do when you go to work in the morning matters to you. And I hope the people who worked with me felt that way.

As you know, you can now find Bob any morning painting in one or another studio at the League. It's been a joy to watch him grow. When you are married for over 30 years, you don't expect the kind of surprises that he now brings home! The past few years have not only rekindled latent talents but produced artistic capabilities I don't think he even knew he had.

None of this would have happened without the kind of nurturing that the League's atelier system makes possible. We are both grateful to the various instructors who have shared their insights and challenged him to push into new territory.

About Marilyn and Bob Laurie

Bob Laurie enrolled in John Groth's class at the Art Students League in 1948, forging a bond that would last his entire life. His classes with Groth and with Ivan Olinsky would give him the basis for a long, successful career in commercial art, integrating classical compositional components into his layout and design. Clients would include major corporations and nonprofits, as well as magazines and fine-art publishing houses. Bob was also an early contributor to the design of *LINEA: Journal of the Art Students League* (now an online publication at www.asllinea.org).

Bob also explored composition through photography; focusing both on landscape and the figure. Some of his photographs are permanently displayed in Leopoldskron Castle in Austria. In recent years, Bob moved his focus back to oil painting, specializing in landscapes and cityscapes. New York was a favorite subject, as was

"Bob's Art Gallery," a narrative tool that allowed him to play with composition and to juxtapose global art, city, and landscapes.

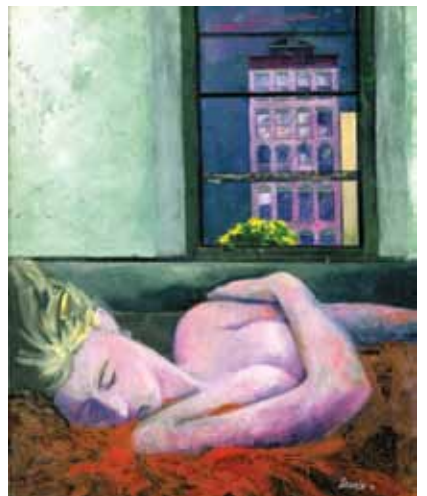
A warm and approachable presence as a student, friend, and board member, he will be greatly missed.

Marilyn Laurie was raised in the Bronx and educated at Barnard, Marilyn Laurie was determined to change the world. After cofounding Earth Day and the Environmental Action Coalition, Marilyn began working for AT&T in the early 1970s. Initially hired to develop an environmental volunteer program, she rose in the ranks to the position of Executive Vice President—the highest-ranking woman in the history of the company, at the top of a communications organization of 500 people. She also served as president of Laurie Consulting, Inc., working with corporations and nonprofits to develop branding and public relations strategies.

Marilyn was a member of the Executive Committee of the New York City Partnership, President of the Arthur Page Society, and Chairman of the Public Relations Seminar. In 1999, she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Inside PR. She also served as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Columbia University, and as a Director of the New York City Ballet and New York Presbyterian Hospital. She was named by the *Columbia Spectator* as one of the 100 most influential Columbia Alumni of all time—one gradation more influential than *New York Times* publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger. 🌍

Artwork by Bob Laurie

From top: *Self Portrait on Lex.*, oil on canvas, 30 x 30 in.; *Wilson*, charcoal on paper, 20 x 25 in.; *Lej da Segl, CH*, oil on canvas, 30 x 30 in.; *Slumber on Third*, oil and wood on canvas, 24 x 30 in.





Elected to the Membership of the Art Students League on April 9, 2014

Welcome New Members

Sophia Angelakis
Santiago Apolo Troya
Valentina Bardavid Hoecker
Maura Bluestone
Carol Borelli
Alanna Burns
Liza Casey
Chengwei Chen
Ezra Cohen
Adrienne Cosner
Jeremy Day
Guy De Baere
Linda Dennery
Judah Feigenbaum
Ananda Fetherston
Judith Kurz Foster
Wendy Freund
Jennifer Frisbie

Seiji Gailey
Christine Galvez-Le Coueffic
José Gastelum
David Ginsberg
Yana Golikova
Ciro Gonzalez, Jr
Bevin Gordon
Ivy Greenman
Nathalie Madelaine Gregoire
Debora Grobman
Maureen Guinan Fitzgerald
Henry Gurule
Heike Hilarius-Heimbach
Ivy Jaquez
Pamela Jennings
Marc Josloff
Ruth Kaufman
Jane Kennedy

Eun Jin Kim
June Kosloff
Kristina Kossi
Douglas Krakauer
Chandle Lee
Esther Lo
Camila Constanza Lopez
Corona
Arline Mann
Ana Marti Monroy
William McDonough
James Lancel McElhinney
Ellen Miller
Ann Marie Nazzaro
Ralph Roma
Christina Rosen
Pitchanan Saay-Op-Oua
Montserrat Sanchez

Michael Scrivana
Rachel Lulov Segall
Parisa Shabanidaryani
Michael Shannon
Robert Sisselman
Mei Tsai
Ronald Underberg
Elizabeth Velazquez
Sergio Verdeza
Marck Webster
Ephraim Wechsler
Pinar Yilmaz
Connie Zack
Mariana Zanina
Christopher Zavelo
Brian Zukauskas

2014–15 Calendar: League Dates to Remember

October 20–November 9	Making/Breaking Traditions: Teachers of Ai Weiwei
October 22	Members Business Meeting
November 13–December 3	Grant Winners Exhibition
November 27	Thanksgiving Day (League Closed)
December 3	Annual Members Meeting
December 10–22	Holiday Show and Sale
December 25	Christmas Day (League Closed)
January 1	New Year's Day (League Closed)
January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (League Closed)

Stay in E-Touch

If you've enjoyed *Lines*, you'll want to keep up with League members and events online by visiting our website, www.theartstudentsleague.org.

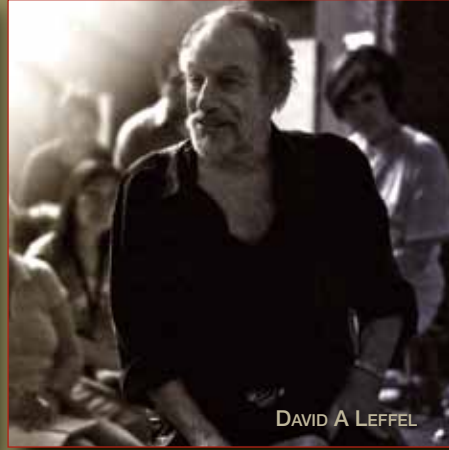
We've added a Members page with key dates and an *In Memoriam* section.

From the League's website you can:

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The Art Students League of New York

215 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019 TEL: (212) 247-4510
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