



***Life Force Wheel:  
The Companion & The Warrior***

*Exhibit Catalog*

Art Exhibit—Performances—Events

April 25 — July 15, 2014

Life Force Arts Center, 1609 W Belmont, Chicago  
LifeForceArts.org 773-327-7224

***Life Force Wheel:  
The Companion & the Warrior***

**Opening Reception**

April 25, 2014

**Closing Reception**

July 15, 2014

Free admission to exhibit &  
Opening and Closing receptions

**Gallery Hours**

Monday & Thursday, 1:30 - 6:30 pm  
& by appointment

**Artists Featured in *The Companion & the Warrior***

Steven Blaine Adams

Steve Baltrukonis

J. Penny Burton

Calaj

Mariela de la Paz

Kurt Fondriest

Dorothy Graden

Vivian Gutierrez

Terry Hall

Colleen Koziara

Thom Lausch

Karin Levitski

George Lindmark

Lauren Pitasch

Britt Posmer

Kevin Seymour

Szmeralda Shanel

## About *The Companion & the Warrior*

The Companion and Warrior Archetypes are the hero and his or her comrades: Don Quixote and Sancho Panza; Robin Hood and his Merry Men; Dorothy and the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion. The Companion follows and supports the Warrior. The Companion "has the Warrior's back," protecting him/her for the accomplishment of mutual goals. The Warrior stands up for what she believes in. What she loves is what she fights for. The Warrior understands his own power, impact and boundaries. The Warrior acts on the positive meaning of fight: to defend oneself, to take action to protect others, and to inspire others to mutually accomplish a worthy goal. Both Companion and Warrior work with the Skill of Empowerment: standing up for what you believe in, knowing how to lead and follow, and having a clear sense of self-identity.

The artwork in this exhibit features a wide variety of media including painting, photography, sculpture, fabric art and installation. Life Force Arts Foundation Executive Director Joan Forest Mage says, "It's been fascinating seeing the interpretations artists have about this theme. From tribal Warriors to a child walking a picket line, from a Mother being both Warrior and Companion to her children to abstract renderings of mythical heroes, this show expands our understanding of these powerful Archetypes."

*The Companion & The Warrior* is the third a series of shows called *Life Force Wheel*. This year-long, six show series of art exhibits and multiarts presentations explores the deep Archetypes of human existence. The Life Force Wheel is a spiritual teaching based in ancient, universal wisdom, received through inspiration by modern shamanic practitioner Joan Forest Mage. The Wheel is based in a deep awareness of our unity with all beings, and seeks to foster healthy relationships between the individual, human society, nature and the spirit realm. The six show series began on December 8, 2013 with the Teacher Archetype and concludes in January 2015 with the True Self Archetype. All shows will be held at Life Force Arts Center, 1609 W. Belmont, Chicago.

## Steven Blaine Adams

*Ace of Swords* (2014)

16 x 27

Amber, Carnelian, Hematite, Quartz, Horn, Moonstone,  
and Amethyst

\$500

In the tarot, the ace of swords is about the ultimate spiritual, mental, and physical challenge. The sword is also about cutting through problems and challenges, the purification of fire in alchemy, while the "one" is the symbol of the self. This piece is symbolic of new beginnings for all undertaking a new spiritual challenge. What is your ultimate challenge for yourself? This piece is the quintessential Medieval King's dagger, a symbol of protection and survival. The stones involved are energetically about empowerment and grounding yourself in your spiritual challenge so that you can become the Warrior.

**Steven Blaine Adams** is an artist and designer who works with natural materials like stones and crystals to create artwork and jewelry with symbolic and spiritual resonance. He is LFAC's store designer, and is on the curatorial committee for LFAC's art exhibits. The son of an Italian gypsy astrologer and Tarot reader, Steve has been doing readings professionally for over 30 years, combining the wisdom of Tarot with the healing properties of stones. Steve attributes meditation, art, ritual and spiritual connection as instrumental catalysts in his path towards healing.

## Steve Baltrukonis

www.drawnwithfire.com

### *Samurai* (2014)

8 x 10

Pyrography and florescent acrylics

\$450

Common during Japan's feudal era, the samurai were a warrior caste. They were disciplined warriors who staked their lives to serve their master. Clad in lacquered iron armor and driven by a culturally ingrained sense of honor, they followed the bushido, a system of beliefs that served the same purpose for samurai as chivalry did for knights.

**Steve Zaric Baltrukonis** was born in Chicago to a Lithuanian father and Serbian-German mother. He has dabbled in the arts since high school, playing in punk bands steadily for over a decade. His foray into the visual art of wood burning began in April of 2012 over a cheap soldering iron, some scrap wood and a severely broken heart. A voracious reader since learned to read, many of his works are inspired directly from works of literature.

## J. Penny Burton

Jpennyburton.com

### *Blue Egg Nest* (2012)

8.5 x 6 x 5

Handmade paper, metal screen, wire, gut, paint,  
mixed fibers

\$400

### *Gray Egg Nest* (2012)

5.5 x 29 x 7

Handmade paper, metal screen, wire, gut, paint,  
mixed fibers

\$400

The *Eggs Nest Series* is comprised of five separate artworks that present the reproductive hopes of new species in the foreseeable future. These eggs and their protective nests have been forced to morph and genetically alter themselves in order to survive the harsh and hostile environments in which they find themselves. The nests take on a *Warrior* role, to assist in ensuring that the delicate eggs remain camouflaged and safe, and able to bring the embryos to fruition, thus allowing these new species the opportunity to survive and/or thrive in the unfamiliar and unknown new worlds in which they find themselves.

**J. Penney Burton** recently earned her MFA from the University of Missouri, Columbia, where she majored in fibers and minored in ceramic sculpture. Alongside a

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BFA in Interdisciplinary Art from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University, Burton also holds a Master in Arts, Fine Arts from Concordia University, where she combined studio fiber art with art and craft history, specializing in contemporary North American fiber art and artists.

Notable past exhibitions include the *5th National Collegiate Handmade Paper Art Triennial* juried by Jane Milosch, at the Corcoran Center of Art and Design in Washington D.C. September 2012, and the *Animal Fibers: Art Informs Shibori* exhibition juried by Jean Williams Cacicedo, Jorie Johnson and Edith Cheung held at the Hong Kong Design Institute December 2011 - January 2012. More recently, she presented her work in *Investigating the Vessel*, at the Foreman Gallery, Hartwick College, Oneonta, New York from September-October 2013, as well as in *Rat Race*, at the Meeting Place Gallery in the Lambert-St. Louis International Airport from October 2013 - February 2014.

Burton had two solo exhibitions in 2013, *Swarm* at the Craft Studio in January, and *Fight or Flight*, her thesis exhibition, at the George Caleb Bingham Gallery at the University of Missouri in May 2013. Burton is currently an Adjunct Assistant Professor, teaching 3D Art at the University of Missouri, Columbia and she is looking forward to eventual full time employment teaching art at the university level.

## Calaj

www.calaj.com

### **Prometheus** (2012)

52 x 64

Oil on Canvas

\$1600

Packed in the pithy center of a fennel stalk Prometheus brings the stolen smoldering fire to the human race and with it comes the burning ember of a Warrior's ambition. This fire, ambition, fuels man's creative spirit, enabling him to fulfill his true destiny, that which emulates the nature of God. The true nature of man only comes with a harmonic relationship between a Companion and the Warrior. This Companion brings responsibility in the form of useful tools that guides the manifestation of the Warrior's energy into that which serves the circle of life.

**Calaj** is the collaborative art duet of contemporary painters Janet Trierweiler and Matthew Schaefer, an artistic pairing sharing philosophical discoveries, technique and process. Their practice includes abstract, figurative and conceptual ideas. As individual artists, Janet and Matthew have exhibited at numerous galleries and shows throughout the Chicago area. They are faculty artists at Evanston Art Center.

"Working together minimizes personal expression, making visible the evidence of relationship, nature's enigmatic adhesive force. The disciplined practice of the techniques we have developed manifest an illusive

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world within the canvas. This other world, or volume, draws us into an unfathomable perspective. In this ungrounded state lies an experience of refreshing vulnerability and psychic relaxation.

Our desire is to bring this state of mind, this soft gaze, to life, inviting the natural occurrence of an ambiguous perspective into our paintings.”

### **Mariela de la Paz**

[www.marieladelapaz.com](http://www.marieladelapaz.com)

#### ***Venus of the Forest*** (1991)

40 x 40

Giclee print on canvas

\$1,400

The High Priestess consecrates her body to nature, daily in this spring, bathing and purifying herself, The humming-bird hovers over her face bringing its medicine that lightens up the heart. Behind her a powerful Anaconda coils around the medicine vines. Snakes have been revered cross-culturally as beings of great wisdom and strength.

#### ***Sacred Masculine*** (2013)

31 x 40

Oil on canvas

NFS

Giclee prints available

A young Male in sitting in stillness. He has achieved mastery over his Second and Fourth

Chakras. His animal totems reside here, a roaring Puma of pure Kundalini Life-Force in his pro-creation center, also the place of intuition. the Condor in flight on his heart soaring high gifting him with higher awareness and a passion for freedom. Depicted after the Pehuenche tradition of Southern Chile.

**Mariela de la Paz** is a Chilean-born artist who has researched the Mesoamerican, Andean and Amazon cultures for over 20 years, and has been channeling this art through Sacred Power Plants. Her paintings reflect the traditions of ancient rituals, which invoke the ancestral memory of the universal soul.

Sacred plants are entities of a female nature, and considered by the sages of these cultures as spiritual allies. The substances within these plants cause information currents to pass through the body, which then arouses and resonates with a cosmic awakening. These are intimately related to the procreation of life on this planet, and they bring light and love.

Mariela has attempted to record these visions into her paintings, and they express the journey of the soul in all its vital cycles: birth, death, the celebration of life, and the transcendence to planes of ascension and liberation.

This visionary art is a form of “darshan”, because the person who contemplates the painting receives a blessing. The observer becomes the subject. There is a universal resonance with the human experience. She is expressing something profoundly intimate and

personal in this art, but in a universal way that we have all experienced.

Sacred medicinal plants act as a meditative state that stills the minds, so as to connect us with reality in all of its realms, taking us away from linear time and putting us in touch with multidimensionality.

It is her intention to deliver, through these forms and colors, a timeless and sacred message which will remain in the eye of the beholder as a unique and non-repeatable experience. This sacred art is a profound meditative experience and mystical opening.

## **Kurt Fondriest**

[www.healingseedministries.com](http://www.healingseedministries.com)

*The Spirit of Self Dances with the World* (2007)

18 x 24 framed

Pastels/Paints

\$950

This energetic expression of spirit embracing the world is symbolic of both companion and warrior as inner and outer reflections of the self. This projection of these two elements is personal but yet universal.

**Dr. Kurt Fondriest** is an Expressive Arts Therapist at Misericordia home in Chicago, where he has worked for more than 22 years. He is an ordained non-denominational minister and certified pastoral counselor, holding a PH.D in Holistic Ministries. His work is based on his life with a chronic pain condition called

fibromyalgia. Dr. Kurt sees life as a ministry, a way of expressing one's spiritual connection to others. One of the greatest gifts our creator gives us is the power to love unconditionally; it is through this gift we find ourselves and our work. Let us always remember to not keep the gift of unconditional love but to share this divine blessing with all.

## **Dorothy Graden**

[www.dorothygraden.com/home.html](http://www.dorothygraden.com/home.html)

***Wolf Magic*** (2013)

18 x 22 framed

Giclee print

\$215

Wolf spirit perceives and instinctively understands the world around her. She sees the dangers and takes action to protect herself and others. She is a strong independent spirit and a symbol of freedom and intense passion. In this painting, Wolf Spirit is larger than life, welcoming companions to accompany her on physical and spiritual journeys, knowing that she can help them achieve their mutual goal.

**Dorothy Graden** is an award winning contemporary artist whose art is inspired by Ancient Visions. For over 25 years, Dorothy traveled through the American west to photograph and draw prehistoric rock art. These rock art images were incised, pecked, abraded and painted on cave and canyon walls and boulders. Rock Art has been found on every continent except Antarctica. Some sites are 30,000 years old. Many of these sites hold spiritual powers, and many are shamanic.

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Dorothy has presented her field work on rock art at the Russian Academy of Science in Moscow and at University College Cork, Ireland. Her photographs have been published in the Theosophical Society's journal, *Quest*. She also presents, lectures and exhibits her drawings and ceramic sculptures at various venues throughout the Midwest and the Chicago area. She draws with great admiration, respect and humility for the ancients who inspire her work.

### **Vivian Gutierrez**

artegutierrez.com

***Birth*** (2014)

8 x 10

Acrylic & Ink on Plexiglass

\$225

Birth comes as an inspiration from the energy of the universal Mother. She creates our reality by dividing herself into what we perceive as individual sparks of light. It is a representation of creation and the nobility of the feminine as an expansive energy. As a mother of three, I sense how we divide ourselves in fractals; my children are the clearest example on how divisions are non-existent and it is a delusion to believe there is a separation between us.

LFA Executive Director Joan Forest Mage says, “One can say that every woman who gives birth is a Warrior — she must have the spirit to risk her life and challenge death in order to carry out the great cause of bringing a new life into the world.”

**Vivian Gutierrez** was born in Matagalpa, Nicaragua in 1973. In 1980, her family moved to San José, Costa Rica during the Nicaraguan Revolution. She moved to the United States at the age of 26. At a very young age she found herself fascinated with poetry, and different art expressions. Her inclination toward the subject of spirituality and respect for women's strength has always been her main subject and theme. Her preference for this subject has been extremely influenced by her mother's fight against cancer of 39 years.

She is a palette knife artist working with mixed media, oil and other materials. Her paintings and sculptures reflect her perspective on spirituality and women's inherent qualities. She has exhibited in Costa Rica, the United States and Mexico. Vivian is an animal lover, a vegetarian and fond of meditation. She presently resides in Michigan with her husband, her three children and their two dogs.

## **Terry Hall**

[www.tfhallphotography.com](http://www.tfhallphotography.com)

### ***Silent Warrior*** (2012)

14 5/8 x 18 5/8 framed

Digital Print

\$600

Silent warrior pays respect to the power of the companion. In this photograph a child stands on a picket line to defend her father, the warrior in her life.

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Even without the warrior's presence we know that he must do everything possible to defend his future and ultimately, the future of his child. The power of the companion lies in her ability to communicate the truth in terms that cannot be argued. The companion makes us easily see what the warrior is striving to achieve.

*Faithful Friend* (2013)

12 7/8 x 16 7/8 framed

Digital Print

\$530

We may imagine the warrior to be an epic hero, impressive in strength, capable of anything, victorious and accomplished. But the Warrior in this photograph is striving, perhaps strong, but has not yet accomplished his mission. His everyday struggle to survive is not the stuff of Hollywood movies, but the harsh reality of need for food, shelter, and medical care. In *Faithful Friend*, we find a companion who fiercely defends his warrior. The companion's dedication to the warrior is not dependent on wealth or influence. Instead, it is earned by the warrior's protection and care for the companion. Which subject in this photograph is the Companion? Who is the Warrior? I leave that question for the observer to consider.

**Terry Hall** is a Detroit based artist. His ongoing work in fine art photography includes subjects residing not only in the greater Detroit area community but also from other surrounding city centers in the Midwest. People and environments are significant areas of

interest for Mr. Hall but he has also produced more abstract work, smoke photography being his most recent work of this genre. Other work includes volunteer photojournalism for Detroit based activist organizations including Occupy Detroit and Detroit Eviction Defense. Mr. Hall is a new board member of the Detroit based Whitdel Arts Gallery where he works to promote the growth of local and guest artists through exhibits, workshops and lectures.

## Colleen Koziara

[www.mysticalwillow.com](http://www.mysticalwillow.com)

### *The Birthing* (2005)

20.5 x 26.25

Watercolor on Paper

\$400

This painting is based in an actual incident that was told to me by a group of priestesses. They sought a symbol to honor the Ancestors who would stand amongst us at the coming gathering of the Feast of Samhain. They journeyed to a farm where Highland cattle were raised and lived and died. On a moonlit night, they walked the distance to a far field and the area where the bodies of the cattle were laid to their final rest. The skull of a Matriarch offered itself for the journey and they accepted it with gratitude. On the walk back one amongst them, a Priestess of the Ancient Dark Mother and the Raven, raised the skull to the full moon for blessing, as it reached its height, the fluids trapped within it

from the rains and the body, gushed forth in a shimmering silver moonlit cascade before them.

Time stood still. Waters and fluids of life and the Moon, held even in death, all around lit by the moon, the spiral of life and the constant turning of the wheel, the spiral, still continued here. The Warriors sought, and This Matriarch was found, a strong and welcome Companion on their journey into the Darkness at the end of the year.

Joan Forest Mage, Executive Director of Life Force Arts Foundation, says: “A Warrior must deal with death: his/her own, as well as those of friends and enemies. The image speaks of the mysteries of transition through death and into the shadowy terrain of the Otherside. In many cultures, Warriors receive spiritual instruction in how to navigate this land if they should die in battle. This painting can also be seen as an experience of initiation, another skill of the Warrior. Initiation is about facing death and learning how to survive. The warrior lives close to the mystic. A saying goes, “There are no atheists in foxholes.”

*Union of Opposites* (2011)

16 x 20

Acrylic on Canvas

NFS

Relationships, partnerships, connections, sexual and intimate are the spots it seems which are most

fraught with difficulties and challenges, at least for me. How are these recreated? How do you go about unlearning all the pain you have learned? How do you convince yourself to pull down the walls, remove the guards from their battlements and open yourself fully?

Divine  
Male Female  
Divine and Complete  
Joining to Oneness  
Balance and Exultant Union  
Souls Joined  
Spirits Merged  
Glowing Orange  
Amber Warmth  
Suffuses all  
Possible only  
When time is lost  
And the past and the future  
No longer hold sway

Joan Forest Mage, Executive Director of Life Force Arts Foundation, says: “The God and Goddess depicted here are the ultimate Companions and Warriors. The antlered God especially reminds us of the connection of Warrior and Hunter. The skills of the Warrior and Companion include leading and following and being in unity, such as depicted in this painting.

**Colleen Koziara** grew up in northern Wisconsin on a

farm, on an island. In this place without movie theatre or even good TV reception, she grew to love the stories in myths, legends and songs. The area was peaceful, gentle and beautiful. Woods, fields, wildflowers, and views of the lake from rosy sunrise to golden sunset filled her life. What most amazed her were the intricacies of nature, like the sight of a setting sunbeam, shining through the branches of a tree, illuminating a delicate spider web and transforming that web to a magical world formed of liquid silver. She lived her most formative years immersed in these images and she came to see a personality in nature. It is these years she spent seeing this “secret” face and magic of nature and the stories that it told that filled her with a childlike sense of wonder and inspired her to create both then and now.

She creates images which portray the spirit and humanity of nature and thereby the nature of humanity and spirit. With her work she intends to capture a moment of magic either from the natural world or from an ancient legend or tale, and speak of the “secret” beauty and magic within simple everyday moments and objects.

Colleen strives to make each of her works a doorway through which the viewer may journey. Where this journey takes them is up to them.

## Thom Lausch

### *Sekhmet* (2014)

19 x 24.5

Stained Glass

\$300

The Goddess Warrior was sent to earth by RA to destroy mortals who conspired against him. Sekhmet's blood lust was not satisfied at the end of the battle and almost destroyed all of mankind so RA poured out beer stained with red ochre and hematite to resemble blood. Mistaking the beer for blood she became so drunk that she gave up the slaughter and returned to Ra saving the remains of humanity.

### *Eagle Spirit* (2014)

32 x 20

Stained Glass

\$350

The Indian warrior kneels in the desert invoking his eagle spirit guide to give him Wisdom, Power and Bravery to overcome his enemy in the upcoming battle.

**Thom Lausch** has been making stained glass since the beginning of 2013.

## Karin Levitski

*Warrior Bear* (2014)

14 x 12

Watercolor on Vellum

\$250

For the past several years Karin has been on a path of learning and personal transformation, including reconnecting with the mythology and traditions of her ancestral homeland, Lithuania/Russia/Sweden. The work she has submitted for this exhibit, **Warrior Bear**, is inspired by animal spirit guides whom she has been working with for the many years. Karin has had a life-long affinity for Bears and has been working more consciously with them as a totem guide for more than 8 years. *Warrior Bear* portrays the fierce, protective side of Bears with a primal roar of warning. This bear is also covered with battle scars and tattoos of a warrior.

**Karin Levitski** has been creative as long as she can remember, with an interest in artistic expression of all sorts, including but not limited to painting, watercolor drawing, straw weaving, needlework, crochet, jewelry making. Much of her artwork has roots in traditional folk art, particularly from Scandinavia, especially Norwegian Rosemaling. Using traditional brush strokes and non-traditional colors, Karin creates artwork full of color and soul which is sometimes whimsical, has elements of humor or spiritual inspiration, and is flavored with traditional art forms. For her, creating art is a means of escape from the mundane and a journey into the sacred and an opportunity to connect with and be surprised by

messages from Spirit. She is always surprised by the finished product of any of her artwork.

## George Lindmark

[www.georgelindmark.com](http://www.georgelindmark.com)

### *Shaka Zulu* (2008)

18 x 24 framed

Oil on Canvas

\$1,800

No one knows what Shaka Zulu looked like and yet Shaka united the people of South Africa against colonial rule and built the Zulu people into a powerful group of more than one million. When he was 26, his father died and left the throne to a son, Sijwana. Shaka killed his brother and took possession of the Kingdom. After taking control, Shaka revolutionized its military tactics. He was the first to group regiments by age and train the soldiers to use modern weapons and special tactics. His motto was “death or victory.” He was the ultimate warrior and warrior chief. This is my personal impression of him after much research and meditation. A man, a warrior, and a king. Bloody and powerful. He is almost impossible to connect with in any civilized sense and his life is legendary.

### *Spirit* (2008)

18 x 24 framed

Oil on Canvas

\$1,600

There is a warrior inside the heart of every woman. "Spirit" is my spiritual warrior. She possesses as much strength, determination and fortitude as any man. She is willing to take up arms and fight for a cause with relentless perseverance. She stands on a mountain of spiritual integrity, understands that this is her "Call to duty" and her response is to commit. Her eyes show that she carries the wisdom of the ages, her hands are feminine and strong and guiding her through the darkness is the moon.

**George Lindmark's** true love is oil painting. Traveling to some of the world's great art collections such as The Louvre, Musee d'Orsay, The Uffizi, The Rijksmuseum, The Tate and The Brandywine, he has deciphered lessons contained within the brush strokes of the Great Masters. Journeying to the workshops of living master's, he has learned various oil painting techniques. This odyssey, combined with daily study and practice, has given him the knowledge and skill to create his own "Representational Style" of artwork with traditional oils. Influences such as John Singer Sargent, N.C. Wyeth, Howard Pyle, Norman Rockwell, and Frank Frazetta have provided inspiration for George to pursue this passion. His artwork has appeared in U.S. and European galleries and he is a member of The Oil Painters of America and The Portrait Society of America.

## Lauren Pitasch

[www.intothelightacupuncture.com](http://www.intothelightacupuncture.com)

### *Thought Forms* (2014)

24 x 30

Print

\$350

**Thought Forms** are invisible, powerful energetics that vibrate a frequency of the intent of the thinker, either conscious or unconscious. Thoughts can be used for good in creation, manifestation, protection or for harm against self and others. So thoughts, like people, are in relationship with our consciousness, realized or not.

**Lauren Pitasch** is a mixed Media Artist, Designer and an intuitive light healer. A graduate of the Art Institute of Chicago, BFA and a Masters in Oriental Medicine-MSOM, Lauren has great passion with creative expression in metaphysics, Art, and Astrology, and designs spiritual jewelry.

## Britt Posmer

### *Firebird* (2012)

12 x 24

Acrylic on Canvas

\$275

At the present time, we as a collective are coming to understand the importance of community and, in

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particular, sacred Companionship, as a vital source of nurturance, sustainability, inspiration, and support in our mutual awakening. During the past few years of an intense Initiation, I have often received assistance in the form of non-physical companions, some of an animalistic nature, as in **Firebird**.

*Tribe* (2013)

24 x 18

Acrylic on Canvas

\$325

**Tribe** illustrates both the energy of resonant and companion souls that support our unfolding and act as the ground out of which it might arise, and the energy of the Warrior, with its capacity for the courage and sacrifice to protect and safeguard our most precious emergence.

**Britt Posmer** is a contemporary ecstatic and interfaith contemplative who utilizes the arts as a principle means of meditation, transformation, and communion. She is a self-taught painter, as well as a dancer, poet, writer, and performance artist. In addition to her artistic passions, Britt is a trained holistic healer who specializes in transformational companionship and issues pertaining to gender, body, and consciousness.

## Kevin Seymour

*Quetzalcoatl Cursing Staff* (2014)

24 x 6

Mixed Media

NFS

One of the many spirit teachers I work with is the spirit of Quetzalcoatl, The Feathered Serpent God who was a teacher of the priests and a god of knowledge and learning. During a workshop for creating Ancestors Staves facilitated by Szmeralda Shanel at Life Force Arts Foundation, I was led to create this cursing staff. It took me by surprise when Quetzalcoatl revealed that this staff was intended for cursing. Up to that point, I had only considered the application of my work as a healer and didn't really explore the idea of doing 'harm' to anyone. He responded that sometimes change needed a much more assertive approach. He reminded me of an article about some religious leaders on the East coast involved in a child abuse scandal. I remember feeling angry and powerless to take action. The Quetzalcoatl Cursing Staff is that power. Used with guidance and ethics, cursing can be just and healing. We often think of Cursing and something to cause harm, however if someone was cursed to be unable to harm a child, that would be very healing for the child. As I explore the warrior within me, I understand there is a need to

take an action at times that others may find unpleasant for the good of the community.

**Kevin Seymour** is a Shamanic Practitioner and Reiki Master performing many healing sessions, soul retrievals, and journeys for people both remotely and in person at Life Force Arts Center. He has held several ceremonies at LFAC for healing people and nature spirits. He teaches Reiki and Shamanic Journeying and works to help people deepen their own connection to spirit.

With his grandmother being an art teacher, he grew up learning creative ways to express himself. Now, through his shamanic work he has been creating spiritual objects for healing both for himself and for his clients.

He has been a volunteer at Life Force Arts for a few years and studied shamanism under Joan Forest Mage. He has studied Reiki under Reiki Masters, Jennifer Berman, Chris Allaun, and Dharma Devi.

## **Szmeralda Shanel**

[www.blackisismagic.com](http://www.blackisismagic.com)

***Priestess Healer Seer Warrior Women*** (2013)

13 tall

Fabric, yarn, shells, bone, beads, ribbon

NFS

Throughout history priestesses, seers and healers have been warriors leading their people in the fight for

freedom. Queen Dihya/al-Kahina (the priestess soothsayer) and war leader of the Berber tribes led her people in resisting the Arab conquest of north Africa. Queen Boudica of the Iceni, divined, invoked the British goddess Andraste, and led her people in an uprising against the colonizing Romans. Chiricahua Apache prophetess and warrior Lozen fought beside her brother Chief Victorio, using her skills in battle as well as her gift of clairvoyance against invading U.S. armies in Arizona and Mexico. Harriet Tubman escaped slavery in the Maryland then returned approximately 13 times to rescue others. Gifted with the sight and the ability to dream true, her visions, dreams, and the pistol in her pocket ensured that she and her passengers traveled safely on the roads to freedom. A warrior woman, during the civil war she served as a scout. A healer, knowledgeable in herbal medicine she also served during the civil war as a nurse. The Vodou priestess Cecile Fatiman, led a ceremony that is considered the starting point of the Haitian revolution against slavery. The visionary Joan of Arc, was instructed by saints, to lead the French army and drive English invaders out of her country. And there are many more.

**Priestess Healer Seer Warrior Woman** honors and celebrates the spirit of women healers who fought for liberation.

**Szmeralda Shanel, M.A.**, is a visual, performance and ritual artist. She holds a Masters Degree in expressive arts therapy and has been working as a teaching

artist for 15 years. As an expressive arts therapist consultant and educator, she works with individuals as well as communities focusing on the healing aspects of the creative process. A priestess with the Fellowship of Isis and the Temple of Isis, Szmeralda is the founder of the Iseum of Black Isis, a temple dedicated to Goddess Spirituality and Sacred arts.

### **Acknowledgements**

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**Life Force Arts Center has over twenty events a month focusing on the connection of the arts and spirituality. Please check our calendar & sign up for our e-mail list**

Visit PANTHEON, our online journal of Spiritual Art

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Catalog created by Jaimie Shepardson

Catalog design by Maggie Baker

## About Life Force Arts Foundation

The mission of Life Force Arts Foundation (LFA) is to advance the field of spiritual art through artistically excellent exhibits, events and publications that explore the art-spirituality connection. We define spiritual art as visual, literary or performing art that flows from spiritual practice, strives to connect the audience with Spirit, and creates spiritual awakening, healing, or evolution. We focus on the arts as a common ground of human expression, where artists and audiences of diverse spiritual traditions can honor each other, and share their personal and collective experiences of the spiritual aspect of life through the arts.

LFA's goals are to develop spiritual artists, the spiritual arts audience, and the spiritual arts community. The Foundation operates Life Force Arts Center (LFAC), Chicago's spiritual art gallery and performance space, which presents artistically excellent, spiritually based visual art exhibits, dance, theater and music performances, author book signings and workshops with artists who are experts in spiritual art making

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