



*Lyn Nude in Charcoal by Stacy Rosevear*

## Recreating Me:

## Exploring and Healing through Artistic Expression

*You need chaos in your soul to give birth to a dancing star. (Nietzsche)*

Anyone who has lived with a brain injury or who has loved a person with a brain injury has known chaos. So many pieces, so many parts are scattered about after the accident. Where do you start? What can you do? Who are you?

The artists we present here this evening have been in this chaotic place. They have fought against circling currents and through drifting haze. They have searched for themselves and have made mistakes and have persisted. These artists are not the same people as before that day. They are much, much wiser.

And tonight we have captured their dancing stars.

Enjoy and be inspired to recreate yourself as well.

*The University of Washington TBI Model System staff and volunteers*

## Hillary Bassett Ross



While I work in a host of media, a large blank canvas poses my truest challenge. It is challenging because it always begins without a goal. Without a plan. Without sketches. It is a leap.

The result is organic—at times vibrant, others not, depending upon what comes out at that particular moment. Working abstract allows the ability to see where the composition takes me, and still lets me alter the course at any moment.

Most of the work is completed with palette knives, using very minimal brushwork.

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## Jill Beyer



In January 2006, Jill Beyer sustained a traumatic brain injury in a bicycle accident. Since then she's taken up creative writing as a vocation. Currently, Jill is enrolled in the Creative Writing Certificate Program at the community college in Santa Fe, NM. She supplements her coursework through UCLA Online Extension Writer's Program.

Her poetry and short fiction have won awards and recognition locally in Santa Fe, NM. She is at the beginning stages of writing a novel.

TRAUMA EGYPT is her first piece to incorporate into her writing her experiences recovering from and living with a traumatic brain injury.

Show Entries:

*TRAUMA EGYPT - Flash Fiction*  
*An Unplanned Victory - poem*  
*Ode To My Fourth Grade Teacher - poem*

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## Gwyneth Boyer



I've been drawing and painting since I can remember. All I ever usually did was put as much color on the page as possible. It didn't matter if I was in the lines or not, just as long as the page was saturated with any variety of color I could muster up at the time.

As I've progressed through art camps, and art classes and as I've learned about the different ways I could use color I found that I gravitate towards the abstract. Using the influences of artists like Natasha Wescoat, and Timothy Sorsdahl. I create pieces that are filled with color and have rarely any straight lines. Like life, I think that art should have many twists and turns that don't fall along the lines of what the mind wants it to be. It should be messy and colorful, and every where in between, which I believe is reflected in my art. I hope you enjoy my pieces.

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## Michael Carlos



Musician, singer and songwriter Michael Carlos, 38, blends an eclectic mix of musical styles with razor-sharp lyrics to create compositions that have earned him critical acclaim and a growing fan base in the Pacific Northwest.

Currently based in Wenatchee, Washington, Carlos grew up in California's San Joaquin Valley. As a Latino child adopted by Caucasian parents, Carlos was

often mistaken as the son of migrant farm workers. His experiences living in San Joaquin Valley's cultural divide and the search for his own identity has helped to shape his music, which critics have lauded for covering a "wide range of musical territory." Carlos draws from a diverse array of styles, ranging from indie rock, alt-country, Latin, pop and blues. He sees his music as one way of bridging the cultural divide and connecting with his audiences, both white and Hispanic.

In 2008, he followed up the political and cultural satire of *Yesterday's Icons* with a more personal voice in his second album, *Damage and Remainder*. Some of the songs were a catharsis for Carlos in grieving the deaths of his father and then a year later, his girlfriend, who died in an automobile accident which nearly claimed his own life as well. The album features two Spanish-language songs, "Jenny's Cumbia" and "Playerita," which illustrate Carlos' growing versatility and deepening connection with his Latin roots.

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## David Cole



David Cole, a Boulder, Colorado native was injured October 2nd, 1980 as a college Freshman at CU, Boulder. David was the victim of a driver's brief and tragic miscalculation that resulted in a 6 month coma. As an early survivor of traumatic brain injury (TBI), David struggled to regain his life skills, earn a college diploma, work for his living, become a husband and have three healthy children.

His driving ambition has always been to educate others on the experience of TBI, and to answer the question, "Can you

remember anything, what was it like?" and to reveal his capacity for intellect, humor and analysis.

The Iliad of the Odd D.C. will also increase understanding for the medical, social, and the physical ramifications of TBI for medical caregivers, support staff, the family, and friends. He has given a first person, untutored impression of what real life as a TBI victor looks like.

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## Laura Cubell



My ceramics pieces are inspired by the healing power of nature and its many layers and textures. Creating shape and design from earthen clay on a wheel is a meditative process. I usually start with an image in my mind of the piece and often work with simple

bowl shapes. When I begin each piece, holding the mound of clay at the wheel provides me with a grounding force. Whatever result takes place, it makes me happy. When the clay is dry, the real creative challenge comes with choosing glazes. Deciding which colors to combine brings an excitement and anticipation of the final look and life of a particular piece. I like to pursue boldness in applying glazes and see what results.

Since moving to Seattle 18 years ago, it has been my privilege to study at Pottery Northwest, a haven for masters in the craft of ceramics.

*Spring Nature's Green* is a shallow bowl that takes inspiration from the mossy forest floor.

*Tree Line* shows the texture of bark on a tree, also the tree line on a mountain top.

*Starry Night* is a large bowl that shows the interplay of blue and white in an evening sky.

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## Bret G. Hart



My art is an expression of an alternative view point both internally and externally. The aim is to challenge the viewer to contemplate a world where things are not always arranged in the expected or normal way. The dynamic arrangement of flowers depicted in this series reflects the expected and unexpected and how I must arrange my world each day to fit my life from a wheelchair.

This is my view of the world from a wheelchair where things jump out at me. Very little is as it once was, or as it is for most people; yet there is still beauty in the contrast of darkness and light and vibrancy of color. I enjoy inspiring others to open themselves to a different point of view. As I am inspired by beauty and color I hope to inspire others to alter their view of the world.

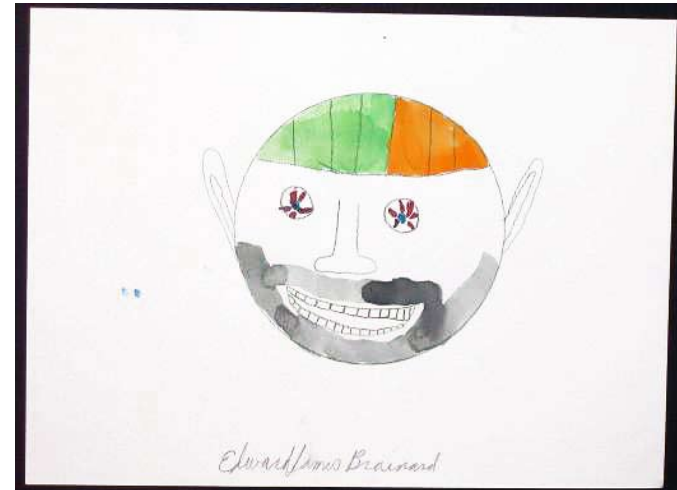
Oil on canvas is my preferred medium of expression, preferably portraits. The flower series is a departure from my usual portrait subjects and could be considered decorative pieces. I have been greatly inspired by the German Expressionist Max Beckmann and have been painting since the late 70's and attended The San Francisco Art Institute from 1991-93.

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## Heads Up Writing Group

The Heads Up Writing Group of the Heads Up Program at Elderhealth Northwest wrote *A Recipe for Recovery*.

## Edward James Brainard



## Aniko Connor

This nature scene reminds me of happy memories of sailing and fishing in the beautiful Washington mountain lakes. It makes me happy to think of nature and how much I love living in Washington!

I did the cat cartoon because I love cats and their diamond eyes!

I did both pieces in a watercolor art group at Heads Up Adult Day Health group.

## Heads Up Writing Group

The Heads Up Writing Group of the Heads Up Program at Elderhealth Northwest wrote *A Recipe for Recovery*.



### Tony Hassman

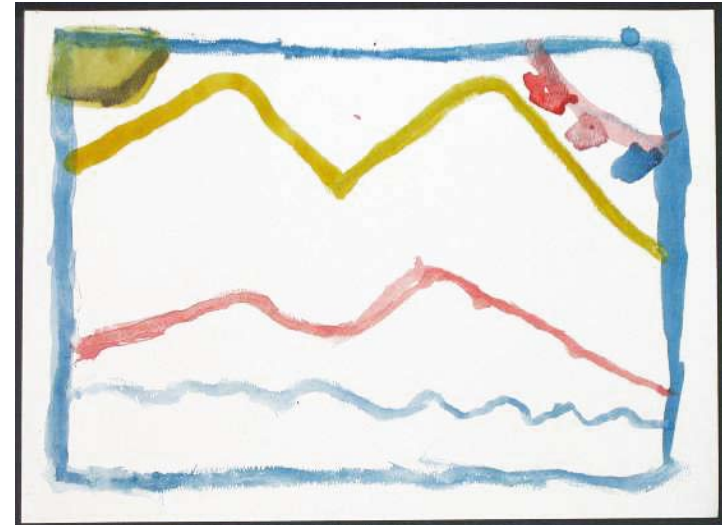
This picture is similar to one I did in 8th grade as I mosaic. I got an "A" on it and it was displayed for three months. In an art group at Heads Up Adult Day Health Program I chose to try it again in pencil and watercolor.

It is meant to be fun and playful!

## Heads Up Writing Group

The Heads Up Writing Group of the Heads Up Program at Elderhealth Northwest wrote *A Recipe for Recovery*.

### Michael Olson



### Kelif Nejash

I did this watercolor during a Heads Up Adult Day Health Program art group. This flower reminds me of a dream I had during my brain surgery. It also makes me think about how I would like to give my wife something beautiful like a flower.



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### Willie Veness



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## Mark Huntsman



My TBI took the physical and spiritual and existential parts of me and twisted them up something good. *enter sky, stage left*, is a poem I wrote five years after my accident, at a time when my life was on just this side of its darkest point: a very

wise and funny and generous family friend had agreed to have coffee with me every week, and was talking me through all the fragmented stuff in my head. And it had begun to work.

One day I sat down to do some research and this poem spilled out of me. I'm a prose writer by inclination and practice—prior to this poem I'd only ever tried my hand at a poem while wearing an ironical hat on my head. The kind of restraint poetry requires does not come to me readily, and, indeed, I don't know that *enter sky, stage left* is a proper poem. But it's one of the more honest things I've ever written, and although it begins with a question, at essence I think it's a statement. Here but for the grace of God stays I.

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## Adam Lafayette



A traumatic brain injury in my opinion, dispels any efforts of the weak hearted. No longer do we decide what to think, how to feel, or even what way to move. I believe that there is no such thing as a complete recovery. The "Mirror Stage", a theory by French psychoanalysis

writer and researcher, Jacques Lacan, is founded on the notion that an infant looks into the mirror and recognizes a "whole" identity while in fact its self is still fragmented. Of course this contrast of what is seen in the mirror and what is actually felt, creates tension.

In a sense this is what my poem is about. The first words I remember speaking after my brain injury were, what the hell happened to my life? Six years later, I'm still not sure. I mean, I have pictures, memories, and witnesses, but no justice. I know what happened to my brain, but I don't understand and I don't think I ever will understand what happened to my life.

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## Victoria Lemming



Victoria Lemming, 61, artist, resides in Bellingham. A Washington state native, her work has been shown in various venues around the state, including the Pacific Avenue show in Tacoma, where one of her pieces garnered a 1st place in 2002.

Lemming has worked consistently as an artist since childhood, when she discovered that art seemed to nourish her talents and her soul more than talking, writing and acting, which were the other distinct possibilities. She does continue to write poetry, a particular enchantment, but most of her efforts accrue in painting, papier mache and textiles.

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## Matthew Malcham



“The object of art is to crystallize emotion into thought, and then fix it in form.” - Delsarte

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## Yuanbuo Meng



Although learning to reengage tasks again after my TBI in 1988 was initially hard, art helped me focus and find a way to move on. Although a trained scientist, as an architect's son who attended a Montessori primary school I learned to draw early.

Rediscovering Art helped me prepare a portfolio. That as well as my classes at an art college evening class taught me to use chalk pastels creating art without lines! Using my left (creative-side) hand, I relearned to engage art in color without using line. In spite of my partial sight and double vision, I chose to work on A1 or Newsprint paper sizes! I am now engaging in Etching at the Printmakers Workshop!

As presented, my self-portrait series was part of portfolio preparation (never used), and shows that I learned to explore visually! Visible too are the contrasts that start from my chalk pastels, to oil-paintings. Despite being Right-handed, these all were done by my left-hand apart from one single right-handed b/w pencil drawing. Can you see how in the illustration series, I overcame my Traumatic Brain Injury on my frontal Right-side?

After twenty years searching, I now am establishing 'ARThi' in Edinburgh Scotland where I will use Art to help young people ages 19-49 regain the skills and abilities to regain a job.

WOW! ! ! Quite an exploration and adventure!!!

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## Constance Miller



My art was dramatically affected by my brain injury of 1982. Whereas, previous to my TBI my work focused on explorations of the juxtaposition of shapes; afterwards my imagery undertook an examination of my fractured self. For years afterward my self-portraits took on the form disheveled fragments of my former self. Shapes within my images became more angular and sharp edged. Tones were soft and indistinct. Depth was flattened and lacked distinct spaces

Themes address catastrophic annihilation, destruction, and often featured dangerous falling, fractured or broken objects.

More recently, following my years of concerted efforts to put myself back together again my work has taken on a softer, more unified tone and has expanded to include an examination of the quirky as well as beautiful things in my environment.

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## Darcie Richardson, Designer Ernie Wagner, Lampworker



They told me that my memory would not improve, that I had probably reached a plateau, that there was nothing more “they” could do. Raven, with an eye for all that glitters and sparkles, with intelligence enough for two, told me otherwise.

I string beads and in the moment I imagine that every bead is a prayer; every bead a wish; every bead a hope for the future. My husband does lampwork, making beautiful, original glass designs. I buy other beads and silver from all over the world ... I hunt

and poke and prod as Raven does, for all that is shiny and in which I delight.

Ernie and I are a team. He makes the beads and I string them. I use beautiful silver from the Hill Tribes region of Thailand and sterling from Mexico and India. I seek out beads, seeds, rocks and pearls of all sorts to enhance my designs, in addition to Ernie's.

Bruja Gallery is where our talents merge into jewelry, trinkets, bobbles and bracelets. We are located in Olympia, WA and are open by appointment only. We are also available for Trunk Shows.

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## Daniel Romer



*Super Saturated.*

Daniel Romer is fascinated with how the psycho-somatic shell he creates interacts with his universe at large. Emotions condense into thought patterns, funneling into physical habits... the machinery of the universe appears to bear a striking resemblance to the wheels and gears that roll within his mind. This leaves one prime question for him: If I learn to live in balance from the deepest level, will my inner growth know any limits?

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## Stacy Rosevear



Normally a figurative artist, the following pieces provide a window into some physical challenges and process of healing for me following a stroke in 2000. I was not a visual artist prior to that event.

BIRCH at NIGHT (2007), a traditional Japanese Katazome piece which required many hours of

small movements, coordination and details, is a work of personal triumph.

ANTICIPATION (2008) exists as visual culmination of years of recovery before Neilson and I flew to Europe in 2008.

Three weeks following the stroke included deep depression, sleeplessness, temporary paralysis, a ventilator and no verbal communication. In my darkest hours Neilson took me on mental trips to Paris. My dreams of full recovery spilled onto the canvas. Items from previous European trips, childhood dreams, maps and an immense array of color with repeating circles (referencing timezones, the 24 hour clock opposite my critical care bed), on top of having the ability to paint and travel after my illness manifest here.

THANK YOU, EV 30/40 & 40/40 (2008) mixes a study of ink wash faces with my feelings toward peers as I left art school. Originally part of a 40 piece installation. Each face is different.

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Work studio located within Equinox Studios, Georgetown, Seattle (9/2009)

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## Nicholas Michael Schweitzer



Nicholas Michael Schweitzer had no interest in art prior to his recovery period from a 1988 Traumatic Brain Injury, when his mother introduced him to watercolors. Nick readily took to drawing his memories in the abstract. A mark became a tree or a mountain; a series of diagonal lines represented an idea. Short-term memory slips prevent Nick from recalling the meaning of a drawing later on, but the artworks still reflect feelings in him of accomplishment and confidence.

The Seattle Hills drawing was done in a Harborview Hospital bed, following a fourth cranioplasty. Nick showed a steady hand with the paint brush and a sincere interest in using the watercolors, making clean marks to portray his love of this city on hills.

U of W Coffee Café was drawn with markers and watercolor, while living at another program in California. Nick readily draws pictures connected to his student years at the University of Washington, life in Terry Hall and his apartment on 11th Avenue, and his work in Seattle. Images reflect his affection for Seattle's favorite drink – coffee, and favorite activity - reading.

Nick's road to self-renewal continues 20 years after his TBI, enhanced by his visual language.

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*All artwork featured in this program is ©2009 by the artist.*

## Rob Shively



I have always been able to express myself well through Cartooning. It's my escape to a world without rules or boundaries where my imagination reigns.

Art has also become a rehab tool for me. My own struggle with my brush with death and survival culminated in the piece entitled "The Silver Bullet." It's a blatant snapshot of the destructive lifestyle that led to my TBI. Delivered with the dark comedy that I embrace at a price that starkly reminds

me I am still in rehab every day for the alcoholism that authored my injury is redeeming. I struggled with drawing after my injury. This piece is my own slam into the concrete. It's a cartoon in style, but has a realism that reminds me my talent was almost lost to me and regained through rehabilitation. Drawing a picture that brings a gritty shock factor to the viewer is a powerful tool.

In contrast, "Unorganized" pokes fun at what was a startling life change for me – not being able to juggle priorities, schedules and tasks easily in my mind.

It's a gift to be alive and able to choose a promising and fulfilling activity over a dangerous vice.

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## Leslie Sinclair



I was painting at the moment of my son's 1988 traumatic brain injury, and repercussions of that incident continue to inform my art. At first the focus was personal, but sudden realization that a half million dollars of insurance coverage is not enough to treat a TBI survivor for life-long medical care and cognitive support spurred me into a life of advocacy, with artwork to match.

I work in water media and collage, mixed-media constructions, clay, and oil. Included in this show are *Bamboo Gratitude*, mixed-media on

paper bag, and *Perseverance*, oil on bamboo cane - two pieces from my *Stroked Bamboo* series, prompted by my later reversed diagnosis of stroke; and *Battleaxe*, a mixed-media collage.

These reflect the prettifying of the aftermath of TBI for those who require life-long support. Our society funds cutting-edge technologies to force life even at the point of agonal respirations, and funds medical care for the duration of some survivors' lives, but remains oblivious to evidence of vital brain plasticity, so neglects the provision of long-term brain-function improvement strategies and activities.

I exhibited several times for WaSHIF, which preceded BIAWA. My artwork is in private, corporate, and university and college collections.

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## Ilene Stein



For some time I have wanted to create photos that would help others understand or recognize aspects of life with Mild TBI. Assisting me with this project are three spongy brains of purple, blue and green.

### *Balance*

Fun with disorientation.

### *Meditation*

This photo is about awareness.

There is very little buffer between my brain and everything going on

around it. The vibration within my brain and the movement outside of it are separated by wavering dotted lines. It is, for example, often great for being immersed in color. Being immersed in color at the grocery store – not so great.

Thank you for your attention.

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## Eric Sumeri



Music is my “lifeblood”!!!

As long as I can remember, I have been captivated by the absolute power that the briefest melodic and harmonic tidbits can hold over me. When I was in a coma for several weeks, my parents knew the powerful role that music played in my life, and

they had music playing for me. A few years into my recovery, I put on a recital to thank all that had played such pivotal roles in my recovery. Here are a few of my pieces:

I composed the French Horn Quartet, *Fanfare*, for my father. I wanted to capture the joy that his fatherhood inspires in me. He used to play French horn in high school.

The cello & marimba duet, *Cataclysm*, is for my mother. She plays the cello in the Cascade Symphony Orchestra, and I have always loved the sound of it.

The third piece, *Voices Within*, is for me. In 1990, several of my best friends and I were finishing our tenure studying music at Central Washington University. We took all of the music that we had spent several years internalizing, and applied it to creating our own rock band with a horn section. *Otis Elevator and the Shafts* was born.

## Drew Sussman

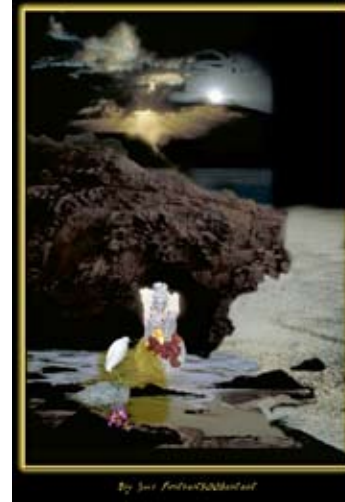


i write poetry to express myself and feelings the only way i know how to and it has served me well and inspired me, to be published and to be able to create the only way i can now.

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## Morgan Thomas



In 1977 I returned to the long held dream of making art and photography, and incorporated a non-profit organization, FAR. I had produced my own work in mixed media, ranging from drawings and photographs to site-specific installation and performance. Continuing to work with FAR through 1986, I developed work dedicated to giving voice to social concerns.

Beginning in 1980, I added digital media. In July, 1999, I was pleased to find a position at a new school, The Oxbow School, in CA. A car hit me as I was taking

a walk. Eight years later I graduated from the Acquired Brain Injury 2 year program in Costa Mesa, CA. Currently I am writing a "poetic" film about Acquired Brain Injury, and living in Santa Fe, NM again.

My artwork is inspired by wishing to stir memories of humanity. It is rooted in nature and body. The work is poetic and didactic, an aggregate of image and word, dream and critique, and celebration of pattern and dissent. The titles of works speak for my themes: Face It; Embrace Her, Memory in Place, Reflections on War and Love: Act, Rising Figure, Rivers of Ancient Mournings, Twentieth Century Child; We Will Not Disappear.

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## Susan Waddle



I have been living with a brain injury for 27 years, but have only recently begun to understand the impact of this injury on my life. What I am learning about the impact of my injury will help me, I hope, discipline and organize my creative self in ways I welcome. And creating art, in turn, helps me integrate the injury and reclaim myself.

Most of the art work I do involves the human figure. The expression of real emotion through figural work intrigues me. I have worked as an animator and art educator and am working on book illustrations. I began a series of oil paintings exploring the range of emotions the children of our world must feel about our planet. I work in illustration, ceramic sculpture and have recently started creating mandalas from mixed media as both art and meditation. Art, as a healer, helps me express, explore and center myself in these ways.

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## Carol Wessberg



The artist, Carol Wessberg, has discovered that she can use art to express herself in ways she can no longer find the words for.

*Awakening:*  
(Watercolor)

For a long time after my accident, I felt dead inside, cold and

brittle. Slowly I felt things begin to change - I began to notice good things, pretty things and color. Like nature, I was dormant and waiting for the process of re-awakening.

*Synesthesia:* (Watercolor)

Do you see music? I do. I see colors when I hear music or any other tones. This can be a wonderful experience, but at other times it is overwhelming. These colors associated with music can intermingle and clash making for a confusing mix of overload. At other times, the colors amplify and improve the overall experience. These are the colors that I see while listening to Heartbeats by Jose Gonzales.

*Personality of Tulips:* (Watercolor)

These tulips stood out and spoke the loudest to me. They are dramatic and colorful and overwhelming - they screamed to be painted, to be shared. Can't you almost smell them?

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## Viv Il Veith

My work often starts with a title. The title leads me to the fabric, the shape, and the dimensionality. The piece takes form and gains life as the fabric calls out for stitching here and beads there. The work slowly evolves and under my hands begins to tell me a story. I find it interesting as the artist that even after a piece is completed I learn more about its journey and meaning with each showing.

“Think of Me as an Ocean” is such a piece. The beautifully hand dyed fabric led to the name at first. But as the piece evolved it became a love story with the depth and breadth of an ocean: storms and calm waters; strong currents and eddies; sun sparkled droplets riding on waves and dark depths of secrets realms.

Now as I enter this piece in this show, I also realize it is a statement about the me that I am recreating after the TBI. . . Think of me as an Ocean.

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## Thank You For Your Support

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