

color chords reflecting your inner state



Elaine's first color chord.



Elaine's second and third color chords. After the first lyrical choice (top), a dark memory arose (above right) followed by a sense of love and gratitude for supportive friends (above left).



Dahlia's second color chord. Dahlia's second color chord expresses a deep meditative state underlying life's changes.

This large assortment of colors has a powerful presence and can evoke many responses. The simple act of seeing and choosing colors from this pile is a spontaneous meditation in itself that can awaken us immediately to natural forces. But to experience your color choices more fully, I suggest a short time of preparation, inviting the same spirit of meditation as in the drawing process.

EXPERIMENT: A Meditation for the Eyes

Before seeing the color pile, begin by closing your eyes, noticing what you are feeling in this present moment. Can you notice any sensation in the space inside your head? Feel where your eyes are in this space, and in time allow them to be more at rest. You might cover your eyes with your palms, noticing what your own touch brings. Stay this way as long as it is comfortable.

With open eyes, notice what it is to see after this time of quiet. When you are ready, let your eyes rest on the pile of colored papers, noticing the effect these many colors might have on you. Do some colors begin to stand out more?

EXPERIMENT: Choosing Colors

Like being drawn to certain people in a large crowd, spontaneously choose colored papers from the pile—any combination of colors, any number. Let yourself be drawn to whatever attracts you, trusting whatever comes into your hands. The colors may



Color chords of five people in a group setting. From the color pile, members of a women's circle chose their individual color chords. After picking colors without a theme, they later expressed an incident from their lives. Each person came to recognize their individuality and expressive power, whether experienced in art or not. The sharing afterwards brought the group together.

even seem to choose you as you are led irresistibly to what you want. One color follows another, resulting in sometimes unexpected, yet compelling, combinations. It is important to accept anything that happens; there is no need to produce anything meaningful or beautiful. There are no wrong combinations and there is no right way.

As you select the colored papers, put them on a sheet of white paper. You may want to arrange them carefully, or you can simply leave them just as they came off the pile. This simple process of arrangement happens almost involuntarily, each color naturally finding its place in relation to the others. It is very close to doing nothing, and yet later as we view the colors we can see that a great deal has happened.

From the whole spectrum of color possibilities everyone invariably chooses their own unique combinations—each a world in itself, resonant in its own particular way. These combinations can be described as "color chords," unique color harmonies that reflect the myriad qualities of the world.

Like a visual emotional weather report, the language of color reveals changing states of being with an uncanny accuracy, expressing how we feel at the moment. Every emotion and every quality of being has its equivalent in color, and the colored paper arrangements can make the changing aspects of our lives immediately visible. We can see how different each moment is if we choose at random a second chord of colors, and then a third. The color choices may seem accidental, and yet when we are done, orderly patterns of movement between the sets become evident. Bright colors are often followed by more subtle ones, dark is balanced by light. We can see all the changing aspects of nature reflected in these colored papers—morning moving into twilight, summer moving into fall and winter. Whether subtle or dramatic, our color choices are always changing, as we can see from Carol's examples (right).

EXPERIMENT: Expressing Life Events Through Color

Colors chosen spontaneously often reveal fundamental aspects of our inner life that may be hidden to the conscious mind. If we choose colors with specific life occurrences in mind, we can begin to appreciate the wide range of color expression available to us. Begin with eyes closed, noticing sensations of the present moment. Then, invite a memory or a current situation in your life into your consciousness. It might be something particularly intense, or something quite ordinary. It could be from the distant past, or something that is happening in the moment. Just notice any feeling quality that arises, and along with it, a color or colors evoked by the feeling. Let these colors resonate inside you, and when you are ready, choose them from the pile of colored papers.



C. Griffin color chord, anxiety.



C. Griffin color chord, transition.

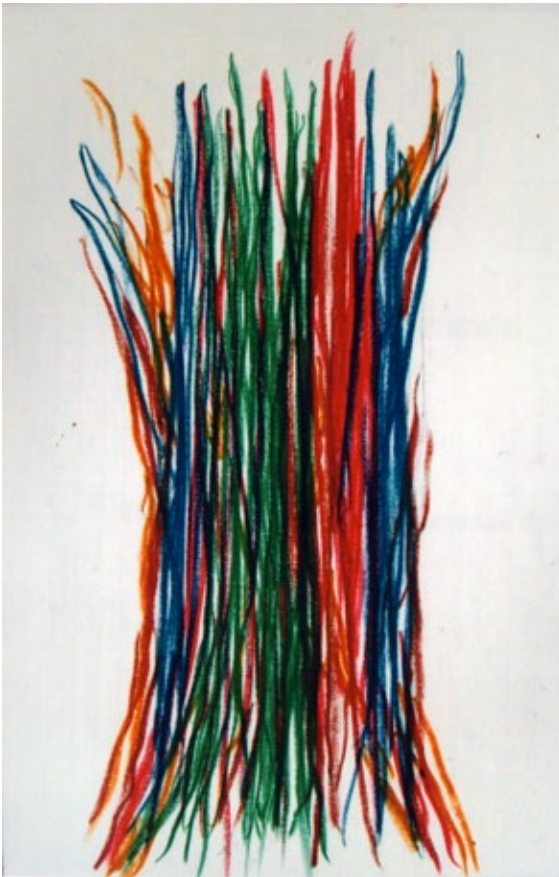
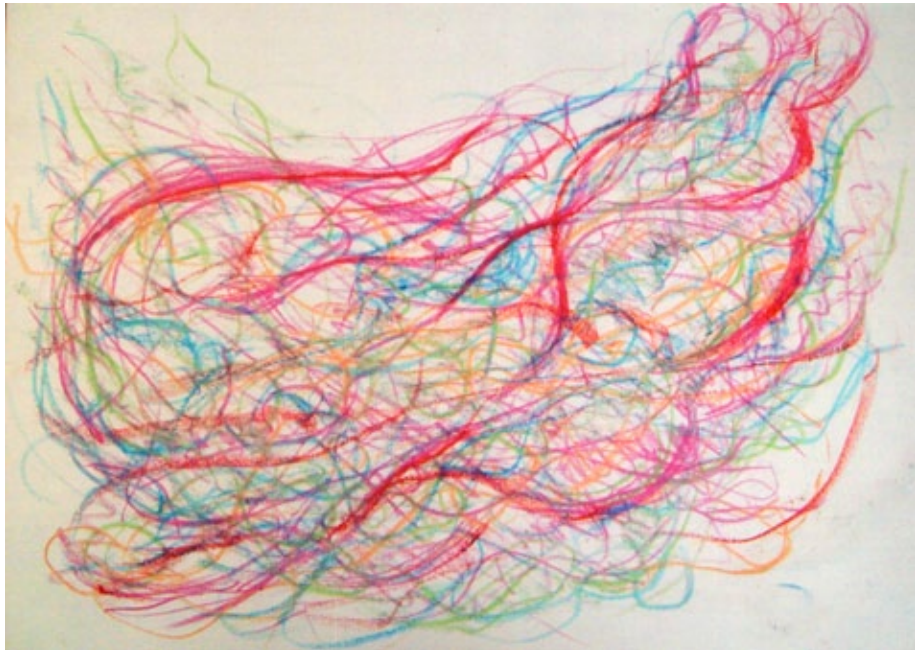


C. Griffin color chord, joyful resolution. Carol moved from dark into light.

Carol Griffin, first drawing, *Empathy*.

Right: Carol’s first drawing expresses empathy for the vulnerable wilderness. She writes, “the flow of nature, tender yet powerful, abundant, instinctual and open.”

Below: For the second drawing she writes, “Determined and direct I take a stand, grounded like a tree trunk. With focused action, I am seen and heard.”



Carol Griffin, second drawing, *Taking a Stand*.

Sometimes our decisions are rooted in larger philosophical dilemmas where both options need to be considered and honored. Integration may develop into a new way of being beyond the original struggle. As an example, Carol was torn between her commitment to a peaceful and spiritually based lifestyle and by her desire to speak out publicly against a municipal plan to cut a roadway across environmentally sensitive land.

In her first drawing Carol expresses her love of nature, aware of its vulnerability. It is a free flowing form, floating upward, resonating with air and light. The layered strokes of pastel colors create a transcendent, shimmering quality, characteristic of Itten’s contrast of Warm and Cool.

In contrast, Carol’s second drawing defines a stance of focused determination needed to overcome her fear and speak out in opposition to the destructive project. It is assertive, with definite form expressive of earth power. The bold intensity and clarity of this drawing are characteristic of Itten’s contrast of Light and Dark.

These two different drawings indicate a strong inner conflict that parallels a universal dilemma — in dealing with the world how can we feel safe and protect our sensitive natures? Can we be politically active without getting angry and aggressively polarized?

After moving to both of these drawings, Carol made a third drawing which brings together elements of both, more assertive than the

first, but with rhythmic curves and flexibility. However, the drawing seemed to lack clarity, and seemed as if she was still grappling with the polarities in the first two drawings. Because the message in this third drawing still felt elusive, she clarified it in a fourth drawing, sensing the space of the paper. Here is the process she used:

EXPERIMENT: Clarifying a decision with space

Prepare a blank sheet of paper with the same format orientation as the first. Take some time to see this empty space, with the four lines of the edges defining it. After moving with the third drawing, bring this movement in relationship to the space of the blank sheet of paper. Then draw the movement in relation to this space with your eyes open. This process can distill the essential message of the previous third drawing. In Carol’s case, this fourth drawing brought clarity and strength, plus a reassurance that she would be grounded yet flexible, whatever the action. She ended up contributing to this community debate by writing a letter to the editor and speaking at a public forum. At the same time she did not get too caught up in the conflicting politics.

Lower left: “Embodied in the world, a bit gangly, taking up space. A big tree in a wild wind.”

Lower right: “Taking a flexible stance, centered, yet open to the challenges of life.”



Carol Griffin, third drawing, *An Integration*.



Carol Griffin, fourth drawing, *Integration Clarified*.

self-guidance in drawing and color: healing

The decision-making process gives us an opportunity to witness and resolve our inner polarities. But much of what we face in life cannot be categorized or named so clearly. We might be struggling with a relationship, recovering from a loss, consumed with rage, or overwhelmed by everyday frustrations. Sometimes our issue is not definite—we could be feeling uncertain, confused, or fearful about a new direction in life. What we want then is not decision but clarification or relief. We are not trying to decide between discomfort and well-being. We just want the discomfort to go away or the mystery to be clarified.



Connie Smith Siegel, drawing 1.
An overwhelming sense of anger is expressed in dramatic complements.



Connie Smith Siegel, drawing 2.
The emotion is still strong but lighter, more linear. Circular lines contrast with clear vertical and diagonal lines.

EXPERIMENT: Focusing on Discomfort or Pain

Close your eyes and become conscious of the present moment. Feel the support from the earth and know that you will not have to do anything but simply feel things as they are. Then, bring to mind a painful or distressing issue; name it to yourself and feel it inside. It could be something you are feeling in the moment, like a headache, or something far away and long ago. Whichever it is, bring it to your attention now, to feel it as a sensation in your body.

First Drawing: Give your whole attention to the particular sensation and its distinctive feeling quality. Does it have a texture, shape, quality of movement, sound? Find the color chord that matches this quality and draw, letting the sensation and the color lead the way. It is helpful to close your eyes at the beginning, although later you may want to add something with your eyes open.

Working closely in contact with the particular quality of your discomfort is like welcoming an unattractive, even frightening stranger who appears at the door. It may not be what you expected or wanted, but for now you treat it like an honored guest, giving it your most generous attention. Having the honesty and courage to experience what repels us, we let it speak, allowing the drawing to be whatever it needs to be, no matter how uncomfortable.

Responding to Your Work: When the first drawing and colors are complete, take time to see and experience them deeply. Instead of pushing the pain or discomfort away, move closer to it. If we were working in the martial art of aikido, we might call it blending. Instead of fighting your enemies, you align with them, feeling their elemental qualities in your own body. See your forms as if you were seeing them for the first time.

Second Drawing: When you have experienced the first drawing in this way, prepare a new sheet of paper and sit for a while, noticing whatever echoes still remain. Come back to a place of doing nothing again—a space of waiting, with no expectations. Then, invite a color or colors to come, and for the second time, find the color chord, choose the crayons and draw. Although names and

images might come, you don't have to name this drawing or represent anything. It is enough to be carried by the energy of the color and sensations inside, letting the hand on the page move as it wants to. Allow any colors, movements, or shapes to happen as they will. Keep your eyes closed at first, then add more with your eyes open if it feels right. When the second drawing has come to an end, take the time to see it, feeling the inner responses you have to the forms and colors.

Third Drawing: After seeing and experiencing the second drawing, return to a blank sheet of paper for the third time, resting on the knowledge that, without doing anything, everything you need will come to you. Again invite a color or colors to come, picking the colored papers or crayons. In this drawing, take the time to choose the position of the paper: vertical or horizontal. As you draw, trust wherever the crayon is taking you. If this drawing has started with eyes closed, take the time to add any lines, shapes, or colors that seem right with your eyes open. After moving and feeling your inner response to this drawing, take the time to see all three drawings together, noticing any changes from first to last.

Understanding the message: Meaning can come from any part of the process. The dramatic shift of consciousness experienced and recorded in the drawings and colors can be further clarified by the Itten contrasts. We can see the angry fire of dramatic complements evolve into the warm and cool transcendence of my last drawing.

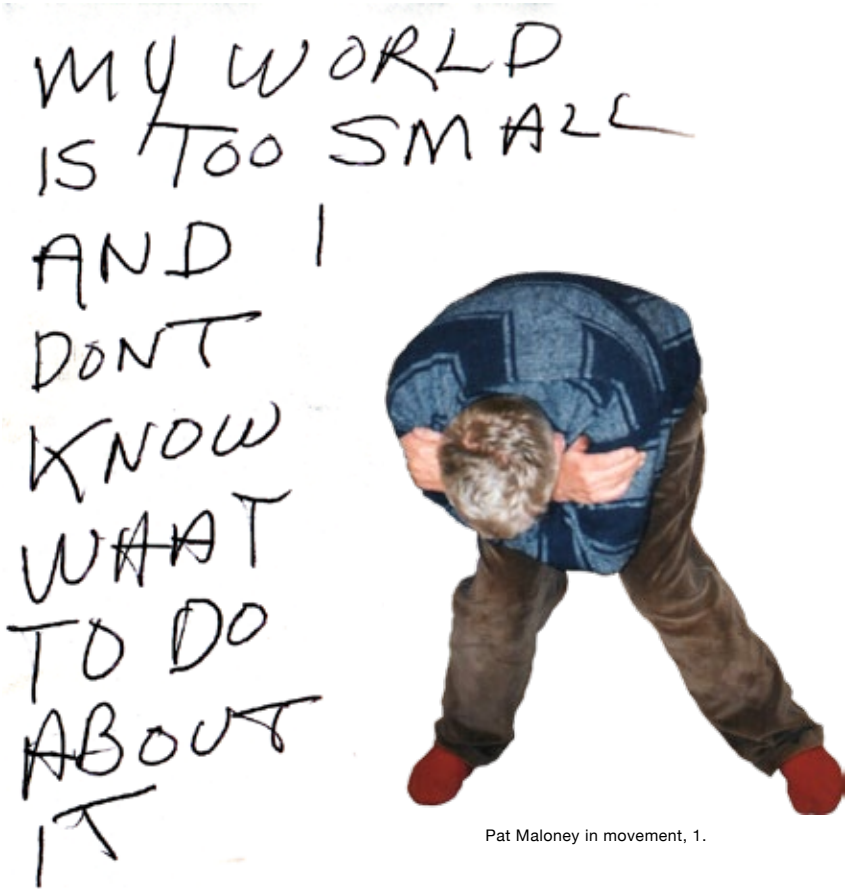


Art is a language of the body with no rules, but convinced passion.
George Siegel

Connie Smith Siegel, drawing 3.
The circular movements and luminous colors of warm and cool take over. Anger has moved into self-acceptance and calm.

exploring through movement

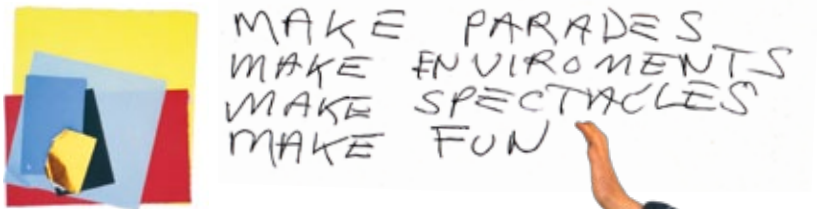
We experimented with movement earlier as a way to appreciate and understand our abstract work. After reviewing these experiments we will now work with movement as an important vehicle for inner transformation.



Pat Maloney in movement, 1.



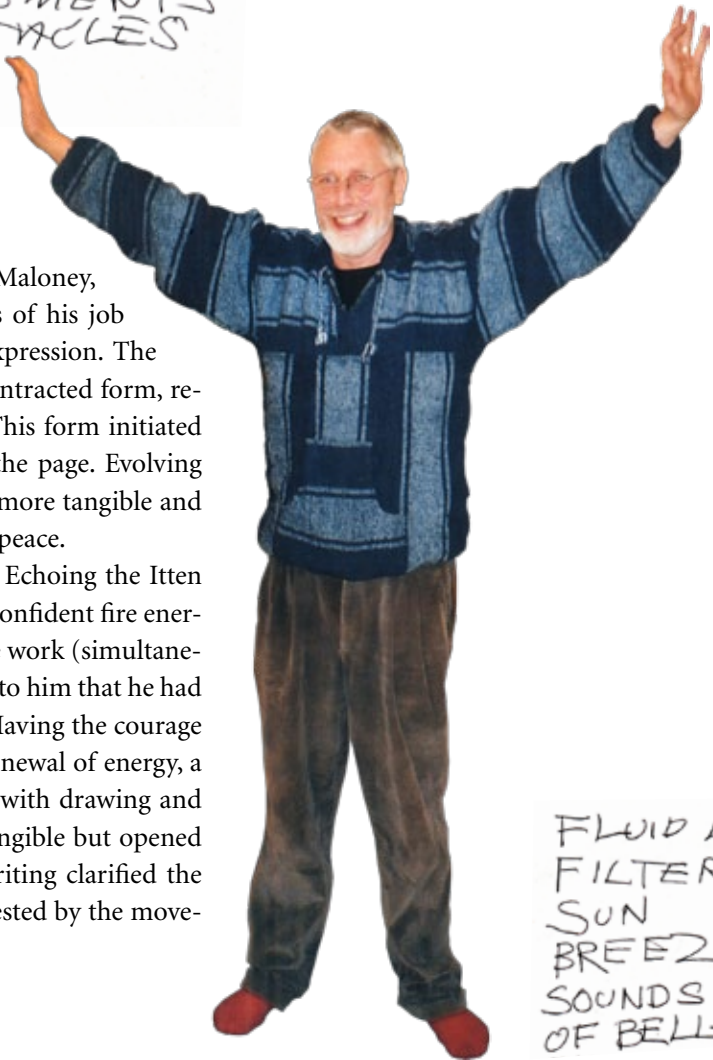
Pat Maloney in movement, 2.



Pat Maloney, color chord 2, confident fire energy.

We can see this transformation in the work of Pat Maloney, as he explores a common dilemma: the demands of his job versus his inner need for freedom and creative expression. The intensity of these demands are expressed in the contracted form, resembling a decayed tooth, in Pat’s first drawing. This form initiated more expansive lines, growing lighter, flying off the page. Evolving in a parallel way, his movement made his feelings more tangible and facilitated a change from despair to liberation and peace.

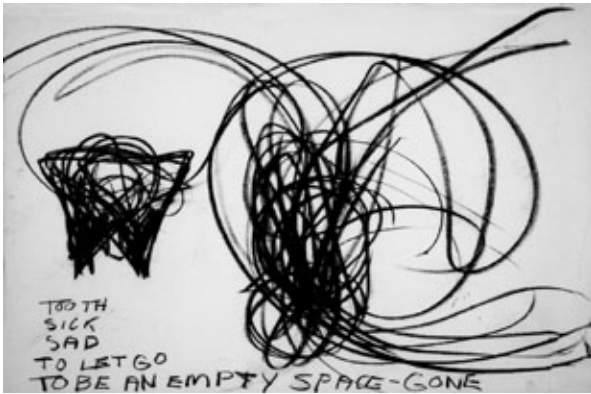
The changes can be seen in the colors, as well. Echoing the Itten contrasts, they move from the stark gray shape to confident fire energy, and finally into the quiet serenity of his creative work (simultaneous). Coming from this perspective, it became clear to him that he had to leave his job, and within a few months he did. Having the courage to accept his discomfort and frustration led to a renewal of energy, a reminder of his creative forces. Movement, along with drawing and color, not only made the original feelings more tangible but opened up the possibility of change. The spontaneous writing clarified the problem and expressed the spirit of freedom suggested by the movement, drawing, and colors.



Pat Maloney in movement, 3.



Pat Maloney, color chord 1, sad despair.

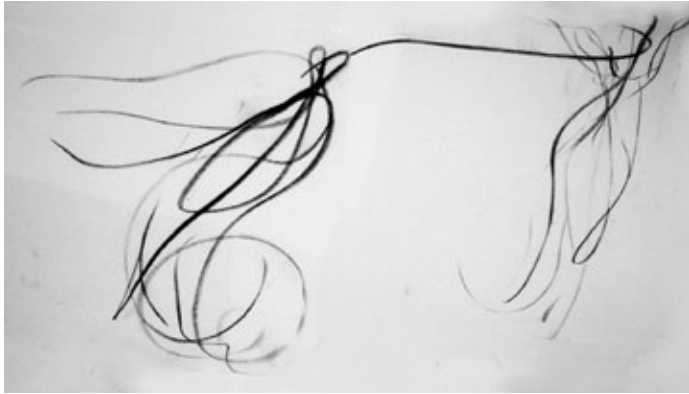


Pat Maloney, drawing 1, dissatisfaction

Evolving in a parallel way to the drawings, Pat’s movement shifted from his original contracted sense of isolation and pain to an increasing openness and freedom.



Pat Maloney, drawing 2.



The light lines in the last drawing and the colors and writing reflect the quiet serenity of Pat’s own artwork.



Pat Maloney, color chord 3, serenity.

SHEER CURTAINS
SOFTENING
GREEN
TIME STOPPED
LOST IN
SPACE
AND WARMTH

personal polarities

For many years I have noticed a tendency towards polarities between my left and right side, not only in sensing, but how these sides express themselves in drawing and color. The elements of fire and earth tend to dominate the left side, and the air and water is on the right. side. (In the language of Chinese medicine my acupuncturist cooperated these different elements, and that much of his work was fo balance these two, allowing them to become more equal. When images come in the left side can express characteristics of the masculine and feminine. Later in the review of Itten theories of color we will see the difference between the earthy contrast of hue on the left and the more airy, transcendent contrast of warm and cool on the right. These differences intensify in the self portrait, between the emotional intensity of the left and the far-seeing visionary on the right. Working through these different energy through movement, sound and dramatic enactment have been important to me in integrating these different elemntal energies.



Connie S. Siegel, healing process 1 and 3, pastel.
The fire of anger and pain in this healing series expressed itself with fire and earth energy. Later this evolved into the calmer circles of light and air.

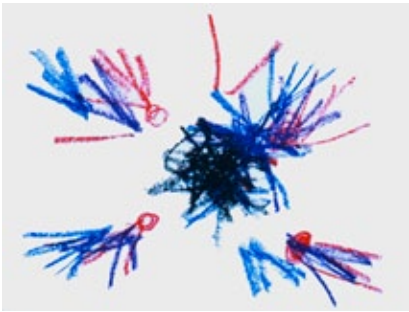


C. S. Siegel, *The Soldier and the Dancer*, acrylic.
Distinctions between the masculine and feminine emerge in this painting. The image of the soldier in camouflage uniform carrying a sharp object is contrasted with the dancing girl on the right, lost in swirling movements. Both needed equal attention as I was working, requiring and exacting balancing process so that both were equal.

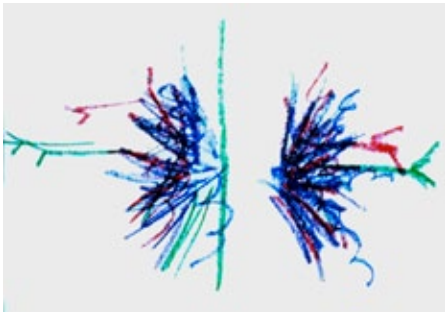


Connie S. Siegel, *Warrior Visionary Figures*, tempera, 18 x 24.
As the images evolved in this painting, the more earthy and emotional left side of the painting (contrast of hue), was balanced by the more contemplative and mystical right side (warm/cool), communicating two ways of being in the world. Notice parallels with a later healing process.

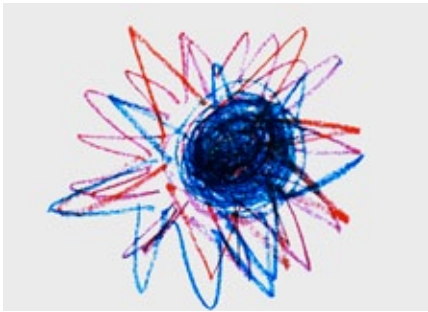
dealing with relationships



1. Meghan Jones, anger, oil crayon.



2. Meghan Jones, separation, oil crayon.



3. Meghan Jones, centered, oil crayon.

Meghan’s pain and internalized anger following a breakup (1), moves into space and separation (2), and then into a renewed sense of centering and self-empowerment (3).

Loss and Fulfillment

The feelings of grief, anger, pain, fear, joy, and ecstasy are the tunnel through which we must pass to get to the other side: to self awareness, understanding and wholeness.

Natalie Rogers
The Creative Connection

Few life issues engage us as intensely as the dance of close relationships. We may be moving closer into fulfillment, or we may be separating and feeling the pain of loss. Either way, the Self-Guidance Process in drawing and color allows us to see ourselves and our own issues as distinct from others. We can see Meghan’s pain move into self-empowerment, Virginia’s holding back move into fulfillment. Beverly moved from deep confusion about a long-term relationship into the clarity of anger, then renewed vitality and joy. In all cases, expressing a relationship in color and drawing helps us see things as they are for us, and through this clarity shows us what we want. Although this understanding may lead to separation or a deeper joining with another, it is really about what we need for self-fulfillment in our own life.



Virginia Shepley, drawing 1, holding back.



Virginia Shepley, drawing 2, letting go.



Virginia Shepley, drawing 3, fulfillment.

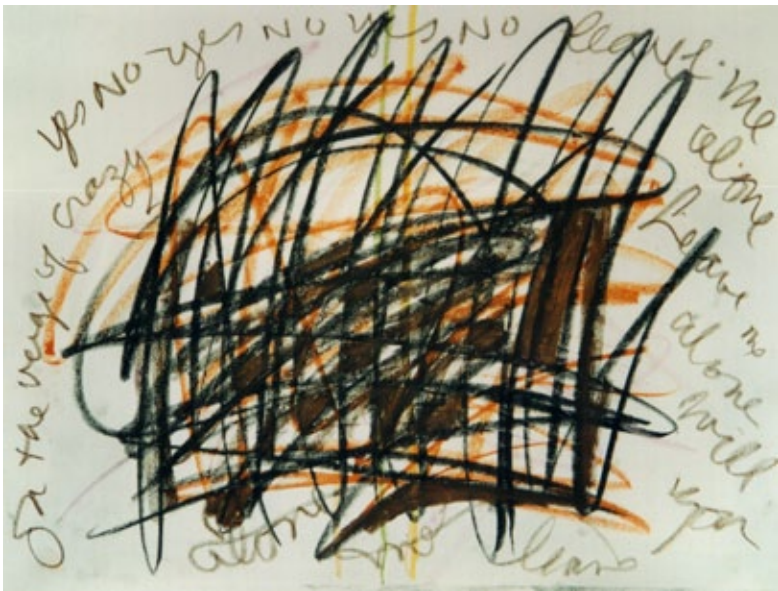
Virginia’s sadness at holding back from a deeper connection moves into a letting go and a possibility of fulfillment and joy.



1. B. Cassell, Fragmentation, charcoal.



2. Beverly Cassell, Buried Alive, charcoal.



3. Beverly Cassell, Anger, oil crayon

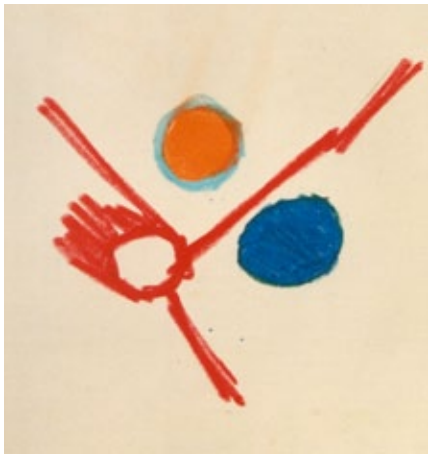
Despair and confusion (1) move to a sense of being buried alive in a marriage (2). In the next drawing (3) the solid forms explode into the fire of rage.



Beverly Cassell, color chord 1.

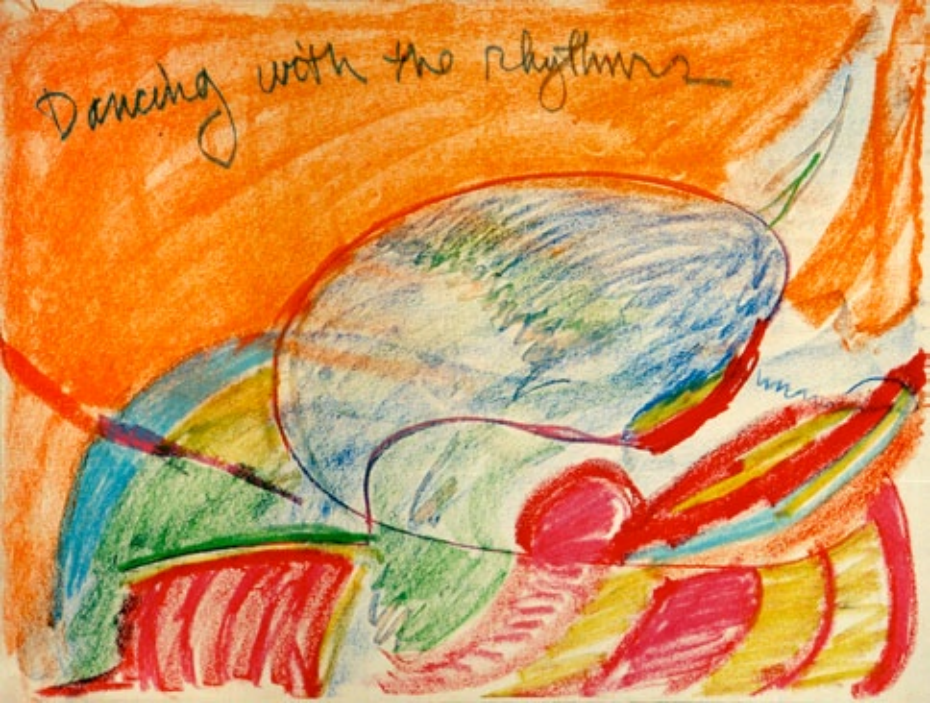


Beverly Cassell, color chord 2.



4. Beverly Cassell, Color & Renewed Energy, oil crayon.

The fire of anger, expressed freely leads to renewed vitality and freedom. After a difficult separation, Beverly found joy through new relationships and dancing.



5. Beverly Cassell, Dancing with the Rhythms, oil crayon..

envisioning places for peacemaking



K. Apana, War I.



K. Apana, War II.



K. Apana, War III.



K. Apana, personal peacemaking.



L. Landsman, War I.



L. Landsman, War II.

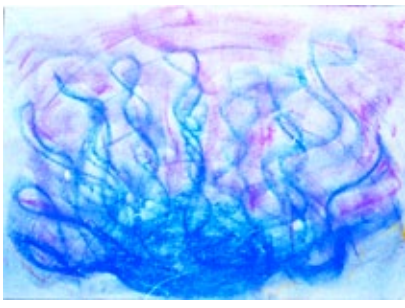


L. Landsman, War III.



A. Withrow, War I.

Earth and fire in response to war (hue, light and dark).



A. Withrow, War II.

Air and water balancing war (warm and cool).



A. Withrow, War III.

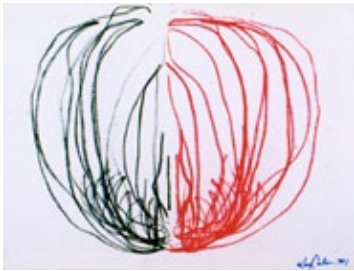
Integration: strength and vigor (contrast of hue).

Abstraction and imagery were combined with group process in a workshop called Envisioning Places for Peacemaking, given by the peace activist Carl Linn and myself as a response to the Gulf War of 1991. The workshop began with a political analyst speaking about the disturbing realities of the war. Immediately afterward, participants expressed their emotional responses in drawing and color. Influenced by the discussion of war, the qualities of fire and earth emerged in the first drawings. In most of the second drawings, these darker qualities evolved into the lighter warm and cool colors and flowing forms of water and air. The third drawing gave people the opportunity to integrate these two elemental opposites. It was often expressed in the outgoing contrast of hue, the fire energy needed to make changes in a difficult situation.



K. Carlson, War I.

Kay's first drawing evolved by stages into a vision of a multicolored candle, ten feet tall .



K. Carlson, War II.

The work of these three people shows fire and earth in the first war drawings (top row) spontaneously balanced by the flowing forms of water and air in the second (middle row). The two elements were integrated in the third drawings (bottom row).

After sharing our experiences, we spent time envisioning and then drawing a personal place of peacemaking. Then we brought our personal vision into the larger community, envisioning and drawing a public place for peacemaking. The sequence of these experiments not only demonstrated the resources we have for personal transformation, but created a model for carrying emotional responses into social action. The sensing abstraction was effective in processing the disturbing feelings. Imagery made our visions tangible in the world.

At the living core of these visions is an undeniable truth—the passion for peace is built into our nature. Witnessing the balancing of elemental forces in drawing and color gives concrete evidence that the reconciliation of opposites is not just a hope but the fulfillment of an urge toward wholeness deep in our tissues. This urge is as inexorable and awesome as any other natural force—as wind, rain, or the migration of birds. If the power of this basic instinct were fully acknowledged and utilized, it would revolutionize our political and social institutions.

If all our imaginative resources currently employed in inventing new power games and bigger and better weaponry were reoriented toward disarmament, what miracles could we achieve, what new truths, what undiscovered realms of beauty?

Leonard Bernstein



K. Carlson, personal place for peacemaking.



K. Carlson, public place for peacemaking.

light and dark contrast



Hokusai, *The Amida Waterfall on the Kiso Road*, woodblock, 38^{1/4} x 26 in., 1834-1835, private collection.
Speaking to us in the timeless language of shape and space, Hokusai's waterfall evokes the awesome power of gravity.

The expression of vibrant color has long been a call to life and regeneration in cultures all over the world—an essential expression of health and well being. But as much as we celebrate the restorative qualities of color and light, it is important to appreciate the darkness that often precedes it—the powerful voice of the earth, compelling and absolute.

We can feel the earth in the starkly woven strokes of Lee's grief (p. ??), the solid mass of Kathy's Winter drawing (p. ??) and the black and red drawings of war (p. ??). When expressed fully, these dark expressions became the rich ground for new life and light.

The healing power inherent in earth is primarily carried by the Itten contrast of light and dark. This contrast is an essential mode that underlies all visual art—from the earliest cave paintings to the achievements of our eastern and western traditions. It directly expresses the force of gravity and our inner sensations. From our first experiments in Sensory Awareness we have expressed these natural forces and sensations through drawing. Now we will move our drawing improvisations into the solid clarity of light and dark shapes.

EXPERIMENT: Exploring Light and Dark

Select a black crayon or pastel and a sheet of white paper. Let your first marks on the paper evolve in any way—into lines, textures and shapes, even images. After the previous color contrasts, you might feel a sense of relief with this more down-to-earth exploration. Using only the simplest of tools, a whole world of power and diversity is waiting to be explored, from the dense blacks to the subtler shades of grey.



C. S. Siegel, the original sensing drawing.



C. S. Siegel, first notan study from drawing.



C. S. Siegel, second notan study from drawing.

Working from my closed-eye drawing, I made a value study. Finding that unsatisfying, I made a second study that felt better.

EXPERIMENT: Discovering Shapes

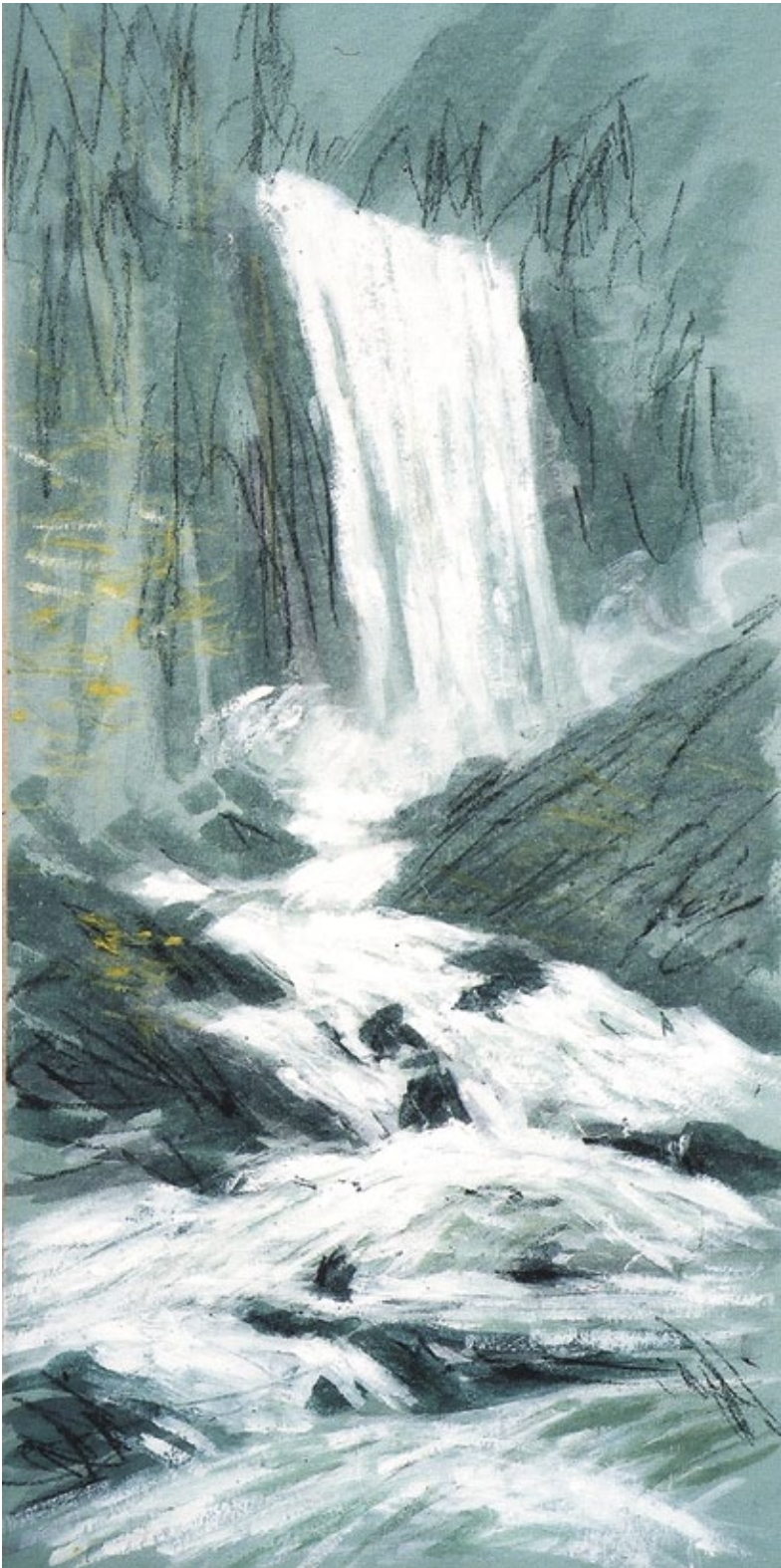
Although you may have spontaneously moved into definite shapes, we will explore these even further. Begin with a sensing drawing, touching the paper with closed eyes at first. After taking time to see the drawing, notice how it changes when you fill in the spaces with grey, black and white. If you are dissatisfied with your first choices, try again with the same lines.

As we find our unique forms in this way we also reveal a universal language of composition, essential for artists. This language is especially evident in Japanese art, which defines this compositional use of value as Notan: “the harmonious distribution of light and dark within a painting “ Notan is based on the yin/yang principle of dual forces held in unity, each force having equal importance. Although this unifying principle underlies Western masterworks, it is more visible in the Eastern tradition. The light and dark abstraction in Japanese prints, deeply influenced painters such as Van Gogh, who maintained, “...it is almost a true religion that the Japanese teach us...” We will explore the perceptual source of notan in the next chapter, as we explore the healing power of the senses and the relationship to imagery.

EXPERIMENT: Shapes in the World

As you fill in shapes in black, gray and white, you may find images emerging spontaneously. Or you can draw the wealth of forms you see in the world.

Look at the world around you, seeing everything as shapes and space. In our previous experiments we drew with light, using primaries and complements. Now you are drawing with weight and mass, the language of earth. Your drawing may surprise you, as you are no longer at the mercy of visual reality. You can be centered in your own body as you find your own forms in the world.



Connie Smith Siegel, *Vernal Falls, Yosemite Valley*, pencil, crayon and acrylic wash on green mat board.

The light and dark shapes of rocks and water inspired this painting.

a healing journey through fire and earth



Linda Larsen, *Fukushima*, colored papers (above), *Fukushima 1*, drawing, oil crayon (below).

Linda's three drawings began with this intense color chord.

Although the response to darkness, fully experienced, can bring a spontaneous generation of light, it doesn't always happen immediately. Grief, pain, and despair have their own timetables. Although a shift into light will eventually follow, we cannot demand, or force it. Each stage must be respected. We can see this respect for mourning in Linda Larsen's series of drawings in response to the earthquake and tsunami disaster in Japan. The first drawing expresses the shock of the burning chaos and destructive violence of natural forces. The second drawing goes to black—the finality of destruction and despair—the bleak reality of a disaster so far away resonates strongly. The series ends with a quiet realization of the tragedy—a deep mourning. Sometimes we just need to be with a situation, not making it better or disguising the tremendous loss. This drawing gives honor to the subtle power of the grays we might use to express feelings and events that bring us down. It is an example of Itten's contrast of saturation, finding value in the common grays of the world, often neglected. We can see that every aspect of living, even pain or death, has its own kind of beauty, a song of the earth, enduring and compelling.



Linda Larsen, *Fukushima 2*, oil crayon. The fiery explosion of Linda's first drawing (opposite) expresses the intensity of shock and outrage at the tragic events. The second drawing (left) expresses the stark reality of the vast destruction, the power of earth, harsh and real.



Linda Larsen, *Fukushima 3*, oil crayon. Linda's last drawing expresses a quiet resignation in subtle grays with a small amount of orange. The grays express a sense of peace and yet sadness as well. Natalie Goldberg echoes this quiet exception when she writes, "Out of this broken state there comes a tenderness for the cement below our feet, the dried grass in a terrible wind. We can touch the things around us we once thought ugly and see {them} ...simply as they are: not bad, just part of life around us...."

discovering your forms in nature

Like Carol, I have found a correlation between my healing improvisations and representational paintings. On first glance the joyful flowering tree (right) might seem to be unrelated to the anxiety which initiated the healing series. Although the last drawing is related to the tree, looking further I realized the abstract form of all the stages were in the composition of the tree, from the first “cloud” of confusion to the broad centering vertical strokes to the final expansive swirl. My attraction to the tree allowed me to experience different aspects of myself more deeply.



C. S. Siegel healing series:
First, *Anxiety/Confusion*, pastel, (above left). Second, *Coming to Earth*, pastel (above right). Third, *Celebrating Light*, pastel (left).
Notice the healing forms echoed in the tree, from the diagonal strokes coming together under the cloud (above left) to the strong vertical strokes echoing the vertical limbs of the plum tree, underlying the floating cloud of blossoms.



Connie Smith Siegel, *Woodacre Plum*, pastel.
Every spring I have painted this flowering plum, a celebration of light and air inspired by the pink blossoms that rise upward and dissolve in the blue sky.

the transformative power of weight

After experiencing and drawing a stone, Ingrid was profoundly moved, even shaken, by her experience of gravity. The primal shape it created (below) confirms the depth of her experience. It echoes the archetypal form of Goya’s horned goat figure (opposite)—a negative symbol that epitomizes the force of darkness, evoking fear and

Ingrid Nudelman, sensing drawing influenced by stone, charcoal, 18 x 24 in.
Ingrid’s first sensing drawing was influenced by the weight of a stone (right), and led to a massive primal form emerging from below. This powerful abstract form seems to come from the depth of the creative unconscious, a hidden language of form shared by artists of all time. Like the drawing of weight and trees of the previous page, trees, the earthy mass generated an rising movement. This archetypal form echoes the shape of Goya’s horned goat figure (opposite), depicted in his dark Witches Sabbath.



Ingrid Nudelman, space after weight drawing, charcoal, 18 x 24 in.
This drawing, conveying an infinite sense of space, directly followed the powerful weight drawing. The composition has changed from a central mass dominating the space to an equal distribution of weight and space. As space becomes prominent, the forces of light and dark come into balance—a new dimension is created.



revulsion. But when this same shape is perceived as the element of earth and experienced as weight, it can be transformative. The previously negative symbol can reflect a life-affirming connection with gravity that brings us strength and renewal.

The startling transformation of this massive form into the infinite space of her second drawing clearly demonstrates a balancing response, leading to a new dimension of consciousness. This balance of light and dark, weight and space, echoes a balance seen in another of Goya’s print, *Collosus* (pg 147). This massive figure in this print is poised on the edge of the world, integrating earth and sky. Although massive, it expresses the vulnerability and the ultimate mystery of the human condition. Like Ingrid’s second drawing, the integration of light and dark forces carries a strong message of unity. In balancing the elements of weight and space through the compositional principle of Notan, artists become like shamans, affirming the basic order of the natural world.





David Miller, *Dream Process I*, oil crayon, 18 x 24 in.

We can see the balancing process of weight into space in David’s self guidance series that began with a disturbing dream. When David’s symbol of fear got translated into drawing, it generated a full-bodied expression of weight. As he allowed his strokes to build it became darker and darker, a deep grounding experience. Although the image of a skull looming out from a dark field conveys a sense of foreboding and fear, when the mass of this dark field could be experienced as weight, it became transformed. The undifferentiated mass became articulate in the second drawing. The all-consuming darkness evolved into a silhouette of a strong, independent figure played against a luminous aura of light and space. The figure is held in safety, supported by an open space above, and a kind of a gentle landscape below in subtle greys, tans and a muted green. The third drawing completes the balancing of forces. The space becomes the subject, clearly grounded, calm and whole. Images and abstraction work together in this transformative process.

In his landscape painting David is often interested in the play between light and dark. The painting of the bird, surrounded by a wave, is strangely remi-



David Miller, *Dream Process II*, oil crayon, 18 x 24 in.

Like Goya’s foreboding goat, the skull in David’s first drawing evokes fear and anger. Then, from the darkness a stately figure emerges, surrounded by light. In the last drawing a whole field of light becomes a clear antidote to the first dark mass.



David Miller, *Dream Process III*, oil crayon, 18 x 24 in.

niscent of the figure in the dream. The dynamic interaction between the sky, water and earth can engage our own sense of balance as we see it.

Along with decisions, dreams can offer a rich resource for self- discovery. Psychologists such as Karl Jung have discovered that dreams can convey important messages from the unconscious. The different characters in a dream are already metaphors for the often-conflicting parts of our unconscious. Translating these characters into drawing and color can allow the energetic forces, often hidden, to be felt and integrated in a new balance. We can be expanded and nourished by finding forms and characters for our worst fears. There can be many elements and characters in a dream, sometimes requiring more than three drawings before the last, unnamed drawing that might be a resolution, or point to another mystery.



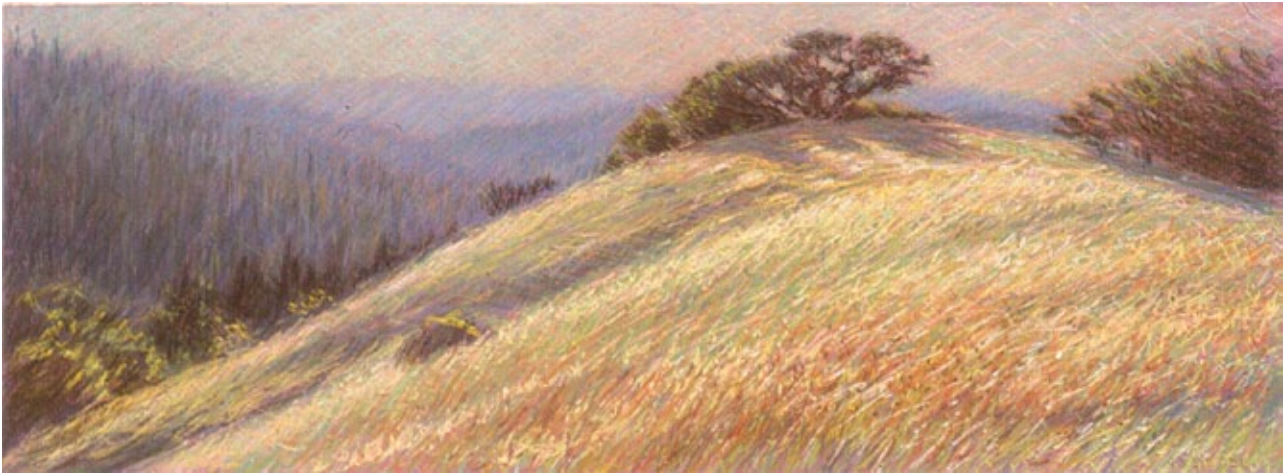
David Miller, *Sea Bird and Wave*, watercolor.

The painting of the bird, surrounded by a wave, is strangely reminiscent of the figure in the dream. The dynamic interaction between the sky, water and earth can engage our own sense of balance as we see it.

from perception to personal style

We have reviewed the vocabulary of creative expression in drawing and color, finding the source in the feeling states and perceptions we all share—the wonder of being alive and in touch with the world. Art is a language of the body, with infinite variations, from the delicacy of touch and breathing to the compelling call to earth. The full range of this language is explored in my previous books. Spirit of Color invites the discovery of an elemental language and unique color harmonies. Spirit of Drawing reveals the perceptual source of personal style—seeing, touching, weight and space.

Perceptual differences between people were especially evident when a group of artists gathered to draw and paint a ridge threatened by development. As each person found his or her place to work on the ridge, the process seemed to echo Darwin’s origin of species—some were drawn to a massive oak tree; others were inspired by the open views. Some drew specific details; others worked more abstractly, even from memory. These choices were guided by the different points of view, the source of individual style.



Connie Smith Siegel, *Blueberry Ridge*, pastel, 15 x 40 in., 2005 (above). Linda Larsen, *Standing With the Oak*, oil pastel, 18 x 24 in., 2005 (right).

Our inner preferences and the media they require are implacable guides as we work outside. For example, Linda was drawn inexorably to the large oak on the summit, and her close up view seemed to embrace its massive trunk like a lover (right). In contrast, I drew the tree from a distance, inspired by seeing the oak in relation to the whole ridge, with the waving grass and the distant hills beyond (above).



The evolution of a personal style in drawing or painting can be a healing, spiritual journey in its own right, requiring patience and persistence as we search for the working methods and media that match our inner nature. A remarkable model of this journey can be seen in Van Gogh, whose evolution echo the contrasts and perceptions we have just reviewed, from the dark brown tones of the old masters to the warm and cool shimmer of Impressionism. Van Gogh found his creative destiny under Gauguin’s influence, in the intensity of flat color planes, played against the other. Throughout these changes he was always informed by his drawing practice, from his first weighty studies to the textured pen drawings that opened into the flowing movement of his last work. The open declaration of his personal anguish and redemption through art was unprecedented in his time. His final discovery of “color that suggests...a passionate temperament,” is a model for rejuvenation through art. This creative possibility of revealing and exalting the soul remains an open invitation for us all.



Van Gogh, *Cypresses*, pen and brown ink, with graphite, on buff wove paper, laid down on card, 24 11/16 x 18 5/16, 1889 (The Art Institute of Chicago, gift of Robert Allerton [1927.543]. Photo © The Art Institute of Chicago.

Drawing from his inner response to the trees, Van Gogh’s *Cypresses* echos the archetypal movements of fire expressed in our sensing drawings. His expressive power, rooted in the sensations of movement, touch and weight, is available to all of us.



Van Gogh. The abstract movement of the drawing underlies the painting, integrating the details of the tree with sky and distant mountain. His inner connection through preliminary drawings sustained his sense of self throughout all his different explorations in color and painting techniques.

the inclusive power of healing



C. S. Siegel, healing #1, feeling trapped. The first drawing expresses a strong sense of earth—powerful but compressed.

The development of individual style fulfills a sense of personal destiny, and has special value in the art world. But it also goes far beyond this context. In an age dedicated to standardization, the different points of view reflected in our work demonstrate our unique humanity. Our forms and colors are living, tangible proof that we each have a place in the world, a deep assurance that we matter.

As a student and teacher in the university, finding a personal style not only affirmed my creative destiny, it also gave me a sense of belonging in a respected profession. But there were rumblings from my unconscious—personal upheavals and a hunger to experience life more fully—to embrace the wild and unexpected. Encouraged by meditation practices and expressive art therapy, these yearnings led to a way of working which could immediately reflect my emotions and the changing aspects of my inner nature.

These different aspects, always in a state of flux, move from one element to another, at home with all the forces in the world. Karl Jung, especially, described these inner states with fear and awe, comparing his deep interior as a “volcano ...that gives birth to the children of chaos... the primordial mother... whose powers stretch beyond my certainties and limits on all sides, and connect me with all forms and with all distant



C. S. Siegel, healing #2, finding passion. The self guidance process allows a fuller expression of momentary feelings. In this series, I move from a feeling of being trapped into a fiery revival of passion, and finally into an explosion of light growing from the center and moving outward.



C. S. Siegel, healing #3, from the earth finding new life.

beings and things.” Jung, along with the pioneer therapist Alice Miller, gave credit to the intuitive process of painting for bridging the gap between their scientific, analytic side and the mysteries of the creative unconscious. The act of painting gave them the insight and courage to develop their influential theories of human consciousness. However, they never exhibited their paintings publicly, aware of the implications of the question, “but is it art?”

The exciting interaction between art, healing, and consciousness can be confusing when aesthetic questions arise. The perspective of fine art focuses more on the product, which often requires professional skills as well as special care in exhibiting and preservation. In the healing context meaning more often comes through the creative process itself, expressing and transforming our energetic states, often in relation to life issues. For healing purposes the creative work itself does not always have to be preserved. We can return the color chips back to the pile and discard our drawings in a similar way as the Navajo or Tibetan shamans who erase their intricate sand paintings at the end of a ceremony.

Although the aesthetic and healing processes can expand each other, we can be faced with dilemmas when dealing with the tangible realities of creative work and expectations of the art world. There are no easy answers, and each person needs to find his or her own way with the sometimes-contradictory value systems. In the next pages we can see examples of artists who, like Van Gogh, have found their own unique synthesis of the healing and aesthetic modes.

“...I did not have to go out of my way to express sadness and extreme loneliness...I almost think that these canvases will tell you what I cannot say in words—the health and restorative forces I see in the country..”

Vincent Van Gogh



Van Gogh
In his later painting of fields of wheat under troubled skies, Van Gogh achieved a masterful synergy of healing and aesthetic form, both expressing his despair and transcending it.

Whether working individually or in a group, with abstraction or imagery, as we express our elemental feeling states in drawing and color, we become at one with ourselves and with the natural world. In his workshops in psychic healing, Lawrence Le Shan describes this state of unity as the “world of the one.” Charlotte Selver, teacher of Sensory Awareness, speaks of it as being “open in our senses.” In his book *Healing*

Lynnelle’s passion for natural forms found expression in the drawing of a rock formation she discovered on a high mountain lake in Nevada. Combining an intimate contact through the sense of touching, with an underlying sense of weight, she explored the large rock formation, fully awake to its sensuous curves and evocative shapes.



Lynnelle, *Rocks, Pyramid Lake*, charcoal, 22" x 30", 1987.

When diagnosed with cancer, Lynnelle brought her attention inward, courageously exploring her diseased liver with compassion and love. Through the process of drawing and color, she maintains her sense of curiosity and respect for all living forms.

Facing mortality, she draws the portal between life and death with the same intensity. Her bold mastery comes from both a lifetime of working and a commitment to the present—each moment lived fully.



Lynnelle, *Liver C.T.*, oil pastel, 22" x 30", June, 1988.

Trauma, Peter Levine describes the healing state as a “felt sense.” As Monet, Pissaro, and Cezanne followed the changing light and contours of the land, they spoke of their close fusion with nature and the primacy of “sensation.” Beckmann spoke of the “essential realities,” Munch of his unity with the earth. However it is described, this meditative/sensing state of being is the place where healing and art meet.

When we find this place, both healing and artistic production are increased. Each contributes to the other, like two rivers joining into a larger flow. The dynamic process of personal growth can extend creative expression far beyond the art world and its orientation to product. It brings us to the urgency of raw, vital energy in the process of evolving. As we express the elemental energy inherent in life issues, aesthetic judgments lose their power, and the question of talent becomes irrelevant. It is a question of passion.

We can see this passion in Lynnelle’s last work which became even more purposeful as she focused on self-healing. Coming from a lifetime of drawing and painting from inner sensation, her passion for life in the face of mortality brought her to the archetypal power of Native American forms, and the bold simplicity we find in Rembrandt’s and Goya’s last works.

By experiencing states of consciousness similar to creative and religious experiences, we can align body, mind, and spirit, and cause a transformation that heals our body. Thus I see healing as an inner journey, and its beginning as an awakening.

Michael Samuels, M. D.
Healing with the Mind’s Eye



Lynnelle, *Untitled*, oil pastel, 22 x 30 in., 1988.

Beatrice Darwin's drawings appear earlier in the book, demonstrating a fierce dedication to life force, expressing her everyday frustrations with honesty and directness, allowing her forms to find their own order. She moved easily between abstraction and representation, and loved the adventure of hiking and drawing in natural places, from the high Sierras to the waving grass on windy beaches. When a degenerative disease began to numb the sensation in her hands and feet, it not only ended these excursions, but also her work on a series of large abstract collages. In response to these changes, she focused her art on healing, expressing her changing emotions and observations in journals of drawings, collages and writing. As her work became more directly personal, she created new and innovative forms in drawing and collage. Even as the numbness increased, her creative force continued, unabated. Every day she sent postcard drawings and musings to a friend, and her friend, also confined, sent her drawings and notes in return. Beatrice knew it is not only important to make art, but to share it as well. Each day brought something new; she could be inspired by a new automatic pen, filling small cards with staccato strokes as she listened to a recording of her son's calypso band. In the face of the fears and frustrations of a long term illness, Beatrice found meaning and joy through creative expression.

Beatrice Darwin, *After M. R. I. Scan*, paper collage.

Color can bring us into acceptance and celebration of life. Color can express our deepest fear. Through color and form Beatrice declared her appreciation and celebration of life in the face of life-threatening conditions, using the spontaneity and power inherent in the medium of collage.



*My vertebrae are
compacting
I count them 1-7
unique
cervical bones and
I pile them up like a
rainbow tower.
Beatrice Darwin*



Beatrice Darwin, *Vertebrae*, collage, 12" x 12", 1998.



Beatrice Darwin, *Upside Down*, collage, 12" x 12", 1998.



*I look at this experience
from every angle, like a
two-year old trying on his
big new world upside down.
How might my world look side-
ways?
What is right side up
anyway?*

Replenish
*A great disorder is an order.
It defines its own terms.
And I am defining this new chaos.
Beatrice Darwin*

Beatrice Darwin, *Replenish*, collage, 12" x 12", 1998.

Facing a long-term illness, Beatrice finds meaning and joy through creative expression.



Judyth Weaver, War 1, pastel.



Judyth Weaver, War 2, centered pessimism, pastel.

I was especially moved by the drawings of my Sensory Awareness colleagues during the first Gulf War. Their first fiery responses to the violence were spontaneously followed by the elements of air and water. The forms of these lighter drawings evoked symbols of spiritual practice—the rose window of Chartres Cathedral, and the candle-like Jewish Menorah affirmed a universal language of peace.



Charlotte Selver, War 1, pastel.

The whirling, fiery intensity of war.



Charlotte Selver, War 2, reflecting peace, pastel.

Resolution in the glowing flame of peace.

to war was expressed through archetypal symbols of spiritual practices. The appearance of all these archetypal forms reflect the dictionary definition of healing as making sound or whole—returning to original purity of integrity. It is in denial of this urge for wholeness that the split has occurred within us and in the world community.

Toward a Language of Peace

I have learned more about the source of this split through the study of Non-violent communication. The founder, Marshal Rosenberg, and the many leaders following such as Robert Gonzales, have pointed out the violence inherent in our spoken and written language. They have offered alternative ways of communicating, based on feelings and needs. Echoing principles of Buddhism and Christianity, NVC is a deep practice of self-acceptance and empathy for others. As part of of a weekly practice group, I continue to study the non-violent principles that lead to connection and peace. Although this communication practice has enriched my life and relationships, the challenges have made me even more appreciative of the visual language.

Whether responding to the distress in the world, or seeking relief from our individual dilemmas, the non-verbal language of drawing and color can directly access our feeling states. This language is older than words, and can touch us in profound and mysterious ways. It is always available, bringing us to our natural selves, providing an essential contact with immediate sensations and our passion for life.

Like the native shaman, healing through rapport with elemental forces, we can each contribute to the renewal of the world community through creative expression. As we follow the healing spirit of drawing and color wherever it leads, we affirm the order of the universe. We restore harmony and beauty to life.

People are at their best when they are creative, and at their worst when their creativity is frustrated.... When the creative dynamism of the human mind/self/spirit is frustrated on a large scale and for a long time, it either deteriorates into extinction, or erupts explosively into destructive aggression.

Afif I. Tannous
On Aggression and Cooperation



Connie Smith Siegel, Bolinas Lagoon, pastel, 12 x 30 in.

Through contact with nature, I find a deep connection to wholeness and peace.