

ARTISTIC CREATIVITY: TRANSFORMING SORROW INTO BEAUTY, TRUTH AND ART

by

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ABSTRACT

Artistic creativity transforms sorrow into beauty, truth and art by making the invisible visible. Works of art make inner feelings public and invite the viewer to share in the artist's search for self-discovery. This requires emotional participation balanced by the intellectual mind in order that we may experience delight and wonder as sorrow is changed into beauty as the truth of Being and being human is revealed.

Rembrandt, van Gogh, Kollwitz, and Kiefer, among many others, have created art works that transcend the sorrow of human existence. Hoftstadler (1971) notes that the revelation of truth "opens up the possibility of authentic human existence...it bids all that is, world and things, earth and sky, divinities and mortals, to come, gather into the simple one fold of their intimate belonging together, even with all their differences" (p. x-iv).

Arts education teaches the rules and skills required to express and appreciate inner aesthetic knowledge that reconciles the Cartesian mind-body split. Participation in the arts is a necessary part of the education of the next generation because it teaches appreciation of the differences as well as the universality of human expression. The arts across time and place reveal and share the timeless beauty and truth of all cultures and may facilitate understanding and respect for ourselves as well as for others.

DEDICATION

To the late Joseph Campbell for his inspiration and advise to always listen
to the inner wisdom of the body and always "follow your bliss"

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CHAPTER ONE: ARTISTIC CREATIVITY AND INNERNESS

Artistic creativity is the vehicle for the transformation of the sorrows of the world into beauty, truth and art, by making the invisible, visible. By 'beauty' I mean the quality of experience that gives us pleasure and a deep sense of satisfaction, both to the artist and the viewer. As we engage in the experience of beauty, truth is revealed. By 'truth' I mean the honest and sincere recognition of being in harmony with the experience of our human existence in the world. Truth exposes inner emotions and archetypal images that may hold value for the artist, as well as the viewer. These images seem to have a mythic origin that connects to universal truth transcending our cultural differences. It is the wisdom that resides in the intuitive and sensuous body that guides the artistic process, if only we stop and listen to our inner voice. .

These archetypal images sometimes emerge during the painting process and they often seem to tell a mythological story. These images appear intuitively and spontaneously from innerness and are not readily accessible to the intellectual mind. In my own work, these images are intuitively understood as inner body-knowing, yet it may take time to understand them intellectually, as the layers of meaning unfold. Often I must go to a book to discover the mythological story behind a particular painting.

John Gilmour (1990) notes that Anselm Kiefer, a Post-modern German painter, is also influenced by mythology. He uses the mythological metaphor of Prometheus, who steals fire from the gods to give to humanity to describe the expressive artistic process. Fire is symbolic of the light of spirit that is partially revealed in a work of art. Heidegger (1971) concurs as he describes artistic creativity as “the truth of unveiled presence” (p. 40).

Exposing unveiled presence is also what I mean by body-knowing, which encompasses the senses, yet goes beyond them into a deeper stratum of inner experience that seems to be linked to ancient primordial knowledge; primordial in the sense of prehistoric knowledge that has been suppressed and almost forgotten, yet has guided our ancestors for millenia. I feel that it is the inner wisdom of the sensuous body that links us to the natural world. Primitive oral cultures still retain to some extent, the ability to connect body-knowing with the intellectual mind through participation in the rituals, mythologies and the arts, but the connection between body and mind has been almost lost in contemporary western culture.

Plato, in *The Republic* written in the 4th century B.C.E. points out that it was more important to educate the mind over the body, and he seems to have been the precursor of the Cartesian mind-body split of the 16th century. With the advent of the industrial revolution, our connection to nature and intuitive body-knowing became increasingly suppressed.

Body-knowing is our sensuous and emotional connection to our inner nature as well as the natural environment in which we live. As we lost our connection to nature and the land that sustains us, body-knowing became a separate and distinct type of knowledge from the rationality of the ego mind. Plato banished the poets because he feared the wisdom of the sensuous body, and over time, the artists and poets became the keepers of this hidden knowledge made visible in their works of art.

In my own work, I try intentionally to loosen control of the intellectual ego as much as possible in order that my body and the body of the paint can interact successfully in a mutual dialogue. For me, it is a type of meditation that transcends time and place. Often it is difficult to stop the nattering mind from interfering in the artistic creative process, but later, when the images have become visible, the intellect will edit and interpret the meaning inherent in the forms. These meanings are often surprisingly accurate and express not only my personal inner emotions, but can also be understood by others on an emotional as well as intellectual level.

We feel physically and emotionally, the sincerity of the inner voice, and recognize the truth of the feelings that are exposed. Bringing the emotions that are inherent in body-knowing into form transcends the sorrow that hides in the shadows of our inner self. As invisible and often troubling emotions are revealed, they are transformed into genuine truth that shines forth from the art work in a subtle and beautiful language that can, at least

partially, be shared with others.

The artist as transformer will be capable of flexibility and imaginative free play with the artistic medium, yet have a strong basis in reality.

Archetypal images often seem to arise out of inner feelings from within the body that may be understood by the mind when they are expressed in the art work. For me the work of art makes visible valuable knowledge that I can not access in any other way, except through the artistic creative process. It seems to me that when the artist is able to relinquish ego control for the time being, it is possible to access a deep inner knowledge that lies waiting to be heard. The body naturally knows what needs to be expressed and will guide the artist through the creative process.

As the artist searches for self-expression and personal truth, a deeper and seemingly more universal truth is also revealed that has its roots in mythology. There seems to be a type of mythological knowledge that lies beneath consciousness that links our body to our ancestors, as well as to all living beings on earth, past present and future. This sense of deep inner connectedness of everything around us in the world is a universal truth that reveals itself in the work of art. Artists know intuitively that truth, beauty and art are one. The arts are the shared language of our basic human emotions that are common to everyone.

A great work of art has a genuine quality that is unique to the artist,

and is a sincere expression of one's inner being. There is a profound satisfaction when one discovers the wisdom that emerges out of the beauty of the artistic medium, be it a painting or a song. The artist knows that the often cruel world of our daily existence can be transformed into a beautiful work of art. They often live abysmal lives that seem to be almost a prerequisite in obtaining a compassionate eye. Works of art that are informed by a compassionate eye express a sublime beauty that gives us tremendous and often timeless pleasure.

It requires courage to risk exposing one's internal emotions that lie buried in the unconscious memory of our body into a work of art for all to see, but this is rewarded by the dispelling of the illusion of separateness that is the sorrow of the world. By making public inner emotions, artistic creativity and imagination seem to partly reconcile the 'mind-body' Cartesian split that constitutes the illusion that all life is sorrowful, as Schopenhauer put it. The act of creation involves exposing the archetypal images that lie hidden in the shadows waiting to be brought into existence.

The illumination of what has previously been hidden in our mysterious dark body memory seems to require, at least in my own work, that the rational mind relinquish control for a period of time in order that the artist is able to respond naturally and intuitively to the quiet promptings of the emotional inner body. As the images emerge, their revelation have a transformative power, both for the artist and often for society, as well as for

future generations, as the innerness of being human becomes visible in the art work.

As the artist explores the inner memories that come out of the medium, intuitive responses resonate deep within the body. John Gilmour (1990) quotes Anselm Kiefer as saying that he sees artistic creativity as "perceiving as precisely as possible that which goes through me as an example for that which goes through others" (p. 57). The act of creating form, for me has an 'opening up of myself to me' feeling that can be exhilarating. Often, I feel that the artefact of the work that comes from this experience is a great gift that speaks directly to the heart. Only later does the intellectual mind begin to judge and perhaps edit the art work, but the concept or image must not be altered. When I can see the art work with delight and wonder at what has been revealed, I know that the work has truth. If I stay true to what has been discovered, the art work has a quality of recognizable sincerity that speaks to the sensuous and emotional body. Aesthetic experience is then reciprocal as feelings of delight and wonder at form and beauty, are in harmony with the meaning of its truth.

In the attempt to create beauty from the sorrows of the world, the artist requires solitude for inner reflection. The creative process is the quest of the individual seeking self revelation through the creative process, yet in quiet contemplation, greater truth is often found. The stillness of the mind allows creativity to flow through the body and into the artistic medium.

Heidegger (1971) points out that the artist must step over the “stillness over the doorway” (p. 203). It is in the stillness that the artist finds the truth that the sorrow of a seemingly finite and limited world is but an illusion, and we are all part of the natural cycles of birth, death and rebirth.

Van Gogh’s paintings celebrate these eternal rhythms of nature and the recurring themes of birth, death and rebirth. His paintings are expressions of the cycles of nature and experienced moods, both within himself, and in the rhythms of nature. Frank Elgar (1958) notes that Van Gogh recognized the connection to the rhythms of nature, and described in paint, these powerful rhythms as the earth’s symphonic and dramatic music. Van Gogh’s paintings have become the vehicle of transformation as he expresses nature’s rhythms in “an *allegro* movement of lines and a triumphant hymn of colours” (p. 126). Inspired by sorrow, he discovers the truth of infinity and gives the world so much beauty in the works of art he left behind. He felt that he owed something in return for his short and often difficult life, and his works of art are a legacy that reveals that the world is still a beautiful place, even when all too often it seems full of suffering. His works are unique expressions of authentic lived experience, and a celebration of the cycles and regeneration of nature.

By living an authentic life, the artist models for others how to live in the world as the Eye-I of the World, that Heidegger called *Dasein*. *Dasein* is a German word that means “to be present, to exist”, as well as “existence

and presence" (p. 48). Heidegger (1961) describes *Dasein* as "laying bare the horizon for the interpretation of the meaning of Being in general" (p. 36). I see Heidegger as carrying on a dialogue between Being, the infinite potential of whom we really are, and being, the individual temporal body and mind that we seem to be. It is in the body that we encounter and interact with each other and the world. Yet the individual body is both an autonomous and collective entity. Individuals are unique from other individuals, yet we are also part of all creation. Our bodies are the unique eyes of the world and our creative expressions of inwardness cannot be duplicated. Each individual is unique. There never was and never will be another quite like you or I, and each one of us has a unique vision which it is our life's purpose to express.

This simple yet profound truth is crucial for education today. In our global society, teachers and curriculum need to facilitate the respect for diversity in their students. The spark of genius in each of us needs to be fostered for it to flower. 'Genius' as the ancient Greeks thought of it, is the guardian spirit that is given to us at birth, and that each one of us has inside our body. It is that spark of a larger me that guides my body throughout the experiences of my existence. The body intuitively recognizes 'genius' when it 'sees' it, often embedded within a work of art. It is our 'body knowing' that recognizes the truth that lies mysteriously exposed in an art work, be it a painting or a dance.

It is the function of the artist to give unique personal expression to this inner truth that is informed by the body. It involves risking exposure and vulnerability in the revelation of innerness and making the invisible visible. Matthew Biro (1998) describes it as the revelation of a mystery and truth of Being, and being human in the world that gives the work of art its authenticity. By authenticity, I mean the quality of honest and genuinely expressed emotions that are informed by our lived experience that the artistic process manifests. Authenticity is recognized by both the artist and the viewer, not only with the rational mind, but also in the emotional responses that we may experience when engaged with the work of art.

For example, *Run to the Light* (1988) is one of my own paintings that was created from inner emotions and body wisdom that speaks silently of truth that I needed at the time, which was revealed in the beauty of the paint. It is the authentic expression of the invisible that speaks of personal as well as universal truth that underlies our cultural conditioning. Although the expression of truth is often diverse across cultures, the universal truth that everyone has feelings and emotions is the common denominator among all living beings. This is the universal, emotional truth that the artist strives to bring into form. It is Being exposed, yet by revealing one's innermost being, the truth is at the same time universal truth.

This particular work was inspired by the sorrow in my own life and on a larger scale, the misery we hear about in other parts of the world. When it

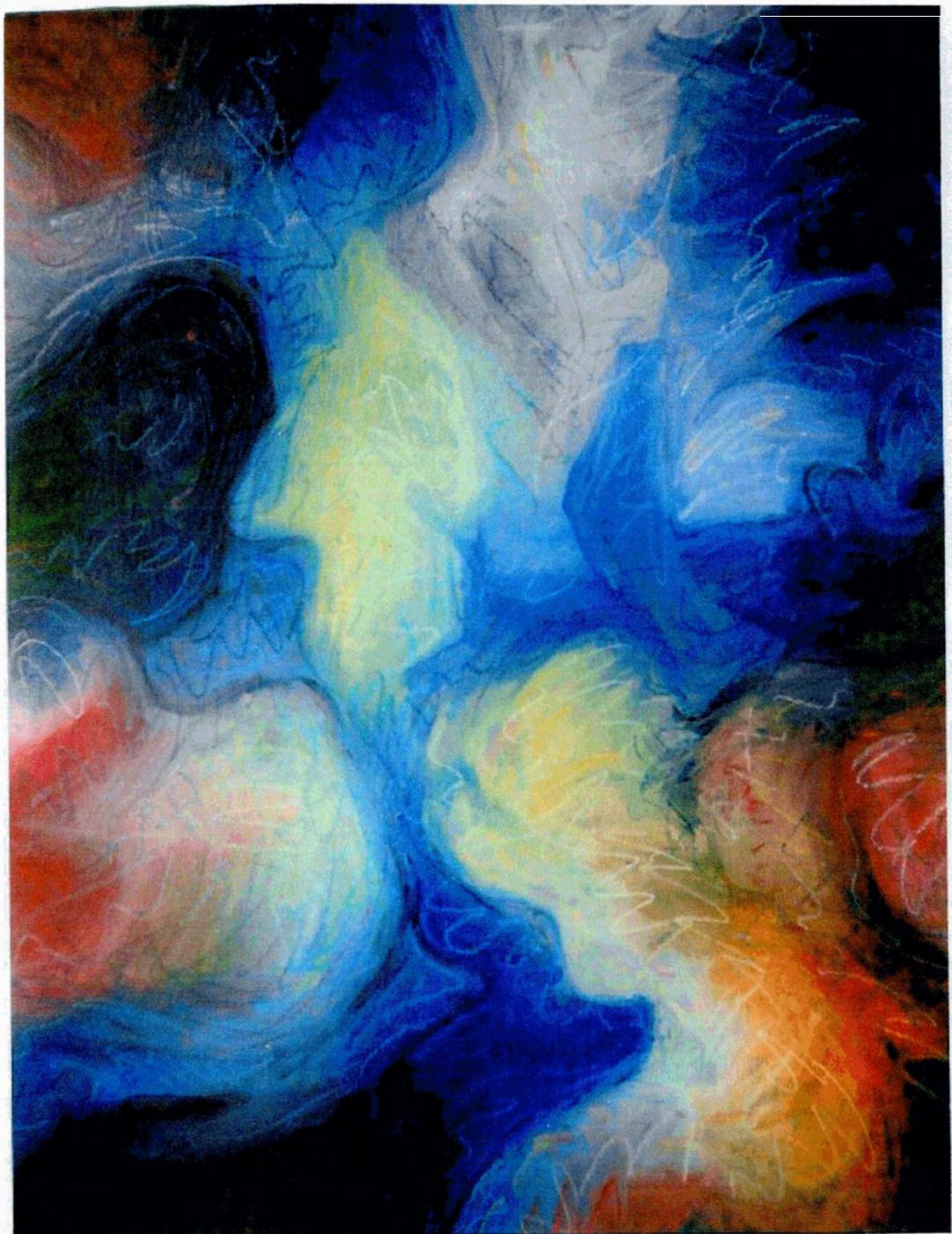


Illustration 1

Run to the Light (1988)

was finished, it seemed to say that although the times were often difficult, there was a light at the end of the tunnel. This expression of inner sorrow inspired a quest for knowledge, artistic as well as intellectual, in the search for beauty and truth. Revelation of inner wisdom that this painting gently speaks of was the affirmation so desperately needed at the time. Looking at this painting, as well as the others, so many years later, I remember exactly what I was feeling when these images came through me. The art work has become the artefact for these feelings and holds them secure in time and space, for all to see. This is the source of all original works of art, and each expression will be unique and different from any other work of art.

Artistic creativity is the expression of authentic innerness, and as the invisible becomes visible and public, the art work becomes open to evaluation by the world. Heidegger (1971) notes that the art work has "to stand on its own for itself alone [and that] the artist is inconsequential as compared with the work" (p. 40). Art works remain as imperfect artefacts or symbols that penetrate this seemingly sorrowful human existence to discover that beauty is a revelation of truth that cannot be found in any other way. Laszlo Versenyi (1965) remarks that if the artist has been successful in projecting and disclosing the truth of Being into the work, it is recognized as the "something else" (p. 101) that shines forth from behind the artistic medium.

Koestler (1976) in *The Act of Creation* agrees and refers to the

essence of a painting as being more than “a pattern of pigment on canvas” (p. 370). Rather, it is the singular expression of “something which is not the canvas plus pigment” (p. 370), but is an invitation to the viewer to partially share in the artistic experience by seeing through the artist’s eyes. Each work of art will have its own individual expression, and does not imitate or copy either from nature or from itself. It is an invitation to participate in silence as the original manifestation of Being unfolds from the medium in its disclosure of truth and beauty that go beyond the medium. The individual expression of the creative artist lies disclosed in its authenticity and is experienced by the viewer who has been invited to partially share the artist’s vision. This requires the emotional participation on the part of the viewer, who silently experiences the emotional innerness expressed in the work of art.

A work of art can only be appreciated in silence, as it speaks of the unspeakable. Heidegger visualizes this silence as the rift or threshold that both the artist and the viewer have to step over to fully experience the Being that lies embedded in the work of art. Lazlo Versenyi (1965) points out that it is in the silence of emotional engagement between the work of art and the viewer that “the opening of the rift between the world and the earth” happens (p. 96). This is the happening of truth where valuable insights are found. Insights that lead to the knowledge that underlying all the sorrows of the world, there is a profound peace and joy in the revelation of the interconnectedness of all existence that transforms it into feelings of

gratitude and joy. Frank Elgar (1958) notes that Vincent van Gogh, in reference to the happening of truth in great art, wrote in a letter to his brother, Theo as finding “God there” (p. 28).

Truth of *Dasein* and the meaning of Being and being a human existing in the world can be found by the imagination and inner body-knowing. It has a sacred and timeless quality, and is the language of our senses and emotions. Kenneth Clark (1978) describes the viewer’s emotional participation with Rembrandt’s paintings as “abandoning oneself to the piercing beauty of colour and sentiment” (p. 112). It seems that only by total abandonment to beauty is the viewer able to accompany the artist on the transformative journey that “passes out of everyday life into a world of the imagination” (p. 112). The paintings silently speak of things that cannot be said in words.

The experience of a work of art and the happening of truth that is found in its beauty have a timeless quality, as past and future melt into the ever present ‘now’ that is the revelation of Being or *Dasein*. Heidegger (1961) understands that “the interpretation of *Dasein* as temporality does not lie beyond the horizon of ordinary time” (p. 480) but is experienced bodily, here and now, in a particular time and place. As past and future are either slipping away into memory or projected elsewhere, Heidegger felt that the concealment of the “earth’s mystery”(p. 480) could never be fully illuminated, but that a great work of art somehow partially reveals the

essential truth of Being in the world.

Jerry Clegg (1994) notes that what Heidegger calls *Dasein*, Schopenhauer refers to as the Ego-Eye, and Carl Jung experiences as a transcendental part of himself that he calls the collective unconscious. This transcendental part of human existence seems to lie hidden in the shadows of the emotional and sensuous body and can be found by intuition and listening to our inner voice. Jerry Clegg (1994) refers to this non-personal and transcendent part of our nature as the Self, and as the "single world-eye that holds the universe in an endless field of vision, whose only limits are that unseen eye itself" (p. 64). The expressive artist can access this collective consciousness that lies embedded in the shadows of our body-knowing through emotional and intuitive dialogue with the artistic medium. As the medium is manipulated, images emerge that bring invisible, inner, emotional body-knowing into visible manifestation.

Joseph J. Kockelmans (1985) comments that truth in a work of art is illuminated in the beauty of the art work itself, making it possible to experience and render what beings really are, as their innerness is revealed. This innerness is recognized intuitively, both by the artist and the viewer. It confirms the Being of a monumental matrix of a shared reality that informs and underlies our everyday world, which is timeless and eternal. This body-knowing transcends the sorrow of our feelings of alienation and separateness that we experience in our individual bodies.

Jerry Clegg (1994) writes that when we engage with our inner voice, we “share in the remembered knowledge of Nietzsche’s Dionysian who sees the world with all its cruelties as a benign entertainment” (p. 64-65). If we are really present in our bodies we experience the world as if anew with childlike wonder and awe, and joyful participation in the sorrows of the world. The wisdom of the emotional body understands that the illusion of sorrow and separateness from ourselves as well as nature can be transcended.

Frank Elgar (1958) notes that Vincent van Gogh wrote in a letter to his brother that he believed that instead of life being a flat and linear distance from birth to death, the probability is that it was “spherical and much more extensive and capacious than the hemisphere we know at present” (p. 176-177). Life cannot be if there is no death, as the cycles of nature should have taught us long ago. To everything there is a season, and death follows birth, generation after generation. I think that our beingness in existence is eternal, as sure as the sun will come up tomorrow.

Rembrandt’s works of art reflect his search for the mystery of Being and being human in the world with a compassionate eye. He wants to depict the inner spirit of the people he paints, both in the religious paintings as well as his insightful self-portraits. His paintings reflect a calm and wise penetration to the essential character of the person. Robert Wallace (1969)

mentions that in one of Rembrandt's rare surviving letters he writes that his overriding "artistic concern has been in expressing the human spirit [and] the greatest inward emotion" (p. 21). His paintings are expressions of the human spirit that are still capable of stirring us today. Kenneth Clark (1978) comments that Rembrandt's self-portraits are powerful penetrations of character analyses of inner feelings and emotions that were given visible form to reveal what it means to be a human in the world.

John Gilmour (1990) writes that Anselm Kiefer also strives to "understand the process of making feelings visible by going in as deep as possible" (p. 95). I tend to agree that the images that come from the depths of innerness are linked to a type of body memory. As the artist searches for self knowledge, larger and universal knowledge is also sometimes found. Steven Madoff (1987) in an interview with Anselm Kiefer, quotes him as saying that "his art was a call to memory" (p. 128), which echoes the ancient Greek dictum 'Know thyself' with all the courage that such a seemingly simple injunction demands.

Renate Hinz (1981) mentions that Kathe Kollwitz, the German artist who lived through two world wars, was also inspired by emotional body-knowing. She distils innerness to its simplest form to give outward expression to the emotional content. The simplicity of the human forms speaks eloquently of the sorrows of war and poverty and its effects are intuitively understood.

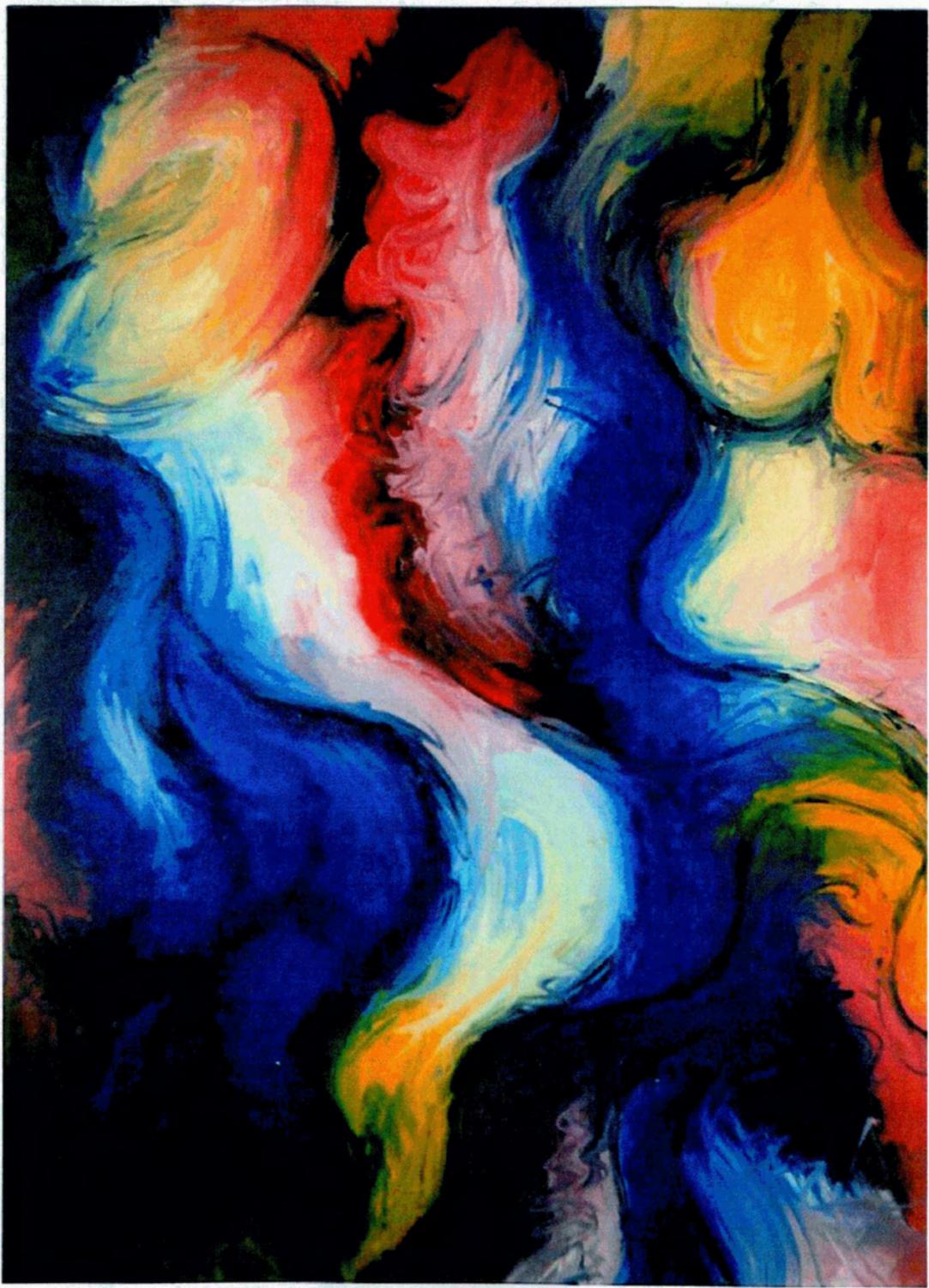


Illustration 2

Run to the Light (1988)

In my own work, the images often carry deep intuitive body-knowing that gives insights into knowledge I didn't have previously. Often there is a sense of humour that gently comes through the images that develop during the creative process. For example, *Facing the Goddess Within* (1988) makes reference to ancient goddess worship, yet the face is represented by a painter's palette. This painting expresses that for me, emotional body knowledge can be found only through the painting process that for me is a dialogue with the medium. The paint is the medium that can illuminate the dark shadow memories that emerge in the beauty of colour and form. By making inwardness open to evaluation and interpretation, the work of art does the work of exposing truth of being in the world with a subtle and profound wisdom.

Heidegger describes a painting of peasant shoes created by Vincent van Gogh to illustrate the inwardness of a work of art. His description is a poetic and emotional visualization which seems to be informed by ancient memories of living in the world of another. This painting illustrates a pair of worn shoes that illuminate the emotional content of the lived experience of the peasant who has worn them. The truth of Being and her possible existence lies embedded in the painting and can be intuitively understood. Heidegger (1971) describes the daily struggle of peasant life with all the sorrow and hardship that was involved, as well as the small joys inherent in the beauty of the earth and seasons of our lives, as creation silently shines out from beneath the paint on canvas.

Robert Wallace (1969) refers to this subtle language as a “nameless thing” (p. 135) that strives to look inward with empathy expressing a “profound and mysterious current [and] the secret quality of its other worldliness” (p. 135) informed by a meditative spirituality that touches the hearts of all who open their being to Being. It speaks of human dignity as we remember and listen to our feelings and the wisdom of the body and our existence in the world. Artistic creativity as self-revelation conceals and yet discloses the tangible and intangible in a synthesis of inner and outer worlds which is facilitated by the imagination.

The artist’s search for self-revelation and Being is made accessible by engaging with the deepest memories and emotions that are embedded in the body. Through the process of creation, a synthesis is made possible between interlocking explorations of feelings and emotions, with conscious thinking both verbal and visual. Koestler (1976) notes that artistic creativity is viewed as the discovery and “unearthing of hidden analogies or likeness” (p. 200) and ‘seeing’ through the “unconscious mind’s eye [of the imagination which requires] a change of the perceptual frame” (p. 207) in order to discover the analogy or likeness that begs to be revealed.

Artistic creativity is a discovery and recognition of truth in the work of art which is often accompanied by a ‘aha’ moment which is felt deep in the body. Koestler (1976) describes the connection to the wisdom of the body “as a sense of oceanic wonder, the most sublimated expression of the self-

transcending emotions, which is at the root of the...artist's quest for the ultimate realities of experience" (p. 258). He notes that Einstein also recognized the sensuous enchantment of an "oceanic feeling of wonder" when the pieces fall into place, and he feels that one is half dead if one is left unmoved by the capacity to wonder as it is our "common denominator and emotional bond" (p. 327).

Koestler points out artists must be willing to risk failure and it helps to approach the creative process with a playful and open mind, where elements of chance are seen as opportunities for inner discovery. This attitude seems to allow the unconscious process of perceptions and memories to come into visual play. This awareness is similar to the dream state, and comes naturally to children and primitive people, but has been subdued in western culture, in favour of intellectual rationality. The artist searches for something that is at once familiar and yet unknown in this process of self discovery. That 'something', the artist intuitively recognizes when the pieces fall into place.

Rosamond Harding (1967) feels that it is inspiration that guides artists as they disengage from time and everyday existence during artistic creation. Concern is focused entirely on the medium, be it colour, form, rhythm, or tone, and the artist is led by inspiration on the quest for truth. All that is necessary is the willingness to follow where it leads. Artistic discoveries that are found will be unique for each artist.

Rembrandt discovered Caravaggio's *chiaroscuro* and created great works of art that reflect his search for the light of Being in his subjects and himself. Frank Elgar points out that van Gogh sees the fire of love in every source of light, be it in the heavens or in the foliage of a tree. He gave the world magnificent paintings that glow with light and colour, and illuminate deep spiritual meaning that speak of his love for humanity.

Mark Rosenthal (1987) mentions that Anselm Kiefer finds his inspiration in the Germanic sagas and mythology of the *Nibelungen Ring* which had also inspired the great music of Wagner. While Wagner celebrates the mythologies of Germany, Kiefer aims at confronting the shame of Germanic history and the atrocities committed during the two world wars. His artistic inspiration is an act of personal and collective redemption as he courageously confronts the Nazi past in his art making. Kiefer's latest work explores the heavenly sphere and the stars, as van Gogh had done a century earlier. Inspired by the light and the natural cycles that unfold in a predestined pattern, the artist is at one with all living beings when inspiration takes us on an inner journey of the body and the mind. What the artist discovers will be their own unique vision, as each artist's search for truth and beauty in the medium will be uniquely personal but also universally understood.

The plight of the urban poor inspires Kathe Kollwitz to create art that celebrates the dignity of the people and her empathy for the women and

children who live a difficult life in Germany during two world wars. In the faces and bodily gestures of the people, she conveys a deep pathos that is as moving today as the day it was created, inspiring people to reconsider the consequences of war and poverty. As Kiefer did much later, she also creates an art of redemption, and Being shines bright from the images in her work, speaking of things that cannot be said in words.

My own work *Driving out the Demons* (1988) seems to communicate, in paint, the urgency of the inner search. There is always a sense of fear as one approaches the shadow world of inner body-knowing that must be overcome. This art work expresses the power of the hidden archetypes that, when faced, become our allies and are no longer demonic forces. The image speaks of truth that sorrow can be transformed by making our innerness public. By exposing the shadows that hide inside our emotional body-knowing, they become the source of inner transformational power.

It requires a childlike faith to believe that the creative process has the possibility of redemption and that the sorrow of the world contains truth and beauty that is the object of the artistic pursuit. Meyer Shapiro (1952) notes that it is an act of love that transcends the everyday world, and creates works of art that others may receive with joy and intuitive understanding. As we face our inner demons they are magically transformed and salvation is found, not only by the artist, but also the viewer who is able to respond to the Being in a work of art. This requires a self-reflective, analytical

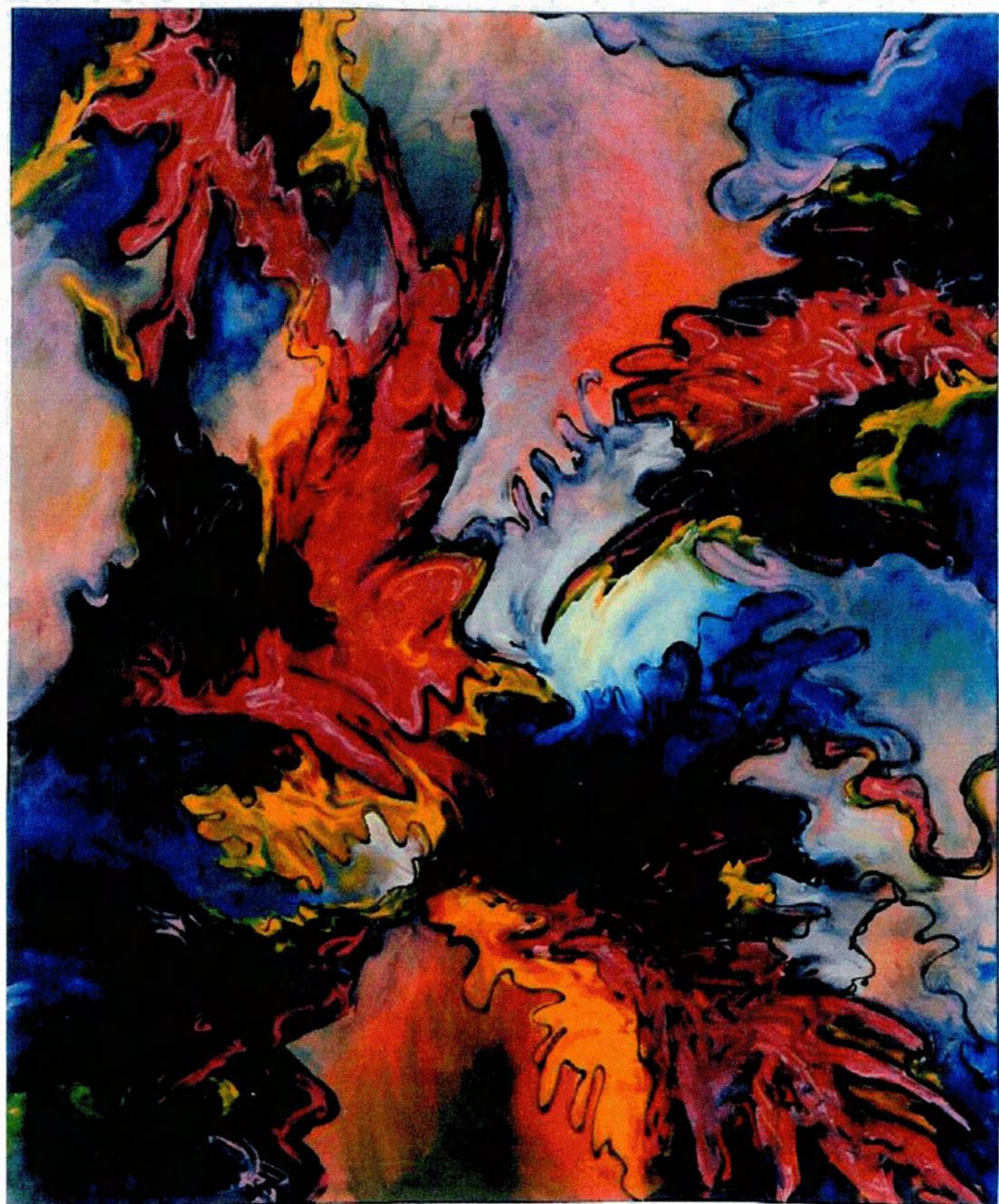


Illustration 3

Driving out the Demons (1988)

perspective, as well as the willingness to be open to the recognition of truth in the work.

The arts as the instrument of reflection and the discovery of the hiddenness of emotions often have a healing effect, for the individual as well as the culture. Rafael Lopez-Pendraza (1996) notes that the mysterious forces that are brought out in a work of art can be meditated upon once they have been revealed, connecting intellectual rationality with emotional body-knowing, and mind and body opposites are no longer split.

These reflections are often rewarded with fresh insights that expand our existence, and have a redemptive quality. As such they put us in touch with an ancient source of knowledge that appears to be embedded in our body- knowing and underlies our everyday existence. It is the mythic-poetic part of our minds that children and oral cultures intuitively remember, and that has informed all the arts, from the beginning of time. Artists know this force when it courses through their veins, and leaves behind yet another artefact that, however imperfectly, has embedded within its medium, something of Being.

The ancient Greeks were aware of the transformative power of the arts, and Kiefer is also aware that tragedy may be transcended into beauty, truth and art. He toys with the notion of redemption in *Father, Son, Holy Ghost*, 1973. Mark Rosenthal (1987) in his analysis of the meaning behind

this painting describes Kiefer's use of three chairs as symbols for religious and ethical values, a reminder that these are vulnerable, and must be protected. He notes that Kiefer's preoccupation with the good in the world offers hope of salvation, and the transcending of evil.

Kiefer is drawn to ancient alchemical practices and has used fire and lead in his work as a simulation of the alchemical process. The ancient alchemists were concerned with the transformation of lead into gold, which can be understood as a metaphor for the inner search for the truth of Being. John Gilmour notes that as a Post-modern artist, Kiefer explores the relationship between modern and ancient technology in an attempt to understand conceptual questions left unresolved in modernism that relate to the Post-modern world. By making complex emotional issues visible, the artist confronts these issues and attempts to shed light on the sorrow embedded in the emotional body, and use it as the raw material to create the great art of tomorrow.

The ability to confront the sorrow that exists in this world is a courageous act that informs both the individual artist, and the larger culture and true wisdom can only be learned from the acceptance that 'this is how it is'. Heidegger (1971) came to the conclusion that sorrow and joy are but two sides of the same coin. We cannot have one without the other and both are part of living in the world. The tragedy, despair, and pathos that surround us in our everyday existence can be seen as lessons for us to

learn from, instead of inconveniences. It is a fact that all life ends with death and this simple fact of life must be appreciated to fully enjoy living as a human being.

Robert Wallace (1974) notes that Rembrandt experienced many personal disasters in his life, yet his paintings shine with the light of empathy for the human condition. As time went by, his work only grows stronger and more tender with a deep understanding of Being and being human. His faith in the dignity of humanity has become visible in his art and still speaks silently to us today.

The tragedy in van Gogh's life is also well known, and his art transforms this sorrow into beauty that transcends the history of painting. He urgently communicates his love for nature and the suffering of human kind. Meyer Shapiro (1952) compares him to Rembrandt, whose art is also an education for our eyes that speaks to our feelings. He aims to make visible the full range of human values, transforming the sorrow of his life into incredible colour, beauty and art. Robert Wallace (1969) points out that pain was the filter in the purification of deep inner emotions that he expressed in his paintings. Intentionally wanting to express serious sorrow van Gogh paints what is in his heart and his deepest and most tender emotions are apparent in his paintings for all to see.

Artists understand intuitively that living as a human being involves

confronting the shadow in our lives. Kathe Kollwitz lived through two world wars in Germany, losing her son in the First World War and a grandson in the Second World War. Her second son, Hans Kollwitz (1988) writes in the introduction to his mother's diary, that she uses her art to illuminate the terrible living conditions of the poor and to challenge the Fascists' cry for war. Inspired by the beauty inherent in the sorrow that surrounds her, her art is a tribute to the endurance of the human spirit. The goal of this artist is the search for a universal truth that expresses that all humans feel pain, sorrow and fear. She distils the figures to their barest essentials to get at the divine spark of genius that lies hidden within the emotional and vulnerable body. These images go beyond cultural specifics and they still touch us emotionally and intellectually today.

It is through the engagement with the innerness of our being that the artist discovers the spark of divinity within us that connects us to all of existence, that the ancient Greeks called 'genius', and we intuitively recognize in a work of art. This requires a willingness to risk stepping over into another type of existence of unconscious and sometimes painful memories. By making this hidden aspect of our nature visible, the artist must have faith and be willing to plunge into the abyss. Laszlo Versenyi (1965) describes the abyss as the unknowable where opposites are reconciled, and what is hidden is revealed.

The abyss cannot be rationalized. In my own experience, it seems

to be a separate part of the psyche that requires me to temporarily relinquish ego control. I see it as an act of faith that Being will be disclosed during the creative process, and I am guided by intuitive emotional responses as images emerge from the inner world. At the same time it seems to have a transformative effect as invisible innerness is revealed.

Works of art speak of truth that reconciles the mind-body split and illuminates the world as it is with all its sorrow and joy. The seasons of nature as well as our lives are a deep source of body-knowing that contain many layers of meaning and interpretation often having a mythological content. John Gilmour (1990) notes that as we open ourselves to the emotional message in the myth of a work of art, "this opens up a form of original representation, a space within which meaning is given birth to itself [as] one opens up to the play of difference" (p. 114).

Western culture has since Descartes experienced a mind from body split that rejects the natural wisdom of the body, but primitive cultures still know how to unite the body and mind through their mythologies and dreams which give great insights about the existence of the divine. The dreamtime of the aborigines of Australia immediately comes to mind. This faith in Being cannot be rationalized and can only be understood in a reconciliation of our sensuous and emotional body-knowing, balanced by the intellect of the mind. Artists find that Being is expressed in the beauty of a work of art to provide a unique type of wisdom that was previously unavailable. Beauty

is an experience that requires that we listen in silence to a message that can only be communicated in the work of art and cannot be spoken of in words.

Works of art are saturated with meaning and knowledge that informs us how to live as human beings in the world. Beauty is the vehicle for communicating with the underlying simplicity of the existence of Being. The body intuitively responds to beauty's purely aesthetic message with a surge of pleasure which guides the artist during the creative process and the viewer in the participation of the unfolding message of Being. The artist's power to communicate both the Being in simple objects and the revelation of inner feelings is revealed in the beauty and vitality embedded in a great work of art.

Van Gogh's passionate and ecstatic expressiveness speaks to us of the loneliness and sorrow of this artist, but even more, it communicates the love he saw in everything around him. Meyer Shapiro (1952) states that van Gogh's vivid use of colour and the vigour of his brushstrokes and lines remain as a legacy of love for existence and all living things. His unique expression of his inner moods and feelings is projected into the painting for all to experience. Perhaps his loneliness gives him the freedom to explore his inner emotions in a sincere quest for Being that shines out from his paintings.

The artist must be faithful to what has been disclosed in the artistic medium, if truth of Being is revealed. This requires an open relationship between the artist and the particular medium. Heidegger (1961) states that freedom is the “essence of the truth of disclosure” as one’s inner feelings are exposed and depends on the “correctness of the relationship between knower to know” (p, 87). He describes knowledge as essentially “the schematization of chaos” (p. 71), and chaos as “the hiddenness of the unmastered abundance of the becoming and flux of the world as a whole (p. 71).

In my own work, I intentionally begin with chaos, and as images emerge out of the paint, I recognize that these images contain a message that is being revealed which gives me knowledge that I didn’t consciously have before, and wouldn’t be able to access in any other way. This requires, however, that the images are unconditionally accepted and made visible in a beautiful way. If successful, others too will intuitively feel the truth of what has been disclosed in the art work.

It has been my experience that artists tend to live a rather different life from the norm of society. We seem to live closer to the earth and have a closer relationship with nature. Hoftstadter (1971) writes in his introduction to Heidegger’s *Poetry, Language and Thought* that openness to Being requires the authenticity of human existence in the world. We live and love on the earth as mortal beings that must work hard to cultivate the land

and build and maintain our dwellings. The reality of human existence for the artist is often a remembering and responding to a call from Being and being in the world. It requires openness to often painful emotions that are transformed into a work of art.

Heidegger (1971) notes that establishing truth in the work of art involves a “bringing forth” (p. 77) a unique being that never was nor ever will be again. I agree that it feels much as if one has given birth, when we recognize the essence of body knowledge that has come into form, much like the birth of a child. Heidegger also notes that “art lets truth originate” by a “founding leap” (p. 78) that connects us to the source of inner knowledge. Julian Young (2001) concurs that the leap to the source provides a fundamental insight that all is as it should be, as “the foundation of truth consists in a coming-out-of oblivion” (p. 23).

In my work, the experience of this ‘founding leap’ happens when I connect to the images that have emerged in a meaningful way. It seems to be the moment when the intellect and the wisdom of the body are in harmony and have been reconciled, if only temporarily. This ‘leap’ is a feeling that things are exactly as they are supposed to be, as if the pieces of a puzzle have finally fallen into place. For me, the feeling of this ‘leap’ is an indescribable inner satisfaction that makes everything good, no matter how bad things seem to be.

Mary Warnock (1971) agrees that the recognition of truth is immediate and emotional, as feelings are stirred in the experience of a work of art. She claims that it is the imagination that provides insights as we respond emotionally to the beauty in the work of art.

Mark Rosenthal (1987) writes that the arts are a shared spiritual language that appears to be rooted in a common mythology and is given visual expression by “going deeper, into ancient strata” (p. 7) to reveal the artist’s mythic-poetic nature. Martin Heidegger (1971) also notes the poetic nature of the arts. In my own work, mythical images come into the paint that I might not understand right away. Often the titles that come into my mind during the creative process hint at the meaning of the forms in a painting. Often there are multiple meanings that I recognize in a painting that only become apparent over time.

Of Gods and Men (1990) is a good example of what I mean. This painting was part of a series that explores the idea of creating out of chaos to reach inward emotions. The title came, like the others, before it was finished, but at the time I didn’t fully understand it. Only a few days ago did the title become clearer, as I read Plato’s *The Republic*, where the phrase “of gods and heroes” (p. 132) occurs several times on the same page. Ironically, it is where Plato speaks of educating the mind over the body. It seems that the truth of Being that is in this painting is still unfolding, and I like the layering of different meanings. It makes a work of art richer for me,



Illustration 4

Of Gods and Men (1990)

if it can be understood on different levels.

In prehistoric times, the arts originated as sympathetic magic. Artists used imagery to bring into existence something that carries a special emotional appeal evoking archetypal, mythological symbols. Inside the cave at Lascaux, many animals were painted on the wall in the belief that they would allow themselves to be killed by the hunter who had given them form. The symbols will vary from culture to culture, but not the essential meaning of the symbols. Although culturally determined, the underlying meaning, the truth of Being, I feel is shared by all human beings. They seem to be archetypal, mythological images of our innate and shared humanness and human existence on the earth. As they are made visible in a work of art, they give a satisfaction that heals the person and the culture.

The transformative power of the arts is a powerful tool for educating emotional participation. The arts are the legacy of the best that our culture has to offer the next generation. Educating feelings and emotional sharing from one generation to the next is the responsibility of the educator and the curriculum. Arts Education can facilitate emotional sharing as students discover beauty and truth in the arts across cultures. The arts speak of living a humane life in the world and preserve the emotional experiences of artists for future generations. As new symbolic forms are created, a dialogue continues between one generation and the next and one culture to another. This dialogue will serve to deepen our understanding of the other

and teach us there is freedom in diversity.

Arts education is invaluable in facilitating students' access to their own expressiveness and by aiding them to explore their inner worlds, they will discover to their surprise, a spontaneity, that opens up a place where the search for their deepest inner knowing is rewarded by a larger view of what it means to be human. This process of discovery can begin the journey to the Self, informed by Being and being in the world and the special gifts that wait to be discovered and given form. With the pleasure and delight of discovery, and the development of skills, the artist begins to understand that all life is cyclical and that without sorrow there is no beauty, truth or art.

CHAPTER TWO: THE EXPRESSIVE ARTIST

The artist's function is to interpret, express and communicate the experience of being present in existence, and create representations that others can understand as Being revealed. The artist shows what cannot be expressed in any other way. It seems to me that artistic expression of the essence of existence is difficult to articulate in another language than the arts. In my experience it can only be found in the act of creating form that comes from going inside the wisdom of the body. What is being revealed is genuine emotion, which holds profound meaning both for the artist and the culture. By making representations of innerness, the artist creates new meaning that can only be understood by the viewer's affective response. We feel the truth of Being when we see it, it is a body knowing that is guided by our own innerness.

The artist who truly expresses innerness does not copy, imitate or look for personal glory. The purpose of artistic expression is to create something of value that will invoke a deep sense of recognition that is felt in the body. The artist hopes that this emotional response is not only personal, but that it touches others in a profound way as well. The expression of the artist's private innerness into the public objective world allows the opening of an underlying knowledge of our existence to be exposed for all to see. That is the risk the artist takes in bringing out into the open, one's own deep emotional life, and it takes courage to expose

one's emotions for judgment by others.

John Berger (2003) understands the courage of the artist and the need to "stand aloof from the struggles of our time" (p. 88), and points out that the artist's duty is to their capabilities to express "personal and introspective" (p. 88) truth. Naturally, rules and skills of the particular artistic medium play a large part in how successful the artist is in doing this. And I don't mean to imply that the artist creates in a vacuum, because works of art are influenced by time and place and the culture in which the artist lives.

Robert Albert (1992) notes that personality studies show that artists share a tendency to be stubborn in childhood, and have a vigorous ambition and need to excel when faced with obstacles. This is not surprising as it requires dedication and perseverance to continue to create art year after year, while the artist develops the skills required better to represent the inner knowledge that lies hidden within the heart. Andre Krauss (1983) writes that van Gogh persevered year after year "with the confidence and assurance that one is doing a reasonable thing" (p. 24). Personally, I would find it difficult to continue without social support if the inner journey was less fascinating and seems to be its own reward.

R. Ochse (1990) observes that researchers have also found that artists have a tendency to be more balanced in what is described as "masculine" and "feminine" (p. 124) characteristics, although this may be

mostly culturally determined. The artist's more androgynous personality traits may balance emotional knowledge of the inner body, with the strength required to withstand public exposure, in their quest for the wisdom that is exposed in the beauty of the work of art. I sometimes wonder if perhaps the metaphor of the Cartesian mind-body split has its roots in the imbalance between the genders since at least the industrial revolution. Yet we all have the capability to connect with the core of our 'genius', that source of our individual existence no matter whether we are men or women.

The artist is motivated by this spark of genius that informs our artistic creativity, in the sense of the ancient Greek conception of genius. The Greeks saw genius as the inherent spirit that each one of us receives at birth, that divine spark that is our life's task to find and develop. The notion of genius has undergone a tremendous shift over the centuries until the Romantic period. The idea of a (male) creator who is one in a million is but a relatively recent idea of the eighteenth century. R. Ochse (1990) agrees, however, that the spark of genius is what motivates the artist with persistence and the stubborn determination to succeed.

Robert Albert (1992) remarks that the qualities that are associated with artistic achievement are "perceptiveness, continuity, endurance, productivity and influence" (p. 72), and I agree that these qualities are essential to the artistic quest. The tenacious and often difficult search for meaning in the medium often seems daunting to the young artist just

beginning. They need role models to emulate who can encourage their individual journey to their own unique expressions of their humanity.

Laszlo Versenyi (1965) points out that Plato saw artists as mad, ecstatic, and possessed, and as a danger to his ideal society, because they were able to communicate a knowledge that was “more than human insight” (p. 101). Carl Pletsch (1991) comments that the artist's unpredictability and “social isolation” (p. 5) was often associated with mental instability, and society often shuns artists, while later celebrating their achievements when they are safely in the grave. Personally, I think that the artist needs to be alone much of the time to be able to reach within to find the artistic forms that will surface, given time. The hustle and bustle of daily life can be distracting and take away from the required solitude the artist needs to do her work. However, there is a price to pay for this isolation, as society often looks on the artist with suspicion.

John Berger (2003) remarks that the contemporary artist has two options available today; to serve fashion or to “arrogantly” (p. 20) search alone, often in poverty and obscurity, shunning conformity and the latest fashions of the day. It seems to me that the expressive artist, who does not imitate fashion, often must work in obscurity and isolation from society. Artistic authenticity and deep innerness is often not appreciated by the culture until the artist is long gone. No wonder that artists often have an arrogant attitude when dealing with society.

Kenneth Clark (1978) notes that often great artists appear humble, and that is true of Rembrandt, but he qualifies that by saying “however humble they may be before God, great men are usually well aware of their greatness” (p. 18). This is true of most artists who work from authentic innerness, and they intuitively know that their work has value which helps to motivate them to keep working year after year. As my own work develops over the years, I look back at some of my paintings with a deep sense of compassion and respect for the woman I was so many years ago.

Not only does the work of art mirror one’s own existence, it often holds a reflective mirror up to a culture. Art’s emotional impact is meant to deepen our reflection on reality and broaden our insights. Charles Taylor (1991) in *The Malaise of Modernity* writes that the arts are a “subtler language” (p. 81), a “forest of symbols” (p. 83) whose meaning is no longer understood by the general public. Contemporary artists must now create their own symbolic meaning in their art works that whisper of elusive emotions. Charles Taylor describes the search for “a symbolism in nature that is not based on the accepted conventions” (p. 86) whose forms speak to us directly from within an art work in an illusive language of feelings that seem to be linked to nature. I agree with Taylor that the artist is trying to “articulate something beyond the self” (p. 88). It goes deeper than the individual self and is an attempt to reconcile our fragile humanity with existence; past, present, and future.

Charles Taylor also notes that we no longer see ourselves as part of “the Great Chain of Being” (p. 89) as in the past, but that we still need to feel connected to a larger order that holds value beyond ourselves. He points out that contemporary culture has lost its connection to the earth and the natural cycles, but perhaps the subtle language of the arts may help to compensate for “the loss of a sense of belonging...by a stronger more inner sense of linkage” (p. 91). I feel that the art works of the past provide a strong link to the existence of our ancestors that we can learn much from today, and this knowledge should be passed on to future generations.

The artist’s emotional dialogue with the medium reveals an authentic representation of our sense of connection with the natural cycles that speaks to our common existence. The artist knows with an inner certainty that resonates in the body when truth has been revealed, and it is this affective component that guides our responses to the art work. We learn what it means to be human in this world from the language of art. It reveals us to ourselves, even within a landscape or in a dance.

Epona (1992) expresses the experience of freedom and depicts a nude female on the back of a great horse. Epona is the ancient Celtic warrior goddess who is worshipped for her fearlessness in battle. She is a metaphor of the struggle to be free and the need to escape into the art making process to discover hidden mythological and archetypal images that contain a message, for me and for others.



Illustration 5

Epona (1992)

Epona is an example of a timeless image that gives me the courage to go on, in an often mundane existence, to persevere in the face of all obstacles and live life to the fullest. This painting was not intended as a self-portrait, but looking back at where I was during the time it was painted, it expresses for me that a battle had been won within myself. The female form sits naked and proud on her warhorse and I like the feeling of celebration this painting now represents. It is a manifestation of a sometimes difficult journey through the seasons and events of my life and the trials that must be faced and overcome by us all.

It is in the self portrait that the artist truly shares innerness with the viewer. The self portrait is the artefact that the artist leaves as evidence of an inner search for meaning within one's own flesh. This requires the ability to synthesize psychological and pictorial elements simultaneously. It also requires empathy and courage to represent what is seen honestly, as the image of one's own face emerges out of the interplay of light and shadows.

Rembrandt's self-portraits depict an all too human face that appears out of the shadows of the painted surface that express so eloquently his inner search for the spark of humanity within himself. John Berger (2003) notes that for Rembrandt, painting his own face was "a search for an exit from the darkness" (p. 105).

Self-portraits seem to be a search for a link to whom we really are as

individuals as well as our shared humanity. It seems that this knowledge can only be found by penetrating within, and artists have discovered great truths in the exploration of their own features. Rembrandt is able to observe and depict his face with great honesty and empathy. Robert Wallace (1969) observes that these paintings are “rich with profound and mysterious current” (p. 135). Rembrandt’s self portraits show him as a deeply spiritual, meditative and dignified man, in the beauty of the light and shadow that create, as Wallace writes, “an atmosphere that half conceals and half discloses both the tangible and the intangible” (p. 135). Wallace notes that his last self-portrait of 1669, the year Rembrandt died, represents him with a “trace of philosophical humour” (p. 14). His observations are so intense and the emotional impact is so great, that his paintings “still delight, intimidate and above all move the corrupted sensibility of the twentieth century” (p.38).

Van Gogh, like Rembrandt created many self-portraits that are a testament to a man who has tried very hard to succeed, but has also come to terms with the failures in his life. His self-portraits are visual statements that synthesize the human being's need for recognition by others and the lonely and arrogant search for authenticity. His penetrating eye sees the inner spark of genius and van Gogh paints his face with radiating energy that seems to glow from between his brows.

Rafael Lopez-Pedraza (1996) writes that Anselm Kiefer uses his

body in the creation of self portraits that question and challenge the Nazi past. He photographs himself standing erect with his hand in the Nazi salute in the landscape. Putting his body in various places in Europe, he explores the feeling that drove his predecessors to the atrocities committed during two World Wars. The emotional impact that connecting his own body to the Nazi past elicits is his vehicle for personally exploring and coming to terms with the dark shadow of human nature that his culture tried to suppress. By bringing these personal and cultural memories into form, they can be learned from, so these atrocities may be avoided in the future.

Self portraits also explore the passage of time, and the aging process as they reveal how one's features change over time. The artist, with a detached eye, gives representation to this transformation and links us to nature and the cycles of our temporal existence. Rembrandt created self-portraits throughout his life, and as his face ages, his intelligent eyes remain alive and deeply penetrating. Kenneth Clark (1978) points out that we get a sense of his vitality and love for life from his self-portraits. Rembrandt's self portraits suggest that he was able to see himself with detached honesty, even as a young man, until he was old. The authentic quality of his character has been embedded in the paintings for all to see.

Kenneth Clark (1969) notes that van Gogh also makes the self portrait a part of his artistic legacy, and like Rembrandt did earlier, used the painted image as a means to express his many moods. Like Rembrandt's,

van Gogh's self portraits are autobiographical and emotional and have a strong impact on the viewer who connects to the truth inherent in these paintings.

The self-portrait invites the viewer to participate in a dialogue with the art work and to stand in the place of the artist, and see with the artist's eyes, as inner emotions are exposed and recognized in the body. Michel Haar (1996) describes the exposure of inner emotions as the "universal essence of a painting" (p. 177). He notes that artistic creativity is like a birth, a becoming visible that is rooted in the body. Michael Haar writes that the art work is a new revelation of what it means to be alive in the world, and "it figures and amplifies the metaphysical structure of our flesh" (p. 178). It is a shared experience of the essential truth that involves us in a dialogue between felt emotions and visual perception.

John Berger (2003) calls a dialogue with a work of art a "corporeal experience" (p. 109) that is shared by all and that "the spectator's body remembers its own experience" (p. 109) when confronted with the subtle language of the arts. There seems to be a type of memory that is lodged in the sensuous and emotional body that requires solitude and time to be heard. Time is required in order to be truly present in the moment and in the body, in order that the artist can attend, remember, sense and play with images and ideas as they come to consciousness. To be in that place where one is truly present and aware feels like a timeless place full of

sensuous and emotional knowledge that is discovered in the beauty of colour and pigment, or in a song.

Breathing is crucial in the experience of being alive in the body. The flow of air that goes in and out, sustains, relaxes and soothes us so we can shift our perception of time and space, in our search for inner truth. The artist also tends to live playfully, abandoning self to curiosity and wonder like children do naturally in the art medium of their choice, in order to rediscover the joy of being alive that comes from within and that frames our relationship with the world. As body and mind are in harmony, images and memories surface with a feeling of inspiration and rapture that is felt deep in the body.

Rapture is experienced as a deep feeling of recognition. Joseph Kockelmans (1985) writes that Heidegger as well as Nietzsche understand rapture (*rausch*) as an “aesthetic bodily state [that involves] the entire human reality” (p. 54). The experience of rapture permeates us physically and in the soul, with a deep sense of belonging and being loved. It speaks to our emotional being and the truth that on one level of reality, all is exactly as it should be. Rapture is the feeling in our body of the truth of Being and being human in the world.

Rapture and inspiration are both experienced intuitively, and faith and awareness are required to take the often non-rational leaps that are

demanded. The artist has to trust the process and follow where ever it may lead. Joseph Kockelmans (1985) describes rapture as opening the windows of perception, as we extend beyond ourselves to others, "in a relation in which these beings are experienced as being more fully in being than would have been the case without this feeling. And the feeling of plenitude is above all some form of attunement which is disposed that nothing is foreign to it" (p. 55).

Rapture is the experience of really seeing, not only oneself, but the other, and in one moment we are aware that we and the other are one, and our separation is only an illusion. It the space where I and the other meet, in the meeting of our differences, that Heidegger (1971) calls the abyss of being, where truth, beauty and art can be found. Merleau-Ponty (1968) in *The Visible and the Invisible* describes this meeting as the "intertwining between the chiasm" (p. 130) where knowledge could be found through the senses and the body. He describes the experience as "the thickness of flesh between the seer and the thing" (p. 135). It is our flesh that separates us from the other, yet it is the means by which we communicate as well. The flesh is the limit of the body, and it is the place where we meet the other. It is in the flesh that we experience life, and can perceive and make representations of our being in the world.

All artists create from the body but none so evidently as the expressive painter, whose gesture is left as an invitation to the viewer to

share in the creative journey. Hugh Silverman (1996) notes that it is the artistic gesture that has been established and still lives in the work of art "that brings up an unconsciousness which is not the object of repression, but the subject of constitution" (p. 128). Expressive artists respect the gesture of the body as a quality of the art work. It is the natural and original mark that belongs to the artist and is instantly recognizable as authentic. Gesture exposes the rhythm and mobility of the artist and invites the viewer to partially experience the rhythms of the artist's body that are embedded in the work of art. The gesture of the artist communicates across time and space on an emotional level that is intuitively understood.

In my own work gesture is an important part of the artistic language and part of the creation of the art work. For example, *Modern Ancients* (1988) depicts three prehistoric female figures that are somehow very modern. These ancient figures are illuminated by a giant sun-like shape that speaks of the essence of the cosmos and our place in it. These figures seem to be masked and engaged in some sort of ritual play that animates them and presents a feeling of lightness and fun. Often my work will incorporate prehistoric mythic archetypal images that for me hold special meaning, yet at the same time seem universal. As these images emerge from body consciousness, a sense of recognition is experienced which indicates that I am on the right path, as the patterns seemed to shift into a deeper level of meaning.



Illustration 6

Modern Ancients II (1988)

Artists often find that their images seem to change shape in the medium. The images seem to come into form, but then may disappear again as other forms emerge. Or the image seems to be one thing but then it turns out to be something else, and sometimes the image just doesn't work at all. It often takes several attempts to feel satisfied with the forms that have come into a painting. Then the intellect takes over in the editing process in deciding which of the potential forms will be kept, and which will have to go to make the painting work.

It is the artist's function to bring these images into form as best as she can, be it through a dance or a work in stone. Beginning with total chaos as a starting point, my own work can be compared to the ink blot tests used to heal psychological wounds, and the images do seem to have a transformative and healing effect. I feel that these images come from a collective consciousness that underlies our everyday reality, which is rich with meaning.

As these images become manifest in the art medium, the artist is able to express and interpret personal experience, and also seem to connect to a mythic-poetic level of being in the body. It is the spontaneous lived experience that Michel Haar (1996) describes as the "expression of the body...and life is the original artist" (p. 181). Each movement or bodily posture expresses our primal relationship to being present in the world.

I feel that this wellspring of knowledge is the source that gives meaning to all that is alive in the world. Heidegger (1958) describes it as the essential structure of fundamental meaning and as a "form-like presence that is not just personal but the *Gestalt* of humanity which is basic to all beings (p. 53). Joseph Kockelmans (1985) thinks that these *Gestalt* images are preformed and are discovered in the artist's search for self discovery in a particular medium as "the coming-to-pass of non-concealment" (p. 174). Kockelmans sees these images as revelations that hold both personal and universal truth which adapts itself in the work.

Personally, I agree that artistic use of *Gestalt* in a work of art opens up a new way of seeing the world which has never been seen quite like this before. It is the private act of the artist's creativity that goes inward and connects with, and projects the *Gestalt* of a culture into a work of art. The artist finds *Gestalt* by temporarily bypassing the ego in order to bring into the art work a truth that reveals itself in the medium.

Alfred Koestler (1976) describes the creative process as being between the borderland of consciousness and unconscious thinking, "between sleep and full awakening" (p. 210), where the artist often discovers *Gestalt* images that bring authenticity to the art work. He refers to such discoveries as "the underground games of the mind" (p. 462) where the artist can play with images that spontaneously surface from an unconscious wisdom that resides in the body. He points out that the

unconscious is the source that every human must return to in dream each night. We all require sleep and dream, and cannot remain in a conscious state for very long before the body requires the return to the unconscious state to regenerate.

Jerry Clegg (1994) notes that the creative artist learns to open to the dream images that appear during the artistic creative process, and seeks to understand the relationship between the “unknown and unknowable collective unconscious” (p. 93) and the individual personality. He points out that there seems to be a relationship to inner perception and memory.

Alfred Koestler (1976) suggests there may be several levels of memory that cannot be separated. He describes a peripheral level of memory that seems to be the source of the Gestalt images that the artist discovers. He states that these images are “reductive and compress a simplified essence of meaning” (p. 528). This is the primordial source that the artist seeks when creating meaning from the forms in a work of art.

In my own work, I often find archetypal, primordial, and mythical forms by shifting my perception to the periphery. These forms seem timeless, yet ancient and are as valid for us today as they were for our ancestors during prehistoric times. It sometimes helps to view the work from the side or even upside down. This seems to shift my perception from what I want to see, to what is actually in the painting that is trying to come into form. Our peripheral eye connects to our oldest, most primitive part of

the brain, which deals with the emotions and instinct. This may be the source of the artist's unique way of viewing the world

Alfred Koester (1976) links instinct with originality and he understands the relationship of affection that is solidly rooted in the earth. He notes that there often is a sudden feeling of happiness, "Eureka" and illumination that follows the discovery of the pattern of *Gestalt* images that have a tremendous emotional effect. Personally, I think that this intuitive sense of physical recognition feels much like love. Manifesting these previously unconscious images, and making the invisible visible, the artist brings the hidden treasure of primordial knowledge out of the dark, and into the light for all to see.

The universality of these primordial images informs not only the artist, but scientists as well. Alfred Koestler writes that Faraday, a physicist, visualized patterns around magnets and understood that these curves in space related not only to magnetic force, but also to electricity. Van Gogh's brilliant paintings come to my mind and seem to say that the universe and all existence is entwined and connected. Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' paintings seem to speak of this universal energy that links us to every other living being. Jerry Clegg (1994) agrees that these universal truths can be discovered in the artist's perceptual vision that relates to our interpretations of space and time.

Artistic creativity is not subject to the will, and can seem illusive unless one is willing to forfeit ego control for a time, and really listen and enter into a dialogue with the medium. This requires trust in the creative process, as the artist enters into a different state of being. It is that place where intuition guides the dialogue and the collaborative relationship that has been established with the art medium allowing the forms and figures to enter into the visible realm.

As these *Gestalt* images come in and out of form, the artist's ability to trust her body's emotional responses may illuminate the patterns that deepen the meaning inherent in the work. The artist must be willing to follow where these images lead, deep into the unconscious personal and collective memory. As we learn to listen and respond to our emotional body knowing, and develop the ability to improvise, the artist develops the skills that allow the manifestation of the invisible. Albert Hoftstadler (1971) writes that it is in the *Gestalt* of the figure and forms that the truth of actual life experience is revealed and illuminated.

Alfred Koestler (1976) describes these as "memory images" (p. 541) that are simplified schematic forms that contain "true perceptual elements held together by cognitive linkages" (p. 541). He also calls them "sound-pictures" that contain symbolic personal and universal forms that appear as...complex perceptual Gestalt-wholes which enter as units into the symbolic hierarchy" (p. 542). The imagination will then help the artist to

create meaning from these sometimes complex forms in order that the essential message that the art work contains can be grasped by the intellect.

Rosamond Harding (1967) notes that the imagination is the guide that the artist must follow to truly see with the mind's inner eye. She calls it "that intellectual lens through the medium of which the poetical observer sees the object of his observation, modified both in form and colour" (p. 29). The artist that follows the guidance of the imagination into the realm of unconscious form creates from a uniquely personal perspective. As the 'I-Eye', the artist makes visible their original perception of the world. Each human being has their own voice and has something unique to say, but one has to be true to oneself and have the freedom to create. This unique potentiality that each of us has underlies all ideas of authenticity.

Julian Young (2001) points out that there is a feeling of pleasure that accompanies artistic expression. Matthew Biro (1998) describes it as visual play that at the same time has meaning and is open to different levels of interpretation. In my own experience, not only do the art works contain different possible levels of interpretation, but the interpretation of meaning can change over time. This does not take away from the initial meaning, but seems to make the aesthetic experience richer than before.

There is often a period of incubation that precedes the creative act

when the unconscious mind ruminates on the creative idea. The period of incubation is much like the world of dream, where the restraints of logical reasoning are temporarily suspended. Alfred Koestler (1976) refers to it as "thinking aside" (p. 210) and it allows the mind to wander without prejudice, with "fluidity, versatility, and gullibility" (p. 211). Temporary suspension of judgment and trusting to intuitive guidance, facilitates the creative leap that the artist experiences as a feeling of euphoria and 'Eureka' and seemingly 'miraculous flashes, or short-circuits of reasoning" (p. 211).

The artist experiences these creative leaps on a very personal level. Images appear that make visible, sensuous and emotional knowledge lying hidden in a collective consciousness. Laslo Versenyi (1965) describes the artist's creative act as an attempt to give form to what lies hidden in the emotional body. He points out that it is not just the artist's self-representation, but that of the world as well. He notes that by reflecting on the mystery of the images created, the artist not only reflects on self-disclosure, but also on the disclosure of a culture.

After a period of incubation, artistic expression is often rapidly executed, often without pausing to reason or think about details. The body knows what must be expressed, and the artist trusts the imagination's guidance as form becomes visible. For me, this is often experienced as a rapid flow of the imagination when it is not practical to stop to contemplate rationally because the images immediately begin to fade away. Therefore I

must trust my inner feelings, instinct and intuition, and only later revise the forms, if necessary. Rosamond Harding (1967) stresses that trust is an important part of the artistic process. Alfred Koestler (1976) agrees that the “temporary relinquishing of conscious control liberates the mind from certain constraints which are necessary to maintain disciplined routines of thoughts but may become an impediment to the creative leap” (p. 169).

It requires knowledge of the rules and skills of the medium as well as the free play of the imagination to enable the artist to connect to the forms that express inner vision. Alfred Koestler (1976) calls it a “bisociative process” (p. 890) that puts the patterns together that reveal *Gestalt* forms containing valuable insights. He notes that these insights seem to be a sudden revelation of the right fit or link between different concepts or forms creating new relationships. It is an intuitive process that cannot be learned but seems to be part of body knowing, which is original and creative.

We all have this ability, to see with the 'mind's eye', but few have the courage to follow where it leads. William Vaughan (1985) writes that William Blake, a great visionary artist claimed that we can all be visionary, if we choose to stop and listen to our inner voice. Rosamond Harding (1967) concurs but points out that it requires the artistic imagination to be activated and that we trust the process. Frank Elgar (1958) writes that van Gogh describes the artistic imagination as “a strength within...a fire that I can't put out” (p. 59). It seems to me that there is a drive to follow with childlike trust

and naive sincerity, the inner call of Being. Nathalie Heinich (1996) notes that by reaching deep into inside oneself, the artist discovers “what is true, one's own truth” (p. 27). But the artist does not work in a vacuum, and one builds on the accomplishments of the past. Artists are often inspired by the arts of their predecessors, as art is always, to some extent, culturally determined.

Heidegger (1971) points out that a work of art changes our relationship with the world and transcends everyday public existence. A great work of art lifts us ecstatically out of our mundane lives to connect us to the essential inner source. It makes us aware of the “original disclosure of Being” (p. 93). Heidegger notes that it is truth that has been established in the work, “between the disclosure and concealment, between the mysterious darkness of the unconscious body memory and the illumination to the light of the visible” (p. 62). The art work originates in the rift between the disclosure and concealment of form, between the invisible inner darkness and the illumination of visibility, what John Berger (2003) describes as “that space filled with the potentiality of every form” (p. 57). Robert Wallace (1969) refers to these potentialities as reflections of universal emotions that all humans share that speak of “our same mysterious destiny” (p. 40).

Christopher Wright (1978) writes that great works of art, like the paintings of Rembrandt speak to us in a timeless and emotional language

that demands a personal and immediate response from the viewer.

Kenneth Clark describes Rembrandt's paintings as a masterly use of paint and chiaroscuro that "lift the subject onto a different plane, as language may lift a commonplace sentiment to the level of the highest poetry" (p. 114).

Frank Elgar (1958) agrees that we are uplifted emotionally, as he describes a painting by van Gogh of a peasant family eating potatoes they had toiled to grow and harvest. He notes that it is the authenticity and truth of the human condition, visible in a great work of art along with the dignity of what it means to be human, that has power to move us.

It is the exposure of what it means to be a human being that lies at the heart of the concept of the authenticity of a work of art. Great works of art are capable of withstanding the changing fashions of place and time.

Nathalie Heinich (1996) points out that they open up a dialogue with the viewer that transcends history, and demand from the viewer an emotional response in order to be understood.

Chapter Three: The Work of Art

Works of art always have a social function, as personal as well as cultural reality is illuminated. Iris Murdoch (1977) notes that artistic creativity propels us beyond the banality of our everyday experience. Works of art give us glimpses of the timeless and universal foundations of Being that support and lie beyond everyday reality. Truth is inherent in a great art work, and resonates within our body as this revelation is instantly recognized by our affective response. Truth is an essential quality of art, as artists project and express their emotional inner reality through their art works.

Each work of art represents a unique perspective on the world which the artist shares with others. Jerry Clegg (1994) points out that the artist, as it were, wipes off the "aspect-ridden window pane of life [yet] never ceasing to be a limited ego" (p. 96) in order to create original interpretations of cultural reality in the art work. Terry Eagleton (2000) argues that it is our imagination that enables us to empathize with others. He notes that it is the artistic imagination that may facilitate the ability to empathize on a universal and global scale. Artists know that their works of art are not only a personal search for meaning, but are also cultural in nature. Social themes have often been used in the arts to critique and comment on social aspects of a culture.

Terry Eagleton (2000) points out that “we are not born as cultural beings, culture is a necessity if we are to survive” (p. 99. Cultural interpretations convey meaning on our bodily existence that expands our experience of the world. If we are not born cultural beings, then culture must be socialized in us. We can learn much from the aesthetics of different cultures in explaining and illuminating the differences that make us unique human beings. In the sharing of our culture, we create community and appreciate the values of others as well as celebrate our own. Wendy Steiner (2001) concurs that aesthetic socialization exposes us to the experience of beauty and shared values of the culture.

In my own work, social and political statements are often embedded in the medium. *The Longing* (1989) expresses a deep concern with the land ownership issue of the First Nations indigenous people of Canada. As these people are separated from the lands of their ancestors, social problems have created much sorrow in these people’s lives. The foundations of their culture have been ripped out from under their feet, as colonization has encroached on their land and their lives. Yet these people have created great works of art that transform their despair into beauty that is made visible.

Great works of art embody social messages that define the personal and cultural ideology of the society in which the artist lived. Rembrandt

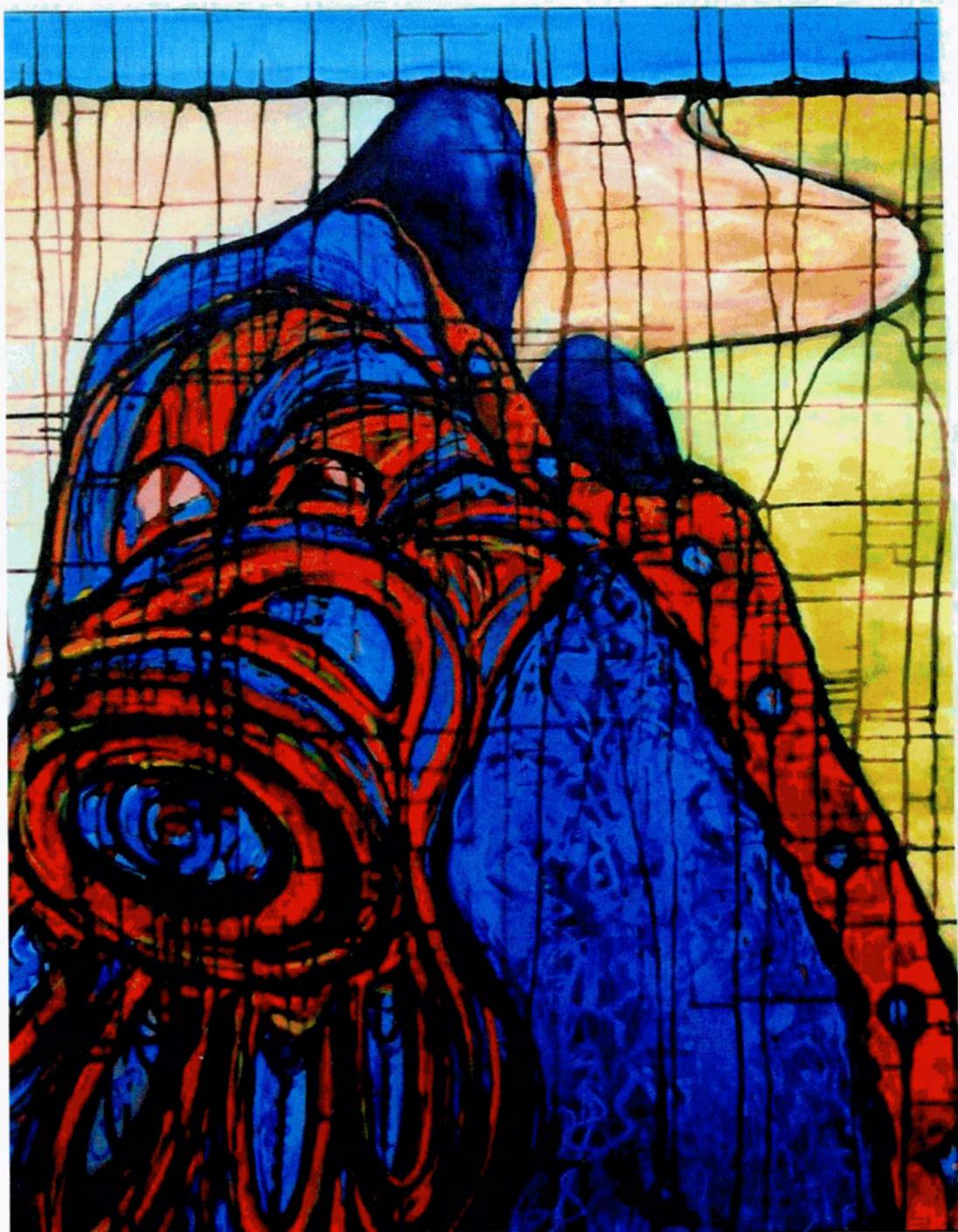


Illustration 7

The Longing (1989)

lived and worked in Amsterdam, a prosperous and colourful international seaport in the richest nation in Europe. Robert Wallace (1969) notes that he was keenly aware that the wealth of the merchant and upper classes did not filter down to the peasants and urban labourers who "endured poverty and hardship comparable to that in England a century later at the start of the Industrial Revolution" (p. 92).

Although Rembrandt never became alienated from Dutch society, he withdrew into seclusion later in life, to find inspiration for his art in his Jewish neighbours and the downtrodden and disenfranchised poor who had left the countryside in search of jobs in the city. Robert Wallace (1969) mentions that Rembrandt found inspiration in the tramps, cripples and poor and he created visual statements that clearly express his feelings about social injustice. Andre Krauss (1983) notes that artists throughout history have been aware of social problems created by the peasants who left the land to find work in the cities, often confronting these issues in their works of art.

Van Gogh, like Rembrandt felt that the purpose of art was to convey a social message and he believed that the peasants and working poor were the proper subject of art. Andre Krauss (1983) notes that van Gogh states this conviction repeatedly in his letters to his brother. His sympathies are with the poor working class whom he glorified in his art. Krauss points out that van Gogh hoped that his art would comfort them and felt that he had a moral obligation to society and the culture he lived in. Meyer Shapiro

(1952) writes that van Gogh painted the peasants and working poor from a deep feeling of respect and empathy, and felt himself to be one with them in their “hard struggle with the earth (p. 10).

Kathe Kollwitz also found inspiration in the plight of the urban peasants, and the effects of war and poverty on women and children. Her works of art speak to us of a universal truth of the consequences of war on families, and are a social critique on the morality of a culture that glorifies war at the cost of its people. Her art never gives form to the enemy, only to the stark faces and gestures of women holding their dead children in their arms. Her work speaks to us on an emotional level that needs no words to convey her social message of pacifism. She did not hesitate to use her art works as a social commentary on the politics of the day, and at great cost to herself, she created powerful images that speak of the truth of oppression, and the need for a better society. Her art illuminates a reality whose meaning goes beyond the experience of the mundane to make the plight of ordinary people the focus. She critiques the society that allowed such misery, and she uses her art to state an undeniable truth which is felt in the body, as we respond instantly with emotional understanding and recognize the despair of the other.

Mark Rosenthal (1987) notes that Anselm Kiefer's works of art are also a social comment and critique of society as he explores and expresses the dark shadow of the Nazi past which contemporary German society

prefers to forget. Kiefer searches for insights in Germanic mythology and its historical past. Born in 1945, Kiefer's generation questions the legacy they have inherited in post-war Europe. John Gilmour (1990) states that artists and intellectuals of Kiefer's generation are "confronted by a questionable past and by a future so threatening that it tends to create despair" (p. xii).

Kiefer courageously confronts the collective guilt and the dark shadow of the Nazi past that some of the people in Germany tried to suppress. His art is a revelation of a fundamental truth that the culture had been wounded when it destroyed a segment of their people. Rafael Lopez-Pedraza (1996) notes that Kiefer exposes the dark "shadow of power" (p. 11) that is the wound of Germany, in order that in the light of reason, society may begin to heal and renew itself.

Society and culture will eventually judge the authenticity of a work of art, but it begins with the individual. The artist must strive to find his inner and authentic voice first. It is through the individual eye and heart that universal truth can be manifested. But the artist builds on a cultural and historical background of past achievements in their search for truth and authenticity rests on the foundations of what has come before. Christine Battersby (1989) writes that works of art carry the old ways of a tradition into a new expression that has lasting value and significance.

Throughout human history, artists have created works of art that have left a moving emotional testament of the cultures that have come before. Since before the caves of Lascaux were painted, works of art have provided meaning and truth about Being that is shared from one generation to the next through myths, rituals and the arts. It requires the emotional participation of the people in the culture to preserve and pass on the meaning and memories of experience.

The arts touch the hearts of people and speak a language that resonates in the emotional body imparting the lessons that an individual needs to know to live a humane life in harmony with the world, society, and their environment. Oral 'primitive' societies still know this truth, but it has been suppressed in western society for hundreds of years. Contemporary western society still lives with the Cartesian separation of mind from the body, and the rejection of the emotional, sensuous, intuitive inner wisdom of the body, in favour of intellectual rationalism.

The artist still knows that intellectual rationality must be balanced by valuing intuition and the sensuous and emotional wisdom of the body. It is through the creative process that the artist constantly reconnects to the affective part of Being, and brings back artefacts, works of art, that bear witness to the artist's inner journey. Alfred Koestler (1976) points out that the ancient Greeks understood the mysterious language of the arts and the innerness of Being and being human on this earth, and honoured the dark

power of the unconscious in their mythology, rituals and arts.

Although the arts are a historical construct, the artist creates from a timeless perspective. Joseph Kockelmans (1985) notes that a work of art is historical in the sense that it reflects the truth of a specific place and time, "in the essential sense that it grounds history" (p. 192). The arts are always representative of a particular time and place and are influenced by the culture, but I feel that the arts go beyond cultural specifics to bring a timeless reality into form. I tend to agree with Jerry Clegg (1994) who claims that there is "a correlation between the mind and the world [that is] the underlying consciousness that dwells beyond everything else" (p. 63).

In my own work, images become visible that often contain timeless references. *Music of the Spheres* (1989) expresses imaginary and cosmic inner emotional knowing that makes reference to prehistoric, primordial origins of the universe. The memory of our origins seem to lie hidden in the shadows of the emotional body, and for me, it is only through the act of painting that they are discovered. Sometimes it is only later that the title can be verified in the literature of mythology and the meaning of the art work becomes clearer.

The artist is a person of their time and must be curious, if not absorbed in the issues of their culture. Emotional and psychological



Illustration 8

Music of the Spheres (1989)

balance is crucial to be able to penetrate and comprehend the images that emerge from the depth of the unconscious, and one needs to be securely rooted in the present. Frank Elgar (1958) notes that it takes courage to articulate the emotional memories of the past that emerge, and artists need the ability to visualize a better future for humanity, if the work of art is to have value for the culture. Nathalie Heinich (1996) points out that artists have always worked within a historical context that often reserves posterity until long after the artist has died. She notes that ironically, art history demonstrates that the artists most despised while alive, often receive the greatest appreciation later.

Most artists are keenly aware of the politics of their day, and works of art often have a political undercurrent that critiques the social inequality of the day; often shocking society. John Berger (2003) points out that “art does not cover - it reveals” (p. 73). Yet artists often create art works that carry a political message that makes them appear to be rebellious and nonconformist.

Kenneth Clark (1978) notes that there is an element of the rebel in Rembrandt that can be seen even in his earliest portraits, and he “remains a rebel all his life” (p. 39). He grew up and attended university in Leiden, where intellectuals from all over Europe mingled with the underpaid and illiterate textile workers who lived in abject poverty in one of the wealthiest cities in Europe. Robert Wallace (1969) notes that throughout his life,

Rembrandt was very aware of the social inequality between rich and poor and he was inspired by the “lower orders” (p. 41) of society, often sketching and painting them. Kenneth Clark (1969) points out that Rembrandt painted the poor exactly as he saw them, with dignity and penetrating observation that is still capable of disturbing us today.

The plight of the urban poor and even greater poverty in the countryside due to its depopulation continues well into van Gogh's time, and still happens today. Artists and writers are painfully aware of the problems of poverty and disease that the peasant migration brings to the cities and countryside alike. Andre Krauss (1983) notes that van Gogh's works of art confront the viewer “with a literally scarred countryside, whose wounds were caused by the expanding city” (p. 22).

Van Gogh paints and sketches the urban workers and the peasants that work in the fields with great love and dignity. Not only was the ordinary working class a worthy subject for his works of art, van Gogh also felt that they should be the recipients of his art, not the rich merchant class whom he shunned. Andre Krauss (1983) notes that van Gogh writes in a letter to his brother Theo that he would be pleased if ordinary working people would hang his art works in their room or workshop. He has other revolutionary ideas with regards to the issues of social inequality of women, and he acknowledges the inhumanness of a society that forces its women to support themselves by selling their bodies on the street.

He finds inspiration in these women as he expresses the sorrow of the working poor, especially the women with children. Andre Krauss (1982) mentions that van Gogh writing to Theo notes that equal rights and freedom was what was needed between men and women; a revolutionary viewpoint ahead of his time. He understands and acknowledges the social problems that are caused by the changing relationship between the genders, where men increasingly dominate over women and children. Van Gogh was a rebel against society throughout his life, as he tried to express in his art works the sad reality of the lives of the peasants who work the land and the working poor who support the wealth of the nation, yet who reaped none of the benefits for themselves.

Kathe Kollwitz was also strongly affected by the social problems of the working poor in Berlin, especially the women and children who are the focus of her artistic expression. She used her art to make powerful political statements against the prevailing politics of her day, as she opposed the violence that was erupting in Germany that led to two world wars. Martha Kearns (1976) notes that Kollwitz publicly expressed her opposition to violence, war and the recruitment of more young men to fight for Germany. Her art works communicate silently her opposition to more misery caused by war and poverty, in the faces and gestures of the women holding dead children in their arms; universal images of suffering that are understood intuitively by all. The bold expression of her convictions stands as a powerful statement of the horrors of war and the consequences for the

women and children. Even when the Nazis fired her from her teacher's position, she continued to create humanitarian leaflets and posters for distribution that speak of the terrible social conditions endured by the women and children and the working poor in Germany. Her art resonates with great compassion as she makes her appeal on behalf of the disenfranchised and the working poor, and the crimes of the social conditions that prevailed in Germany during her time.

Anselm Kiefer, a post-war German artist also creates works of art with a political message that critiques his society for refusing to confront their Nazi past. Mark Rosenthal (1987) points out that Kiefer's art is intended to shock and confront "half-buried memories" (p. 17) of Germany's past that refuse to go away. Kiefer's art work is a thorn in the side of society who prefers to forget its past and focus on more mundane issues of the day.

John Gilmour (1990) notes that Kiefer was also a rebel in the progress of modern art. In an era of increasingly abstract art, Kiefer reintroduces pictorial representation, and makes reference to pre-modern scientific thought and the artist's shamanic role in the act of transformation of materials during the art making process. He rejects the fashions of the avant-garde, creates representational images of history and explores pre-scientific and more fluid modes of thinking. Gilmour points out that Kiefer's works of art involve ancient forms of conceptualization that are a metaphor

for the transformative power of the arts and alchemy that “shape our conception of the visible world” (p. 32).

Kiefer's thought provoking reflections on German history and mythology in his work express the deeply rooted shadow of the culture that had brought unspeakable sorrow to its people. His works of art have an emotional impact that broadens the insights of the past, as he attempts to come to terms with the collective guilt that haunts his generation. Rafael Lopez-Pedraza (1996) writes that these images seem to regress into a historical past, and speak to our emotional inner body. Intuitively we recognize the sorrow that lies buried in the German collective unconscious as Kiefer searches for insight within himself.

Kiefer's works of art are also a critique of contemporary politics that encourage nuclear energy. John Gilmour (1990) describes Kiefer's painting, *Heavy Cloud* (1985) that makes reference to social and health problems inherent in pollution caused by nuclear energy. This painting suggests a yellow radiation has leaked onto the landscape, at a time when the issue of nuclear power was greatly contested in Germany. Kiefer's art works pose questions about how the individual and the broader culture relates to the past and also the present, and questions the consequences of our political actions in our press for progress. He makes reference to the ancient alchemists in his art works, who realize that the world in which we live has limitations and we must respect the simple elements of air, water,

fire and earth. These elements have not changed and are as relevant today as in the past.

There are few women artists in the history of western art, yet legend has it that the art of painting was invented by a woman. Wendy Slatkin (1997) finds it interesting that in both Eastern and Western cultures, the origin of painting is attributed to a woman's observations of a shadow and then tracing the outline. She notes that Pliny records the legend of the "Corinthian Maid" (p. 34), who traces the profile of her lover on a wall. Her father, Butades, a potter, then worked the image up into a sculpture. She is called Dibutade, daughter of Butades, and the legend of Dibutade was a common theme in art.

But the fact remains, as Wendy Steiner (2001) points out that "before modernism, few women could speak publicly about how it felt to be an artist. There were not many female visual artists, period, if the official history is to be believed" (p. xvi). This gives a peculiar one-sidedness to western art that increasingly sees the female body as a source of titillation intended for the male viewer. Contemporary artists have challenged these issues as they search for more appropriate representations of the body as a metaphor for expressing innerness.

In my own work, for example, *A Ride with Raphael* (1991-1992) expresses the inner spirit that seems to guide me through difficult times in

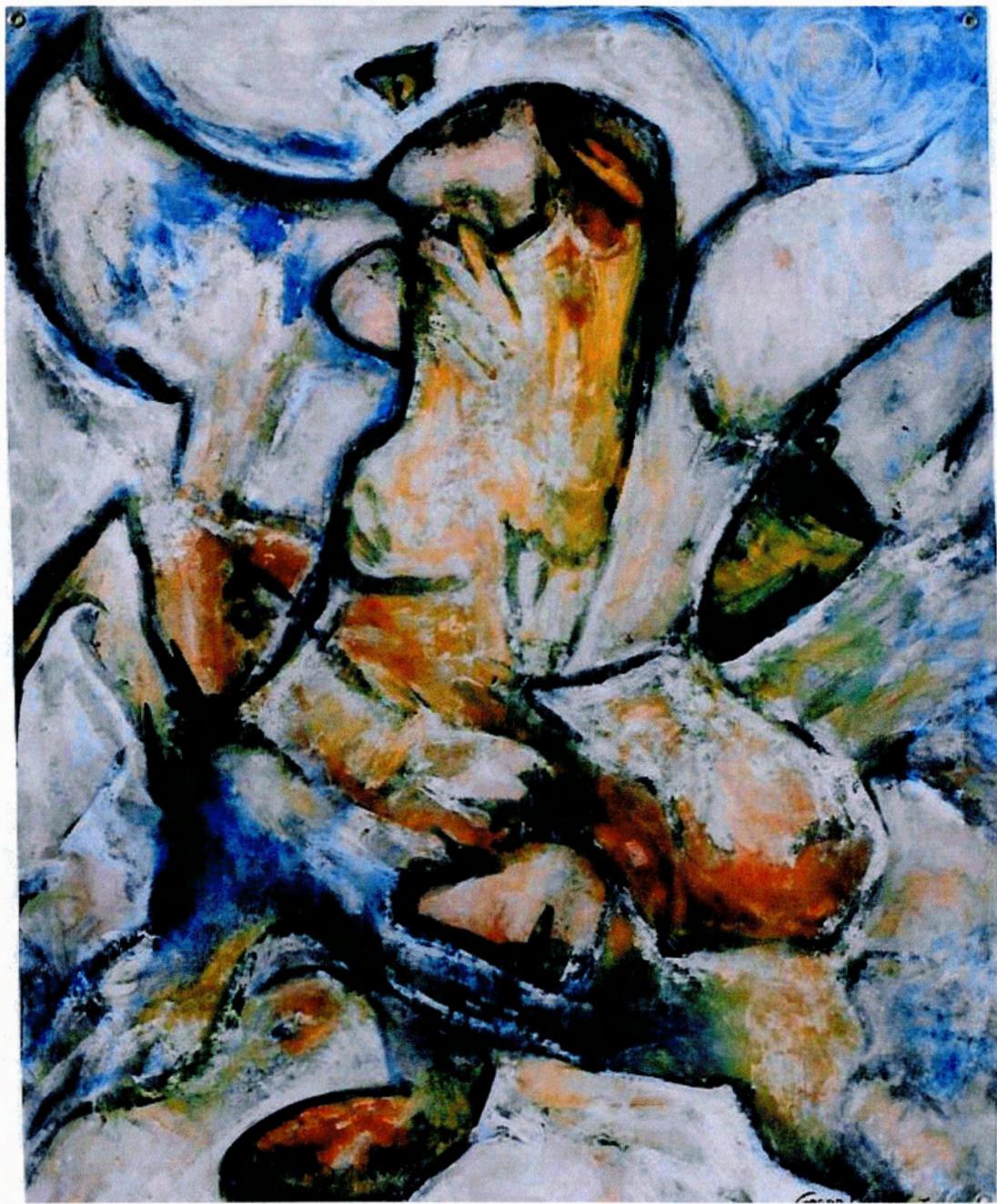


Illustration 9

A Ride with Raphael (1991-1992)

my life. It represents a journey taken through the American south-west in 1991, while a series of my paintings were on exhibit in Phoenix, Arizona. My marriage was in trouble and I had decided to take this time to travel and to do some serious thinking about the future. It was a momentous time of self discovery and it seems as if the spirit of Raphael was always there and could be relied on to guide me during these troubled times. Later, when I painted this work, I intuitively recognized the symbolic meaning of the forms, and saw myself being transported on a horse in the protective arms of Raphael. This painting still speaks to me of that time with great eloquence of the frightened woman I was then. This painting is a reminder that we are not alone, but are part of all existence, even when we are far away from the people we love. I also love its Picasso-like fragmentation and the obvious reference to the female body is uniquely my own.

During a time when the female body was seen as an object of beauty and desire, van Gogh's compassionate expression of women is revolutionary in western art. He was not interested in depicting obvious beauty, but rather the lived experience that left traces on the body. Frank Elgar (1958) writes that van Gogh explains his attraction to his lover Sien by saying that "for me she's beautiful...Life has marched over her body, pain and visitations have marked it" (p. 43). The empathy and honesty in which he sketches and paints the women in his life is a direct confrontation to the bourgeoisie notion of propriety and celebrates the real world of the working poor that burgers wished to ignore.

Phillip Callow (1990) notes that van Gogh's depiction of Sien evokes a strong emotional response from the viewer. In an 1882 lithograph called *Sorrow*, he makes a powerful statement about the wretchedness of the lives of the lower class woman in modern society, who has to survive the best way she knows how. Alcohol and prostitution were a huge problem in the cities of Europe, as women worked at menial jobs to earn enough to feed themselves and their children. Van Gogh saw beauty in the sorrow of Sien, who was addicted to alcohol and sick from starvation. When well enough to work, she scrubbed houses and took in washing. When she was too sick, she sold her body on the street like her mother before her.

Kathe Kollwitz is also familiar with the plight of the women who come to her husband's medical practice, sick with venereal disease and hunger. She also expresses compassion for these women in her art works, finding inspiration in the dignity and despair in their faces. Her works of art are a moving testament to the trauma that is often stored deep in the body, and the viewer can only respond with empathy to the stark faces of women who have seen it all. These images force us to really listen to the silent message that critiques a society so corrupt that it allows such misery, and this must be changed.

But her art works also speak of the rhythm of the body, and the strength inherent in the female when they must protect their children. They may be sick and hungry, but these women stand together fearlessly to face

the aggressor. They speak of a deep primordial love that women have for each other and their children in their common struggle to survive. Kollwitz has given to western art a timeless expression of what it means to be a woman and a mother, with all the compassion and feelings involved, in a time of world wars and social upheaval.

Kollwitz taught at the Berlin Academy for the Arts until her dismissal by the Nazi regime, and she was a vocal advocate for the rights of women to receive an equal arts education and support from the educational system, long before it became fashionable. Lucy Lippard (1981) notes that Kollwitz was able to synthesize her social, political and feminist views in her art and life and had the courage and endurance to use her art to fight back and survive.

Kiefer does not address gender equality directly; however John Gilmour (1990) notes that Kiefer does refer to a "feminine" (p. 126) notion of time as circular. This ancient conception of time can still be found in matrilineal primitive societies. Gilmour points out that Nietzsche is also aware of the cyclical notion of time where the present moment, meets both the past and the future. Kiefer also refers to the mythology of the Earth-Mother, and the transformation of the mineral substances that come from the belly of the earth. He uses earth, straw and metals such as lead, and various other natural elements in his art works in an effort to imitate the alchemist's quest for transformation of these base metals into gold, a

metaphor perhaps of the female birthing process.

Wendy Steiner (2001) sees the challenge for the contemporary artist in the expression of the female, and she writes that we have to free ourselves from the misogyny of the modernist tradition. She notes that what is required is a “re-imagining of the female as an equal partner in aesthetic pleasure” (p. xviv). This would require the conception of a new mythology that teaches reverence for everyone equally, as well as respect for the earth that gives us life. Steiner questions how we can expand our conception of feminine beauty without falling back on the traditional notions of “dominance, victimization, and false consciousness” (p. xx). It seems to me that there is a rhythm, or a dance between the feminine and masculine elements in nature that we might try to emulate. Instead of conflict, a respectful dialogue might be initiated that would make use of the strengths of both masculine and feminine aspects.

Many oral cultures still remember the stories of people who have lived on the land, and they have retained the respect for the earth that sustains their culture. Their mythologies tell the stories that the individual needs to know in order to survive, and the obligations that each person has to the self, each other, and to the land. Participation in the mythology requires an emotional response which gives meaning to one's life within the context of the culture, facilitating emotional sharing from one generation to the next. The myths and stories justify the culture and the place each

individual has in its survival. These stories preserve the memories of what has happened on the land, so that others can find their own meaning and teach the ethics and morality of the culture. With a strong ethical and moral foundation for existence, the female will again be valued and revered, bringing a new harmony into the world. In such an ideal society, the arts will find their rightful place in expressions of beauty that are saturated with meaning and our place in nature.

Heidegger (1971) understands the reciprocal nature of the unfolding of human existence on the earth, and that what goes around, comes around, as an old saying goes. As nature is devalued, and desire for more technology drives our consumer culture, the transformative power of modern society cannot be predicted. He points out that our contemporary technology has made the earth and atmosphere raw material to be used. Even human beings are perceived as raw material and are viewed as disposable. He warns of the dangers of ignoring the transformative power of our society that extends to changing even humanity itself.

The artist can be the visionary that brings back images of our collective memory that may enrich and reveal understanding of what it means to be a human being in this world. Pre-modern mythologies and religious ritual as well as the arts, teach the people of a culture the obligations they have to each other and the earth in order that they will survive. Today, it is the arts that can provide the archetypical forms of ancient mythology that teach the



Illustration 10

Icarus (1990)

lessons we need to learn in order to live in harmony with each other and the earth. John Gilmour (1990) writes that engagement with the arts "reinvest[s] the natural world with mystery and an atmosphere of uncertainty" (p. 161) thus putting enchantment back into our lives.

For example, my painting *Icarus* (1990) expresses metaphorically the dangers of flying too close to the sun, and is symbolic of my own inner search that can become overwhelming and dangerous if the mind and body are not in balance. This image seems to warn that the search for hidden emotional truth has its perils, and it requires faith to continue the journey to the Self. Yet this painting is full of energy that celebrates this journey as the shadows are transformed into the beauty of gesture, form and colour able to bring to light to an ancient truth that still holds relevance for people today.

The story behind this mythological image was not familiar to me at the time this painting was made, but, as usually happens, the name popped into my head spontaneously. Only later did I realize the significance of the message that this painting speaks of in silence. I learned later that Anselm Kiefer around the same time was also inspired to create a powerful painted image of Icarus. It seems to me that these images are universal and may become accessible by going inward where a hidden well of knowledge lies waiting to be tapped.

The arts may also reconcile our human mortality and knowledge that

we will one day die. The arts make the inner archetypes visible, and images such as *Icarus* may then be explored for the lessons that are implied. These images seem to appear when I most need to learn a lesson and are relevant not only for that particular time, but also many years later. After many years, I still respond as if anew to the emotional content in these paintings.

Knowledge of the cyclical nature of our being, may be the message the artist can give to society. Everything comes and goes, it grows, dies, and is born again. By mirroring the world of regeneration and growth, as well as decay and death, the artist illuminates the truth of being in the world. The truth that is revealed in a work of art attempts to share this vital knowledge of connectedness to each other and the earth. Nathalie Heinich (1996) states that the artist who continually searches for inner wisdom in the images that appear in the medium needs “unconditional love of truth and a deep, irrational faith” (p. 79) in order to successfully confront and bring into form, these shadow figures.

The search for the truth of the self can involve risking emotional exposure, when ideas or images come into being. Yet the expressive artist who is true to the medium will respect these images and make them visible in the work of art. By giving artistic expression to personal truth the artist makes visible a larger wisdom that underlies and informs society as a whole. They express what it means to exist as a human being in this world.

CHAPTER FOUR: WHY SORROW?

John Berger (2003) notes that "the present pain of living in the world is unprecedented" (p. viii). It does sometimes seem as if social and personal values have been eroded, and are almost lost from one generation to the next. Matthew Biro (1998) reminds us that the ancient Greeks saw this world of "violence and victimization as part of the cycle of creation and thus part of the revelation of Being and being human in the world" (p. 109).

Rafael Lopez-Pedraza. (1996) explains how Greek mythology, ritual and art gives form to the various archetypal forces that underlie the psyche of humanity. Bringing these archetypes into manifestation and into the light of day makes it possible to come to terms with these forces within the personality and also within the culture. This facilitates reconciliation between the polar opposites of 'good' and 'bad' and brings psychic harmony between the group and the individual. Western Christianity rejects the Greek notion of many gods, in favour of one omnipotent God, and it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the balance between archetypal forces that have been suppressed. In contemporary western society this increasingly becomes a psychological problem.

Rafael Lopez-Pedraza (1996) notes that the negation of the archetypal forces result in a tragic "collective guilt" (p. 11) that is the shadow of the unconscious of Western culture. Mark Rosenthal (1987) points out

that Anselm Kiefer addresses the shadow that lies suppressed in the psyche of western culture, and attempts to come to terms with this “blemish that exists on the soul of humanity, especially the German nation” (p. 104).

Artists have been inspired by sorrow for centuries. Rembrandt lived in one of the most affluent cities in Europe, but he also saw much suffering in the lives of the urban poor. Robert Wallace (1969) notes that in his personal life Rembrandt “suffered far more misfortune than falls to the lot of an ordinary man, and he bore it with the utmost nobility” (p. 17). Van Gogh also experienced much sorrow in his life, and also found his inspiration in the suffering of the working poor. Frank Elgar (1958) notes that van Gogh felt a solidarity with the sorrow of others; and his paintings speak of this shared pain with great compassion. Kathe Kollwitz also found inspiration in the sorrow of the working poor, especially the women and children. Inspired by the lives of the weavers, Kollwitz, critiques the European textile industry, which was notorious for its poor working conditions and low pay. While the capitalist owners became wealthy, the working poor suffered. Her works of art speak in a universal language of emotion about the terrible consequences of poverty.

Heidegger (1971) speaks of pain and sorrow as separating, yet at the same time joining us to all that exists. He describes sorrow as the seam that binds the world and things together in the “middle of their intimacy and thereby drawing their being toward one another” (p. 205). Laslo Versenyi

(1965) agrees that sorrow separates us from each other, yet joins us in “a harmony of opposites” (p. 97). Joseph Kockelmans (1985) states that sorrow is the source of unity between opposites and the basis of their belonging together in the intimacy of their common ground. I think that sorrow is something that everyone intuitively understands. We need not have experienced it directly ourselves but we feel a sense of recognition when confronted by the sorrow of others that elicits a compassionate and emotional response.

Laslo Versenyi (1965) points out that as opposites meet at the place of common ground, the truth of our shared existence is revealed. He writes that the common ground of sorrow is “the original mystery, the dark silence that surrounds the light” (p. 99). He goes on to say that artistic expression of sorrow in a work of art draws these opposites together “and thus brings about beauty, disclosure, truth and Being” (p. 97). Phillip Callow (1990) writes that van Gogh’s paintings demonstrate this synthesis of the dark mystery of the inner emotions with the external world, “conquering the opposition by perseverance” (p.92-93). Andre Krauss (1983) notes that van Gogh wants to devote his life to expressing a serious sorrow that he saw as “the poetry hidden in things” (p. 77). Expressing the bitter sweet beauty of the mystery of sorrow exposes the shadows of body-knowing, and meaning can be understood in timeless and sublime beauty.

Mark Rosenthal (1987) describes Kiefer’s *I-Thou* (1971) series

which is based on the Eastern yin–yang principle, where male yang energy represents the light originating in the heavens, while female yin energy is dark and from the earth. The juxtaposition of these opposites also symbolises, for Kiefer the meeting of the two opposite worlds of “good and evil” (p. 26) that have existed throughout human history. The juxtaposition of these two opposite archetypal worlds has inspired many artists. These archetypal forces are represented in the body as yin and yang energy which the artist brings into harmony through the act of creation. In what has been described by John Gilmour (1990) as an essentially post-modern view of the creative act, the artist plays between these different domains, visualizing “two planes of reality that intersect but do not coincide” (p. 82).

In an interview with Steven Madoff (1987) in *Art News*, Kiefer admits that he is very aware that these archetypal bodily forces are the source of his art making. The artistic synthesis of the inner sensuous and emotional body with intellectual rationalism often happens when mental focus is on something else, freeing the artist to make hidden connections. I find that some of my best ideas come while doing the dishes, or weeding the garden. Rafael Lopez-Pendraza (1996) explains that by a lowering of consciousness “the artist opens up a connection to these archetypal forces which lay hidden in the unconscious” (p. 85). These archetypal images can then be brought into visibility through the work of art. Often one recognizes the forms during the creative process, and the images can then be more consciously brought into form.

Heidegger understands that it is in the place of sorrow, where the two archetypal worlds meet. In the sorrow of separateness where the opposites are gathered and joined together, the artist finds truth. It is pain that is experienced in the body where the opposites confront and meet each other, and realize their difference. Heidegger (1971) writes that it was "in the settling of the pain, the rift of the difference that makes the limpid brightness shine [and] the outside and inside penetrates each other" (p. 204-205). It seems to me that often these sometimes painful images hold tremendous emotional value that reveals a part of myself to me, of which I was not previously aware.

Rembrandt's paintings have retained a rich and profoundly mysterious and haunting undercurrent, a quality that never ceases to touch our hearts. His penetrating eye paints the subject's innerness that lies beneath the surface of the skin with respect and empathy for the human condition. Robert Wallace (1969) notes that Rembrandt searches his inner depths, and juxtaposes light and shadow to create an atmosphere "where a glimpse of the soul may be caught" (p. 135). H van de Waal (1974) notes that Rembrandt's paintings demonstrate that the "worlds of light and dark, brilliance and shadow, happiness and sorrow are inseparable" (p.16). It is in the creation of a work of art, that what was previously hidden has been made visible, and reconciliation between two different realms has been made. A deeper knowledge of absolute truth has come to light, as mind and body are held in balance within the art work.



Illustration 11

Ode to Gaia (1990)

In my own experience, the paintings sometimes hold up a reproachful image that bring tears to my eyes. The painting *Ode to Gaia* (1990) is an expression of emotional sympathy with the earth that sustains us. The damage that has been inflicted on our collective home, be it through war or globalization, has almost destroyed the atmosphere and is unprecedented in the known history of the world. In this painting, the earth is represented as a combination of a woman's body and a tree that branches out over the canvas. It expresses a profound concern with the future of our planet, yet celebrates the fecundity of the regeneration of nature, given half a chance.

Edward Casey notes that we experience the world "by our own lived body" (p.21). We see with our eyes, hear with our ears, and experience everything through the senses and emotions of the body first. Merleau-Ponty (1968) points out that "things become visible only at the limit of our vision of the world as if the vision of the world itself were formed from a certain point of the world" (p. 7). Terry Eagleton (2000) notes that the boundaries of the material body define and expose our creaturely existence to visibility, and the sensuous natural body constrains our consciousness. Perception of the sensuous and emotional body creates an openness which reflects the truth of our existence and brings the invisible into manifestation.

The body makes it possible to be present, here and now in this space in time. It is the horizon of our being, and the place where past and

future meet in the present. In our body, we are the I-Eye of the world. Each of us experiences the world from a different perspective. Eagleton (2000) points out that the word 'body' also has a dual meaning as either singular or collective; the body as the individual personality, as opposed to the universal body that we have inherited from our species.

The sensuous body also connects us to our ancestors and reminds us that as time goes by, death approaches. We are only a single wave on the ocean of humanity. Our bodies not only connect us to our ancestors, but also to future generations, in an endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Mieke Bal (1991) writes that life ends in death, thereby making life meaningful as the beginning of life is always recast again in birth. Awareness of the sorrow of the decaying body also sets limits to our experience of existence as we journey through the seasons of our life.

The essence of artistic creation is the reconciliation of sorrow of the vulnerable body with the experience of the truth that all life is cyclical and reciprocal. A work of art can transport us beyond the limited self into a new realm that transforms our sorrow. Laslo Versenyi (1965) notes that the revelation of the truth of existence takes us out of our "everyday, public existence, lifting us ecstatically out of our obliviousness to the essential" (p. 93).

In the arts, we rediscover the joy of being alive that comes from

within, and that informs our relationships to the world. The arts are a celebration of lived experience, and transform sorrow into joy. The inner response to the illumination of Being is immediate and intuitive and all other knowledge springs from it. We recognize it and feel it in the body as rapture and inspiration. The arts connect our inner emotional body to the outer cognitive world and the awareness of the sensual body grounds the individual within their culture. Frank Elgar (1958) states that the artist is often inspired by sorrow and transforms it into a simplified "serenity of pure harmony, consoling as music" (p. 114).

CHAPTER FIVE: ARTS EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE

Mythology, ritual and the arts celebrate the social values of the group, and have been the very foundation of culture. Culture's cohesiveness depends on the underlying premise that everyone shares these values and that they are universally accepted as being true. Post-modern western culture has dispensed with the 'grand narrative', resulting in the erosion of the mythic structure in contemporary culture. Post-modern western humanity has lost contact with the beauty of the earth and the rhythms of the seasons. The mythic foundations that have connected us with our ancestors, and taught us how to live with each other and the earth have been forgotten. Without the connection to the earth and each other, the world can become a hollow and flattened place.

Charles Taylor (1991) in the *Malaise of Modernity* speaks of a selfish individualism, with its focus on the self rather than our connection to each other that has created a fragmented, pluralistic society where there is only choice, but no individual power. As people centre on self-fulfilment, commitment to the broader culture diminishes, and the individual is increasingly alienated from society. We need a richer understanding of the relationship between the individual and the culture, and we need to re-examine our commitment to each other and to the planet that gives us life. A culture that centres mainly on the self and negates and distances us from



Illustration 12

Woman Waiting (1991)

others is negative. Our identity requires the recognition of, and dialogue with, others in our community to give our life meaning.

Woman Waiting (1991) is symbolic of the renewal of our culture, and is expressed in the female body that is patiently waiting to be heard. She represents the wisdom of nature and the emotional body that informs us that what we do to one we do to the whole. Patiently she waits for the recognition of our connection to all living things. We can only begin to change our society if we are willing to begin the change within ourselves. It is only a matter of time, the image seems to suggest, before we come to our senses.

On a more personal level, this painting represents my mother who had been struck down by a massive stroke, and lay dying in a hospital far away. Her wisdom over the years has taught me to respect nature and family, and this image is a small tribute to my love for her. This painting still speaks to me of the emotions of that difficult time of loss with bitter sweet beauty. Like the other paintings, this work transcends the sorrow of our mortal existence and leaves only a sublime beauty that goes beyond paint and canvas.

This has great significance for education, as it is the social institution that teaches culture to the next generation. Socialization in a democratic society recognizes the equal status of all cultures and genders and honours

a universal and shared human dignity. Contemporary culture must learn to respect the differences between cultures and genders and the diversity of all living beings in the world and celebrate our shared human values. It is through engaging the student's imagination, that appreciation for diversity of other cultures can be taught. It is the function of the arts to manifest Being and being human in the world, and we can learn to understand each other through sharing our arts. Education in the arts can facilitate a dialogue between cultures as we learn to appreciate the beauty and truth that is inherent in all the arts across cultures.

Arts Education can teach us to reconnect to the wisdom of the body as students use their imagination to emotionally engage with the arts. The creative process teaches students to respond intuitively to the art medium and express their inner emotions. The pleasure encountered by engaging the inner world and the discovery of truth and beauty facilitates emotional and intellectual growth. The arts can facilitate a notion of culture that would go far past our present knowledge of universal humanity; a culture that is rooted in the sensuous and emotional responses to beauty and inner body wisdom that is balanced by the intellect of the mind.

Terry Eagleton (2000) points out that "culture, or human consciousness, must be anchored in the compassionate body to be authentic" (p. 102). The expressive arts connect us to the compassionate body by engaging our affective inner wisdom that intuitively responds to and

recognizes the truth that is informed by beauty. Contemporary culture has negated the body in favour of intellectual rationalism, and that has brought our society to the brink of disaster. John Gilmour (1990) states that our connection to nature has been broken, yet all experience comes from being in the natural body. He proposes a more holistic way of experiencing existence that would embrace both the intellect and the wisdom of the body.

A world where sensuous and emotional body knowledge is ignored in favour of intellectual rationality is a waste land, but the arts can reconnect us to our inner being and heal our pain and alienation. Mark Rosenthal (1987) points out that the artist who truly seeks to know reaches deep into the shadow of the psyche to make visible “mythic, eternal and sacred time” (p. 21). The arts can illuminate the ideals of the culture and demonstrate faith that the future will be a better world. It is through the arts that we can teach the next generation to visualize and give form to the future by facilitating the creative imagination. The arts are the foundation of the culture and of all knowledge as the manifestations of invisible emotions that cannot be communicated in any other way. The arts represent the shared values of the culture and we must ensure that we pass on history and prior artistic expression to the next generation to build their future culture upon.

My painting *Moon Dance* (1991) illustrates the cycles of a woman’s life, from birth to death, and rebirth. The symbols of the cycles of the moon

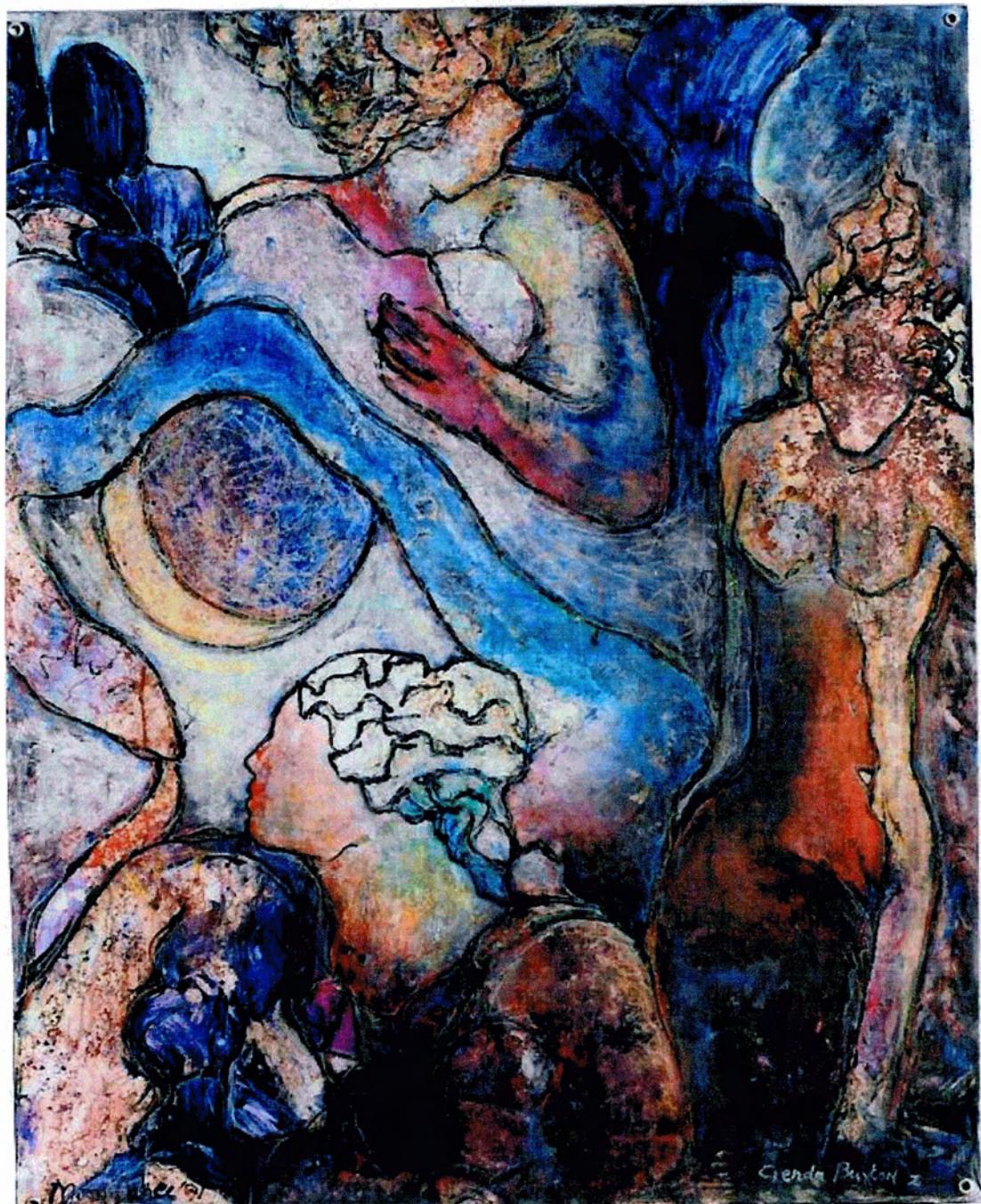


Illustration 13

Moon Dance (1991)

and the shedding of the snake's skin are used as metaphors of the ancient wisdom of regeneration. This painting celebrates the seasons of a woman's life, from being born, giving birth, to ancient crone, and finally death. The figure of death waits in the background and a raven flies behind the mother and child as a reminder of the passage of time. This painting speaks of the universality of the human condition wherein birth is followed by death, but also by rebirth. These natural cycles of life are understood by all, especially women. No matter whom you are, these timeless images may be intuitively comprehended in the emotional body as it shares our connectedness to each other beyond the diversity of culture.

Canada's pluralistic society values the ethnic and cultural diversity of our communities, and is a hybrid culture, rather than multicultural. There is less pressure on the individual to assimilate into the group, and this has implications for education, as well as the arts that are also influenced by contemporary social conditions. Education reflects not only the values, issues and needs of the community, but must also teach students how to live in the world as emotional human beings

Educating students in feelings and their connection to the inner wisdom of the body can occur through active participation and appreciation of the arts. Understanding and appreciation of the underlying mythology that often is the source of the arts of different cultures teaches students empathy for the universal human condition. The arts have a social as well

as emotional function in the community and create cohesiveness in the group. The arts consolidate and give form to the inner world of emotions and connect these experiences into daily life. Students are taught what an experience may be like through activating their imagination and reconnecting to their feelings, instead of a computer-like, mechanical response that is devoid of human empathy. Education of feelings through the arts will bring enchantment back into the world, but we need to return to the body and our inner emotions, in order to feel, not only empathy for others, but joy and excitement in the diversity of all living beings in our world.

It requires the agreement and consent of the community to determine if the arts have a shared cultural value. Arts education therefore must be inclusionary and multifaceted, in order that it can be representative of the diversity of the community. Matthew Biro (1998) notes that the communal decision regarding the value of the art work is based on whether a "new vision of both the world and the essence of human nature that starts a given people along a path of communal development" (p. 97) has been made. Works of art require not only individual artists to create the art works, but also the existence and support of a community to receive and preserves the works of art. Matthew Biro (1998) writes that "preservation consists in standing within the openness that a work has created" (p. 97), and the arts demonstrate the progress (or lack thereof) of a culture. Through engagement with the arts of our ancestors, the next generation may be able

to imagine a new and better world for the future of our planet and humanity.

Each individual has a unique and different perspective on the world. Arts education can help develop and strengthen students' imagination in order that they may learn to connect to the inner wisdom of the body and create meaning with the intellectual mind. It seems to me that when we become aware of the emotional and sensuous wisdom of the body, we also discover that there seems to be an underlying universal consciousness that guides us, and we intuitively sense what it means to live an authentic life in harmony with all existence.

As Charles Taylor points out, we need to rediscover the ideal of the notion of authenticity in order that each person can be true to themselves while being connected to more communal "horizons of significance" (Taylor, 1991 p.39). Students who are encouraged to express themselves creatively and search for self fulfilment are more likely to grant that others have the right to do the same. In this way the individual who seeks enlightenment and self expression within the artistic medium, may also express valuable knowledge that reflects their community. The arts act as a mirror on the world and reveal inner emotional and sensuous experience that cannot be communicated in any other way.

Arts education can teach students that inside the sensuous and emotional body, there is a place that they can go to get away from the

problems of the world. Jerry Clegg (1994) notes that "to each of us there is a side that is a metaphysically safe refuge from [the] vicissitudes of life" (p.64). As students use their imagination and respond with feeling to the emotional and intuitive experience of artistic creativity, they will perhaps realize that we are far more than just our individual ego, and each of us has a unique gift to give their culture. This gift is the purpose of our life's journey to fulfil, and it is a gift, both for the person as well as the culture. It seems to me that it then becomes clear, that tragedy and comedy are just two sides of the same coin.

Study of the arts across cultures may reveal that others have valuable knowledge that has been negated in the West. Some Eastern cultures seem to know that there is valuable wisdom in the body that is able to transcend our mundane everyday world. For example, various meditation techniques have been used for centuries all over the world, in the inward search for Being and understanding the meaning of living a humane life.

My own exploration of the darkness within comes to expression in the painting *Lamentations* (1992). It is an emotional outcry that reveals the despair and loneliness of existence for the solitary artist. It was symbolic of personal events in my life at that time, as well as events that were happening in the world. The sorrows of more war, more hunger, and more pain were transformed into a statement that can be understood on an

intuitive level by all. It speaks of the universality of the sorrow that surrounds us and that threatens our survival.

Phillip Callow (1990) describes a work of art as a “shelter” (p. 178) that has come into existence because it speaks to our basic human instincts and our need for reassurance. He claims that a painting, by depicting a small part of the world, makes it less frightening. A painting comforts and shelters us as we feel closer to the rest of creation. Art works express this need for ‘shelter’ from the vastness of the world, and provide comfort to both the creator and the spectator, by manifesting Being. They have the power to restore the lost connection to our inner body wisdom and what it means to live an authentic life in this world.

John Gilmour (1990) notes that great works of art “challenge our preconceptions about humanity and the world” (p. 81), and teach us who we are. A work of art begins a dialogue that will restore the lost connection to our inner self, opening us up to wisdom which is embedded within the body. It is the function of the arts to make visible the layers of meaning that lay hidden in the shadows of our personal and collective consciousness and communicate to others the truth of being alive and our connection to each other.

Delight is experienced within the sensuous body as well as the mind, when the imagination connects with and understands the wisdom that has

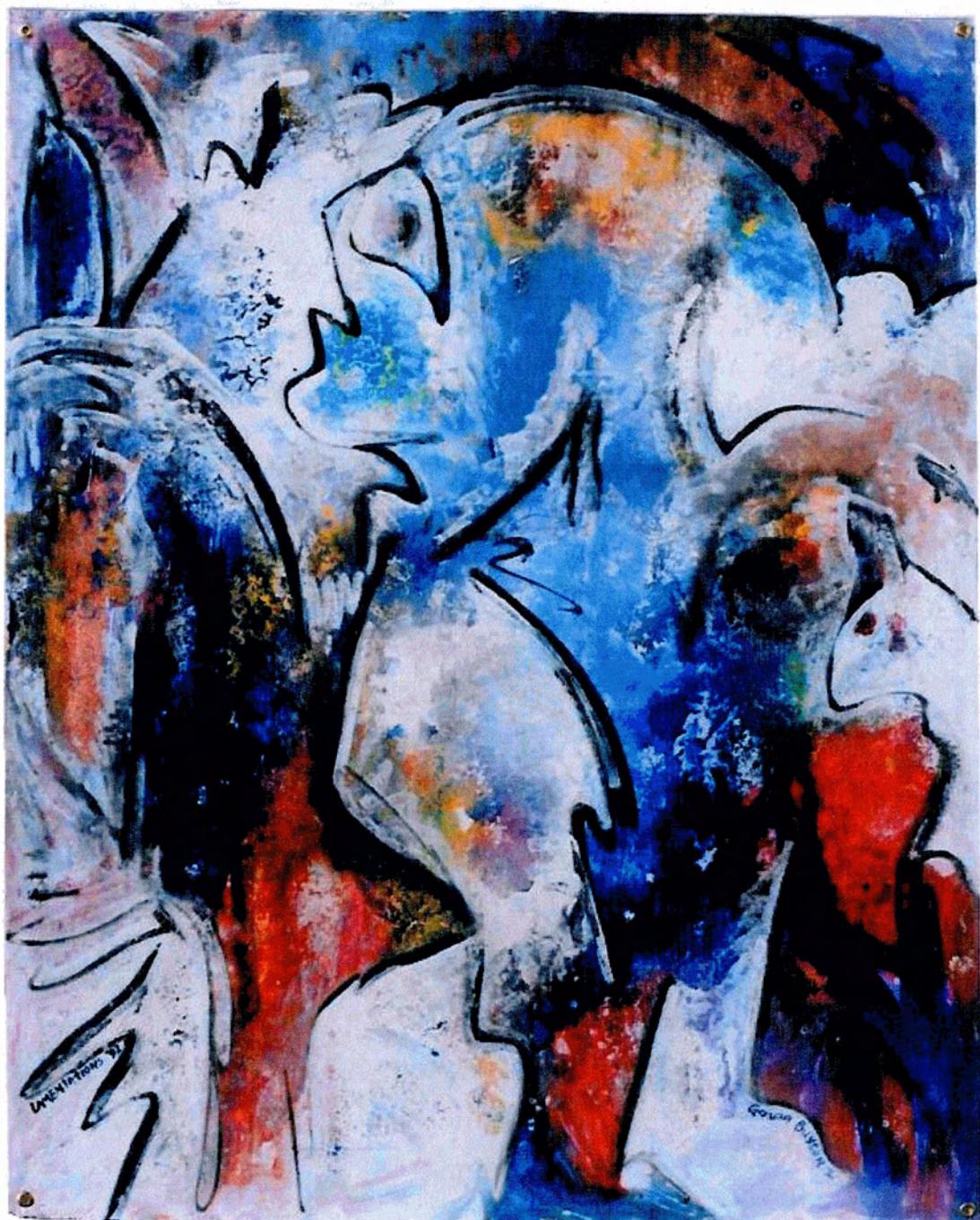


Illustration 14

Lamentations (1991-1992)

been made visible in a particular work of art, be it a dance, or a painting. The interplay between the imagination and intuitive understanding is the source of all aesthetic delight. The imagination facilitates the penetration of understanding of the many layers of symbolic meanings that are presented in a work of art. When the body responds with awe and wonder to a beautiful work of art, our spirit is renewed.

The imagination conceptualizes order and purposefulness from the impressions that the body gathers. By focusing our imaginative attention on something, the mind creates order in our world. It is the imagination that opens the window of perception on what could possibly be true, and transcends the limits of what was previously possible. The imagination makes fluid our understanding that feelings and reason are not separate but are intertwined and mutually dependent on each other.

In my own work, original visual forms are sometimes symbolic of larger issues that are both cultural and personal. The painting *Coming to Meet* (1995) represents the meeting between the masculine and feminine principles that may serve to rebalance us and the culture. It is a metaphor for the dialogue that is necessary, if these two polar opposites can begin to comprehend each other. It is symbolic of the reparation of the Cartesian split between body and mind. Inner body wisdom that is informed by the emotions needs to be balanced by the intellectual mind in order that we can understand the meaning of our existence.

Mary Warnock (1994) notes that the truth in the art work must be grasped by an active will, in order that the original vision becomes our own. She points out that "it is this shared creativity of the imagination" (p. 44) that leads to the discovery of "timeless and quite general truth" (p. 44). The work of art exists as an invitation to share the artist's inner journey to discover this timeless and general truth that is full of potentiality.

Western culture has put much pressure on the notion of individuality and uniqueness of artistic expression. Charles Taylor (1991) is critical of the focus on the self that has lead to the fragmentation of our culture, and calls it a "malaise of modernity" (p. 1) that has degraded the integrity of the ideal of individualism. The individual has freedom of choice, but is not willing to accept the responsibility that goes with it. Taylor writes that the ideal of "the culture of authenticity" (p. 43) needs to be retrieved in a less selfish sense, because the development of the individuality of human beings was Western culture's greatest achievement. The freedom to express one's authentic inner wisdom implies that it does no harm, and that others also have freedom to do the same.

Matthew Biro (1998) points out that the art work opens up a unique perspective of the "differences of others and acknowledges that no one ever stands completely within a single world or upon a single earth" (p. 99). We all experience works of art differently, yet the artist hopes that the underlying wisdom of symbolic forms will be universally understood.



Illustration 15

Coming to Meet (1995)

Universal understanding on an emotional level would apply to Islam in the East, as much as to Christianity in the West, as well as all other cultures. Universal wisdom transcends the cultural differences that separate us because it is the language of our shared humanity.

Richard Anderson (1990) in *A Comparative Study of Philosophies of Art* explores the artistic practices of ten different cultures across the globe. He looks at such diverse cultures as the Australian aborigines, the Inuit in the Arctic, the Navajo in the American South West, the Aztec in Mesoamerica, the Sepik of New Guinea, the Yoruba in West Africa and the San in South-West Africa, as well as early Indian and Japanese aesthetics and compares them to contemporary western aesthetic thought. He states that despite the complexity and variation of culturally “significant meaning...art’s spiritual meaning is crucial” (p. 240- 41) across cultures. He finds that the arts across these cultures contain universal truths and special intuitive insights that communicate “principles of both goodness and energy through its sensuous embodiment of beauty” (p. 241). He notes that the meanings of art and beauty seem to “link with human health and physical well-being and...social goodness [as well as being] a manifestation of truth” (p. 246) in all these cultures.

Anderson notes that the arts across cultures also manifest the transformation of everyday existence in the experience of the sacred inner world. He cites the Navajo sand paintings, Aztec art as a gift to the gods,

and Japanese Shinto that incorporates “music, dance as the perfect mirror that lures the Sun goddess out of the Rock Cave of Heaven” (p.248) and Indian art as the means of transcending human existence. Anderson compares these to religious art created during the Middle Ages in the West that is also meant to transform mundane human existence.

Works of art seem to contain many layers of meaning that may be both culturally and historically determined. These meanings may be understood differently by different people, as the art work exposes us to the differences as well as to the similarities of others. It seems that universal meaning speaks to us through the emotional participation and responses that a work of art elicits, cutting through details of place and time. It is the language of emotions we understand intuitively, that open our minds to a richer understanding of our existence that whispers softly from the heart. This inner voice that is informed both by the wisdom of the body and the intellect, is what makes us human beings and gives us our sense of morality. Terry Eagleton (2000) points out that “only by re-experiencing the body, the medium of our common humanity, will we learn to feel for others in the act of feeling for ourselves” (p. 101).

Arts education can facilitate students' understanding of the many cultural meanings that art works share. Participation and engagement with the arts across cultures may encourage respect for the diversity of the human experience and initiate mutual and enthusiastic dialogues about the

arts, as well as delight us as we discover the many layers of meaning that are embedded in a work of art. Participation in and enjoyment of the arts teach students about making positive choices and taking responsibility for the consequences of those choices. Education in the arts can teach students to access their own ‘genius’ that wants to be expressed, and to balance the intellectual mind with the inner wisdom of the body. This will provide them with a strong foundation for the future that they can build on.

Rosamond Harding (1967) writes that intuitive inner wisdom is “the result of the accumulated experience of our whole life” (p. 31) and we should learn to trust our feelings and imagination. Rafael Lopez-Pedraza (1996) concurs that our intuitive and emotional responses have “value of unknown immensity” (p. 87). There is often a feeling of synchronicity involved when inner feelings are listened to and the pieces seem to fall into their rightful place. Everybody has the potential to access the wisdom of the sensuous and emotional body in order that they may gain insight into the possibility of renewal, and contribute their own unique and valued voice in the ongoing dialogue of human development. The arts in the curriculum are a necessary element because the arts teach us the experience of joy and delight, as well as wonder and awe when we recognize the pieces of ourselves in the patterns of the other.

Arts Education can facilitate students' understanding of the art and artists that came before, as well as teach the experience of the art-making

process. The arts are an important part of emotional and cognitive education and teach students to connect their inner world of feeling with the intellectual mind that informs our everyday reality. Charles Taylor (1991) states that in our contemporary technological world "the primacy of instrumental reason...makes us believe that we should seek technological solutions even when something very different is called for (p. 6). He states that we have lost touch with our environment and the natural world and are unable to respond with basic human empathy to our self and to others.

Education in the arts can encourage students' emotional connection to the wisdom of feelings. The arts communicate the very foundations of being human and celebrate the self in a language that cannot be articulated in any other way. John Gilmour (1990) notes that the arts express the cultural common ground of humanity giving us a sense of continuity while connecting us to the works of art left behind by our ancestors. Participation in the creation and appreciation of the arts encourages our ability to use both cognitive and emotional knowledge that opens us up to the complexity of whom we are.

Education in the arts taps feelings and lived experience, and involves the physical body, the intellect, the imagination, and our senses and emotions, as well as the development of our social being. The arts teach a different sensibility that is the awareness that there is more to this life's journey than the mundane, practical, instrumental everyday

experience.

Participation in the arts and artistic creativity teach students that imaginative interplay between our senses, emotions and the intellect of the mind is a dance that leads to deeper knowledge about Being and being human. It reconnects our link to the roots of our shared humanity through emotional and cognitive understanding that rationality must be balanced by our feelings. The arts are the foundation of humanity and strengthen social ties and our connection to the earth that sustains us.

The arts can reconnect us to the beauty in nature and renew our respect for the environment, and the natural rhythms of life. They express the lived experience of humanity in a particular time and place, and can express empathy for the human condition. Works of art celebrate the rhythm of the cycles of nature, where death follows birth and rebirth is assured, in the natural progression of the seasons.

Arts Education is a crucial component of the curriculum because it teaches students a different and valuable form of aesthetic knowledge that cannot be accessed in any other way. Inner wisdom that is embedded in the emotional body can be brought out into the visible world through participating in the arts, providing valuable insights about our connection to our world. Arts education can facilitate students' imagination and this may help them visualize solutions to problems in other subjects in the school

curriculum. Students learn to create both emotional and intellectual meaning from form in the art making process strengthening their cognitive development.

Education in the arts is the foundation of all learning and is an indispensable part of educating the next generation to make the connections between the various forms of knowledge. John Berger (2003) points out that “an interdisciplinary vision is necessary in order to take in what is happening, to connect the ‘fields’ that are institutionally kept separate...The precondition of thinking politically on a global scale is to see the unity of the unnecessary suffering taking place. This is the starting point” (p. x). Berger notes that the “separate disciplines, such as economics, politics, media studies, public health, ecology, national defence, criminology, education, etc.” (p. x) in reality, are all interconnected and affect one another. The arts can facilitate a more fluid way of thinking that allows students to see the interconnectedness of the various disciplines.

Arts education teaches skills that can be applied to other areas of study and can aid students in their daily lives. Students learn to creatively question the status quo and to make new connections between different areas of knowledge as they create meaning from form. The arts can teach both self esteem and respect for others as students participate in the creative process and learn what it means to activate the imagination. Art making involves taking risks in exposing our emotional inner world to

others, yet is crucial for sharing emotional truth. Students need the cognitive knowledge and experience of the skills and rules of various arts media. These skills should be taught at an early age and be an equal part in the educational curriculum. Literacy in expression of aesthetic forms is a different but equal form of knowledge, and is as important as learning to read and write. There are times when what we want to express can not be said in words but can only be shown; a picture is sometimes worth a thousand words.

Once skills and rules have been mastered, the students require expert guidance in seeking to express their unique inner vision through their engagement with the creative imagination. Participation in the arts helps to ignite the imagination through creative experimentation and play. Freedom to playfully and intuitively explore the forms and emotions that well up while engaging with the arts, and making meaning from them with our hearts as well as our minds, often lead to new and valuable discoveries in the arts for the person, the arts, and the curriculum. John Berger (2003) explains that "art can turn corners so much more rapidly than policy" (p. 76).

Arts Education can develop the ability to create meaning from both inner feelings and the intellect of the mind. As students learn the rules and skills of the various artistic media they will increasingly become more adept at expressing their inner feelings and emotions and create meaning from the forms that they find within themselves. Being able to express

themselves intellectually and emotionally, and appreciating these artistic expressions in others, will give students a strong foundation for the future.

Artists are the visionaries of a culture and education in the arts can teach the next generation emotional and cognitive skills as well as provide students with the experience necessary to express their inner visions. When a culture gives its members the freedom to discover the self, and supports everyone in their search for inner truth equally, a community has been created. Arts education can facilitate the development of the individual imagination as well as provide a safe place for dialogue between various expressions of self. Hofstadler (1971) calls this model of a culture "the source of all harmony of beings, belonging together in the round dance of their being" (p. xx-xxi).

The painting *Transformation* (2002) plays with the idea of the passage of time and the seasons of our life. It reminds me of medieval religious paintings that depict various important events on the same canvas. In this case it is somewhat autobiographical as it shows the various stages of a woman's life. The old seated woman on the right looks serenely over her shoulder to events of the past, and remembers. She remembers the young woman full of hope for the future, the mother who protectively embraces her three children and the three female forms in the background who may be symbolic of past, present and future. The sun shining high in



Illustration 16

Transformation (2003)

the left-hand corner, and the moon in the right-hand corner seem to stand guard over them all.

This painting is loaded with personal as well as shared experience that speaks of the passing of time in the life of a woman, and the familial relationships that have been transformed over time. The theme of transformation is a recurring one in my art making that I feel is a confirmation of the path I have chosen. It reconciles and celebrates the seasons of life by giving it form, which provides meaning. This painting is a reminder that we cannot undo the past, and what is done is done. It is only in the present moment, that we can change our world and learn from the past. The creative imagination understands on an emotional and cognitive level, that a new manifestation for the future may be created from the past. I agree with Wendy Steiner (2001) who expresses the hope that the future will be “a time when beauty, pleasure, and freedom again become the domain of aesthetic experience and art offers a worthy ideal for life” 241).

David Abrams (1997) notes that we may contemplate the future, but as the past retreats into memory, the future “withholds its presence” (p. 211). Living authentically in the present moment involves not only the balance between our body wisdom and intellectual mind, but also that we live in harmony with others. It begins with the individual and radiates out into the family, the community, the environment and into every culture in the world. The universal truths that underpin our cultural differences are our

shared humanity. That goes for every living being on this earth, no less for one than the other.

The artist who lives an authentic life can model this existence for others by expressing the universal truths of what it means to be human. Everyone can relate to the meaning of sorrow and joy and we all recognize beauty, it is only in the personal expressions that we encounter difference. Arts education gives students a sense of how it feels to be an artist, as a person and as a member of society. The history of art contains the stories of our culture, as does the works of art of other cultures. A long gone world is made visible for us in the art works of the past. They contain our connection with the memory of our ancestors and their expressions of Being and being human in the world. These works of art speak of the common ground of humanity, as well as the beauty of diversity.

Artists and the works of art they left behind throughout time have made visible the invisible world of inner emotional wisdom, both for personal and cultural insight. Experience of this inner emotional and sensuous reality, tempered by the intellect, is the source of all creative artistic expression that transforms sorrow into beauty, truth and art.

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