

*The Spiritual Power of Art:
The Human Spirit*

Exhibit Catalog

Art Exhibit—Performances—Events

January 24 — May 12, 2015

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

*The Spiritual Power of Art:
The Human Spirit*

Opening Reception

January 24, 2015, 6—10 PM

Closing Reception

May 12, 2015, 7—9 PM

Free admission to exhibit &
Opening and Closing receptions

Gallery Hours

Mondays & Thursdays, 1:30 - 6:30 PM
& by appointment

Artists Featured in *The Human Spirit*

Steven Blaine Adams	Millie Hreczany
Sharon Bechtold	Shauna Aura Knight
Christopher Bednash	Colleen Koziara
Fred Casselman	Sucheta Misra
Cortez Curtis	Kao Ra Zen
Judy Demchuck	Diana Rudaitis
Dorothy Graden	Anatoliy Snigirev
Amy Hassan	Sujata Tibrewala
John Henderson	Mark Van Dyk

About *The Human Spirit*

Explore art that encourages, guides and uplifts the human spirit as Life Force Arts Foundation presents the art exhibit and multiarts show *The Spiritual Power of Art: The Human Spirit*, running January 24 - May 12, 2015 at Life Force Arts Center, 1609 W. Belmont, Chicago IL 60657. Opening Reception is Saturday, January 24, 2015 from 6 - 10 PM. Closing Reception is Tuesday, May 12, 2015 from 7 - 9 PM. Open Gallery Hours are Mondays and Thursdays 1:30 - 6:30 PM, and by appointment. Admission is free to the exhibit and Opening and Closing Receptions.

The Spiritual Power of Art exhibit series explores three different meanings of “spirit”: Human Spirit, Universal Energy and Mystical & Religious Experience. *The Human Spirit* exhibit focuses on spirit as greatness of human character: people who triumph over adversity, encourage others, are gracious and welcoming, stand up for justice, show kindness and compassion, give wise counsel.

The artwork in this exhibit features a wide variety of media including painting, photography, sculpture, mixed media and installation. It's fascinating to see the interpretations artists have about the theme. From portraits of people who exemplify human virtues such as compassion, courage, wisdom and creativity, to explorations of joyous and peaceful human community; from depictions of the hero's journey to the gamut of human emotions, this show mirrors back

to us the energy of the human experience. At LFA, our art exhibits create sacred space in which events become healing rituals: performances, concerts, poetry readings, workshops, lectures are all infused with transformative power to heal and enlighten the those present.

The Spiritual Power of Art: The Human Spirit is the first exhibit in the four year *Life Force Arts Manifesto* series being produced by Life Force Arts Foundation (LFA). Each year (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018) focuses the theme for its shows on one section of LFA's core statement, the Life Force Arts Manifesto. At Life Force Arts Center, the art exhibits create the sacred space to hold performances, concerts, poetry readings, workshops, lectures and other events as healing rituals based on each show's theme.

Steven Blaine Adams

Eros (2015)

3 x 3

Glass Tea Candle Holder with garnet, amethyst, opal, and mother of pearl

\$75

In **Eros**, the dove is a symbol of peace. The hearts are a symbol for mankind. The piece symbolizes love for humanity. Garnets represent passion. Opals represent the opening of consciousness. Amethyst is for spiritual matters.

Mask of Joy (2015)

3 x 3

Glass Tea Candle Holder with citrine, blue quartz, and rhinestone

\$50

Mask of Joy evokes the celebration of life, in the style of Art Deco.

Helping Hands Mandala (2015)

3 x 3

Glass Tea Candle Holder with opal, tiger eye, and brass

\$50

Helping Hands Mandala is for meditation upon the embracing of others and giving to humanity.

Man, as the Perfect Star (2015)

2 x 14

Suncatcher with carnelian and brass

\$75

Man, the Microcosm (2015)

2 x 14

Suncatcher with hematite, pyrite, crystal, silver hearts

\$75

In these suncatchers, we have DaVinci's image of man as a perfect star. Five is a symbol for human beings. We have five senses, five fingers, and our arms, legs, and head make a perfect star. The pentagram is a micro-cosmos. This piece evokes man as a symbol of the universe.

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 LFA's Associate Artistic Director and also LFAC's store designer. The son of an 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.

Sharon Bechtold
sharonbechtold.com

Gentle Wind (2015)
10.5 x 12.5
Pyrography
\$125

Has Seen many Battles (2015)
10.5 x 12.5
Pyrography
\$125

The Storyteller (2015)
5 x 8
Pyrography
\$85

Message from the Ancestors in these portraits

And when the battle
wears itself out
and the smoke has lifted

a gentle breeze
shall bring the sweet scent
of fresh fertile soil
and new birth

amid the destruction and debris
a long forgotten tale
an ancient promise
will be remembered
and told

from the eyes of one who has seen
the hatred that springs
from ignorance

and fear
a new vision will arise

so when it comes time
to bury the dead
to rebuild the torn
and to transplant the uprooted
turn your face
feel our breath
hear our story
see our vision
and receive
the blessing
of hope.

Sharon Bechtold is a Shamanic Practitioner, Artist, Bard, and Teacher. She studied shamanism through Joan Forest Mage's shamanic training, holds the Bardic Grade from the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, and is well versed in elemental energy work and reiki. She is a professional award winning pyrographer who has published 5 books on wood burning techniques. A columnist and writer for numerous international print magazines, she also teaches art as energy work throughout North America, has been certified as an Illinois State Artisan and is represented by numerous galleries and collections throughout the world.

Christopher Bednash

christopherjosephbednash.net

Cooperative Love (2010)

17 x 11

Digital Illustration

\$32

A diverse group of folks dancing together in a safe space of kindness and compassion. Everyone can be who they are, knowing they are loved.

This image based on my experience living in a 23 person cooperative house, where we shared all the work, all the bills, and the decision-making of running our home. It is a vibrant and dynamic place where members love and support one another through cooking daily meals, participating in one another's creative and activist projects, and lots of dance parties. The rainbow is a symbol of cooperative

economics the world over. Rainbows bridge Heaven and Earth, symbolizing both diversity and unity.

Christopher Bednash is an interdisciplinary artist and MFA thesis student at Columbia College. He works to expand the meeting place between art, activism, and spirituality. Chris is also the Chaplain of the Rainbow Bike Chapel, manifesting on Earth in Spring 2015.

Fred Casselman

earthecho.com

O Little Town (2014)

18 x 32.5

Inkjet on Rag Paper on Aluminum

\$375

This image reflects the human spirit--a town and community blessed by the cosmos, a home for humans here on Earth, a blend of living quarters and commerce. In this very special place, people of many nationalities are making a new life. This is my town, Framingham, Massachusetts, USA. O Little Town.

Fred Casselman begins most of his images with a photograph, currently using a Leica D-LUX 5. He prints his art on an Epson 7900 on Museo Silver Rag paper which is an all-cotton, archival art paper. Fred uses his art to renew the sense of peace and harmony with our Earth, cosmos, with one another, and with ourselves. He has exhibited all over the United States. His visions and dreams for the spiritual evolution of his church manifested as his book *Fresh Air: New Visions for the Catholic Church*.

Cortez Curtis

www.cortezcurtis.com

Malcolm Holley (2010)

24 x 48

Oil on Canvas

\$2000

With a sax in his hands, Malcolm Holley led all of the jazz solos, even though he could not read music and was not part of the music department. He made his own schedule with his teacher's in order to play. He also played in local clubs around Detroit. After graduation from high school, he soon found himself playing clubs and shows and producing records.

After graduating from Eastern Michigan University, Malcolm started performing all over the Detroit area. He did horn work and performed with local rock and rhythm groups. He formed his own group that featured Jazz Drummer Gayelynn McKinney. He also recorded with Mad Mike Banks and Underground Resistance.

After moving to Chicago he found himself doing music for TV production, like WTTW Channel 11. He also wrote music for an award winning video program which won the Center for New Television Voice and Visionary Award. As the saxophone player for Sam Cockrell & the Groove, he opened for some of Chicago's top jazz and blues acts. His debut CD, "Mad about Sax" showcases his songwriting and sax playing abilities.

Lady in Red (2007)

16 x 20 framed

Oil on Canvas

\$1000

This is a portrait of my wife Felicia Curtis, who at the time modeled and appeared in several commercials and movies such as *Losing Isaiah*. My wife also volunteers to teach children for a day in the junior achievement program through her job as well as volunteer work at the Food depository each year. She's kind, loving and takes time to care for elderly family members.

Village (2013)

22 x 30

Oil on Canvas

\$1500

Daily life in rural villages, communities struggling to survive. The women and children of the village are crushing fruit by stamping with their feet to make wine for the celebration of the harvest and cooking meals, spinning, weaving. The men fish, hunt do the farming planting pineapples, fruits and vegetables, brewing beer and palm wine, wood carvings, smelting and forging iron. Little has changed in over two thousand years.

Cortez Curtis was born on the south side of Chicago. He devoted 27 years of his life to project

engineering for a local electric utility company, where he designed substations for ten years as a draftsman, and seventeen years as an engineer. If you look closely at his work, you can see his facility as a draftsman in his lines and in the way he engineers the design in his painting techniques. Since retirement as an engineer, Cortez has emerged as a full time artist, owner, digital designer, and the publisher of Artez Artworks. Cortez graduated from Benedictine University and excelled at painting and digital art work at Illinois, College of Du Page. He is a member artist of the Illinois Artisans.

In addition to his many successful solo art exhibitions at local galleries, his work has been exhibited at the Health4Life Wellness Center, Life Force Arts Center, The HotHouse, Robert Morris State Street Gallery, and Neleh Art gallery. Cortez's art work has been shown at two of the Museum of Science and Industries "Black Creativity" juried art showings. He has received numerous awards and honorable mentions, and articles about him have been featured in the Art Business News, The Red Eye, NowPublic.com, The Chicago Reader.

"Looking forward, I believe it is my destiny to become a great artist. I have the temperament of a revolutionary, and I am blazing with a spirit, embodied in an idea that there are things still to be conquered. My ambition is to paint the world's rebirth, its hopes and dreams. When I paint, I demonstrate my enthusiastic conception of life through my palette and

original painting style, in part conceived of and influenced by the great renaissance masters and my childhood vision of a world beyond, the supernatural.”

Judy Demchuk

Sadako's Dream (2014)

16.75 x 20.75

Textile Paint and Graphite on Silk

\$499

This is a painting of Sadako Sasaki, a Japanese girl born on January 7, 1943 in Hiroshima, Japan. Her life story became famous as a result of her extraordinary human spirit. She was a happy and healthy girl who was a gifted relay runner. She became ill when she was 12 years old. However, she remained cheerful and hopeful. Even though she succumbed to leukemia her spirit prevailed and her 1,000 paper cranes became an international symbol for peace. Her story and spirit inspired me to create this painting of her. People from around the world visit her memorial in Hiroshima and leave paper cranes there in honor of her...a collective creative project for healing and learning.

Judy Demchuk is an award winning Chicago area artist. Her creativity was cultivated by her parents who were gifted in the arts. She excelled in her professional life in both corporate and graphic design careers, but chose to pursue her inner drive to create

art in the traditional arenas. In 2001 she changed directions towards fulfilling her hearts desire; drawing inspiration from her rich professional, educational and life experiences. While she incorporates the influence of her Japanese American heritage into her art, her flare for diversity drives the assortment of mediums and materials she uses in her creations. A graduate of various schools and art institutions, she explores unusual methods in which she can express her concepts freely. Judy holds a B.F.A. in Graphic Design and a B.S. in Computer Science with a second major in Psychology.

Appreciating the collaboration of the stories' text with the visual narrative in children's books led her to create the illustrations for *Nana in the Nursing Home*.

Judy's illustrations have been published nationally and her paintings exhibited in galleries throughout the Midwest. She continues to create art in various mediums, including silk paintings, customized animal carriers, numerous silk scarves series, murals and suitcase compositions for children in the Court Appointed Special Advocates program in DuPage County Circuit Court.

Dorothy Graden

www.dorothygraden.com/home.html

The Flute Player (2013)

19 x 23 framed

Giclee Print

\$130

All the Flute Players I have seen in the rock art tradition I work with have been male, always in profile, some with flutes, some with sticks and often with a hump on their back. They are thought to be fertility kachinas. My Flute Player is female, she has a number of spirit guides, and the "hump" has been transformed into winglike features. She has entered the human dimension but continues to be unseen. She raises the vibrations of all she encounters and blesses them with Universal Energy creating for them a fertile life, whether it be a spiritual, mystical or human one.

Dorothy Graden is an award winning contemporary artist whose art is inspired by Ancient Visions. For over 25 years, Dorothy has 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.

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 presents, lectures and exhibits her drawings and ceramic sculptures throughout the Midwest. She draws with great admiration, respect and humility for the ancients who inspire her work.

Amy Hassan

amyjamilahhassanartcreations.com

Quest for Peace & Unity (2014)

20" diameter

Acrylic on Canvas

\$250

My intention for this Mandala is to show that the only way to achieve peace in the world is to cultivate an understanding and dialogue between people of diverse cultures, religions and backgrounds. Only through education, communication and understanding can humanity tear down barriers of fear, ignorance and prejudice against one another.

Amy Hassan: I am a self taught artist, who has always loved drawing and painting since I was a young girl. Growing up, I enjoyed drawing pictures from nature, such as landscapes and animals. Many of my art pieces have various textures. This may be influenced by my work as a Special Education teacher. In years past, I have created learning activities, tactile books and recreated stories to fit the needs of my young students with special needs. During the past 2 years, however, my passion for painting has evolved into creating Mandala art. I find the process of creating a mandala, to be a very centering, peaceful and meditative process. I will often incorporate my love of nature and also geometric patterns into my creations. Each art piece is unique and connects to the emotions that I may be feeling. The choice of

colors, patterns or symbols is determined by my intention or purpose.

I use a variety of media including acrylic paint, pencil, marker, non-toxic color and clear lacquer, colored stones, recycled jewelry and beads, wood, paper, or canvas. Creations vary in size from 36 inches down to 1 inch. I also use the same technique while creating my hand painted earrings, pendants, magnets and bracelets.

John Henderson

Celtic Mother Goddess (2007)

6 x 12 x 2

Mahogany

\$400

Fem (2013)

1.5 x 9 x 1.5

Mahogany

\$90

African Fertility Goddess

2 x 10 x 2

Coco Bolo (2013)

\$300

John Henderson is a retired firefighter. He comes from Pascagoula, Mississippi where he learned whittling by watching his grandfather and father. According to

family legend, he is part Cherokee, descended from members of the tribe who escaped to the Smoky Mountains when the rest of the tribe was sent on forced march to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears.

John Henderson says: I say that I study ancient art. What I mean is that I look at a lot of pictures in books, watch Discovery and History channels and browse on line. When I find an image I like, I design my images in the style I have chosen, not to copy anything, but to create a piece of art that is recognizable in origin of style. Some pieces, especially Egyptian, can not vary too much from the original, in order for it to be recognizable as the intended subject. North West Native American styles allow much more artistic interpretations. I enjoy creating pieces in this style. I do not claim them to be Native American Art; instead, they demonstrate my appreciation of this art. I have also done work in ancient Celtic, Greek, and African styles as well as some Central and South American styles. Abstract shapes and designs pop into my mind often. I grab a pencil and pad and start doodling. At times, images come to me faster than I can sketch, and from one will come another. I see these images in three dimensions, and sometimes have to sketch two or three sketches to put on paper what my mind sees. It's somewhat like a being a writer: you have to put it on paper as soon as possible, so you don't forget the details.

Millie Hreczany

The Flying Kite (2014)

34.5 x 44

Wood, acrylic paint, mirror pieces and paper, yarn
\$300

The Flying Kite itself represents a sense of freedom, release and silence. The kite has its own direction and flies with the wind above me. This is different from the air and wind that I feel on the ground. I discovered a deep sense of peace when I fly kites on the beach. There is a release of barriers while I allowed my human form to be, just holding the kite string.

I pull the string in one direction trying to be in control but at times the kite dives into the water. Every time I pick it up, untangle it then fly the kite again. With the kite high in the air it is almost as if I am up there with it. I feel different and the energy is different. This is what the third eye in the kite represents.

Being able to pick up the kite and fly it again is the best part. It is the action of getting up every time I am thrown into the water and drenched. It's about wanting to be in that moment, to fly again, to be in that sacred space and allow the kite and myself *to be*. After flying the kite, it is as if I had been in a dream. I want to remain silent. This represents my human spirit as being completely free. It represents

me as having appreciation for the rocks on the imperfect beach. Understanding things as they are, without judgments. Where the wind is the wind. And understanding the perceived imperfections of this world. Kite flying is a physical exercise and when done from a place of authenticity, allows mental quiet.

The Flying Kite is an image of the human spirit because it allows one to have a feeling of disconnect from material, to quiet the mind and open the third eye, supplying immense knowledge that is personal and specific to the individual doing the exercise. The individual can take away wisdom that will help them with their own lives, in the now: a sense of security in oneself, calm, stability, and an appreciation for everything. The third eye isn't someone outside yourself helping you, it's really you.

Millie Hreczany is a Chicago native and has lived and spent time in Florida. She graduated from North Park University with a B.A. in Creative Writing in 1994. In 2008 she graduated from Devry University with a B.S. in Technical Management. She currently works as a paramedic in the private industry. She is actively writing and creating art in various forms. Her art media includes works of art using acrylic and oil on wood, canvas, and other forms of paper. She is an active wood carver and photographer.

Millie Hreczany is a student of G.I. Gurdjieff, meditation, and split consciousness. She is a member

and active participant of The Theosophical Society and uses CD's from The Monroe Institute for mediation. She strives to create from streams of consciousness that show through in writings and art works. She is currently reading *The Reality of Being* by Jeanne De Salzmann.

Shauna Aura Knight

www.shaunaauraknight.com

Lotus Queen (2014)

26 x 34

Acrylics, Mixed Media

\$300

The Lotus Queen has mastered her heart. She sits rooted in her sovereignty, in her power, and also in compassion. Her serenity isn't from a lifetime of peace, but rather from a lifetime of heartbreak that has opened up the lotus of her heart so that the waters of the divine flow into her, and from her. She holds the lotus—the heart—the seat of all compassion, and the waters flow forth.

Hero (2014)

19 x 23

Acrylics, Mixed Media

\$200

She has fought her way through the road of trials. Though she has been betrayed, rejected, and held

back, every challenge has made her stronger. Like the sword, she has stood in the center of the flame and burned away the dross, burned away all that did not serve her. She has been honed and tested, and through it she has found her magic, her power, her destiny. Having conquered her fears and having faced her shadows, she brings that essence of magic out to others to help them face the same challenges that she has, sometimes just by saying, "I believe in you. You will get through this."

Water Bearer (2013)

13 x 19

Acrylics, Mixed Media

\$100

Long before the Water Bearer was associated with Isis or with the astrological sign of Aquarius or with the Star card of the Tarot, the water bearer was a woman. She still is. She is the woman who walks to the well every day to bring back jugs of water back home. With the modern convenience of clean tap water, we have no concept of the sacred duty of carrying water. To us, the symbol of water pouring from silver vessels is just that, a symbol. But to the one who receives the water after walking through the dry wasteland of drought, it is a blessing. To the she who pours the water, it is a sacred gift of compassion, healing, and life force. When have you thirsted? When have you given the gift of water?

Shauna Aura Knight is an artist, designer, author, and ecstatic spiritual seeker who is passionate about creating artwork, rituals, experiences and spaces to ignite transformation, inspire creativity, and awaken mythic imagination. Her artwork explores themes and imagery of myth, mysticism, deities, ritual, sacred sites, personal transformation, and heroes, and includes watercolor, acrylic, mixed media and digital art.

Shauna's art and design work have been used for illustrations and covers for several books and magazines. With leadership experience in Earth-centered and grass-roots organizations, Shauna has organized conferences, intensives, shrines and art installations that help people connect with the divine, our deepest selves, and sustainable community. She travels the country showing her artwork and facilitating rituals, installations, and performance pieces, as well as teaching workshops on personal transformation, exploring myths and stories, and teaching others how to facilitate transformative events. She is the author of several nonfiction books on facilitation and personal transformation, as well as several urban fantasy and paranormal romance novels.

Shauna studied fine art and theatrical design at the University of Minnesota before beginning a career as a web and graphic designer. She has studied creative writing, interactive media, mythology, and the design of events, experiences, and products at Columbia College Chicago, University of Chicago Graham School,

DePaul University, and at many conferences and other professional training. She graduated from a 3-year program at Diana's Grove studying transformational leadership, multi-sensorial teaching, and facilitating ritual.

Colleen Koziara

www.mysticalwillow.com

Soul Song (2010)

28 x 22

Acrylic on Canvas

\$400

How do we lose our voice? How do we find it again? What pain do we carry forward from childhood, past hurts and traumas that cause us to silence our own beautiful song, words, sounds?

Fire born song,
rising to the throat,
the crescendo of its ascent,
the blue center of sound,
and finally, tear washed,
emerging, poured forth
in a rush to become a rainbow river,
which finally free rises
higher than ever dreamed

The Kaitseja and the Noid (2013)

20 x 16

Watercolor and Ink on Board

\$300

Kaitseja is an Estonian word that means Guardian. Noid means Witch. The Kaitseja is the Witch's guardian. Paired forever since the beginning of time by their mother and father the Moon and the Sun, they return over and over again lifetime after lifetime. She always walking the path of challenge and magic, he always standing strong and sure as her guardian and protector, her love and her shield, the one thing that no matter what, will always be there for her to return to. Theirs is a story of connection beyond time and space or even form. It is a story of eternity.

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.

Sucheta Misra

Awakening — Choosing Between Light and Darkness

(2014)

15.5 x 20

Mixed Media

\$500

This piece was developed as the idea of the first awakening of the human soul or spirit, when the first glimmers of light appear and where darkness still exists. This creation discusses the duality of light and darkness in the form of water. Here, water serves as a cleansing element for the human spirit but also serves as a moveable element that continues to flow between light and darkness until the soul is further awakened. The golden sun, the ultimate provider of light, is a source of hope for the spirit and the

feathers are present as the spirit's intuitive knowledge that leads it to light. The glittering rocks demonstrate the earthly world of human desires, again wavering between the duality of light and darkness. The painted soul itself is bold in color, form and position, enhanced with the markings of a warrior to embody intention and strength in the human soul's journey towards the light.

Sucheta Misra is a self-taught visual artist who employs color, symbolism and mixed media to evoke emotion in her creations. Creating visual art in the form of portraits and nature began at an early age for Sucheta, as did her fascination with spiritual traditions from Hindu literature. Her creativity and spirituality intersected in her teenage years when she began to illustrate and paint metaphysical themes.

Sucheta utilizes strong colors and color combinations in her work to elicit an emotional response from the viewer. Shapes and symbols from nature and diverse spiritual traditions also play a significant role in her creations. Sucheta believes that both the creation and viewing of visionary art is an introspective, playful and healing practice. Her art is often created first in meditation and then captured on paper or canvas from meditative memory. Sucheta views her art as a way to connect with her own soul and those of others.

Kao Ra Zen

kaorazen.tumblr.com

The Maker of Toys and Destroyer of Worlds (2004)

24 x 48

Acrylic, Wax & Mixed Media on Wood

\$4000

The Maker of Toys and Destroyer of Worlds is a painting that I worked on during a period in which I started to become much more prolific in my visual artmaking. The figure in the piece was modeled after a dreadlocked guy that I saw in a Reebok ad in Fader magazine. Though his dreads and beard were much longer than my own, I felt a kinship to the person in the ad, though I knew nothing of yoga at the time. The image struck a chord with me and I created a semi-self portrait using the figure from the print ad and incorporating “hints” of my own life into the work. Random lines of my own writings and poetry as well as items representing favorite comic book characters of mine are used to “deify” the figure. The work serves as a guide to me and reminds me of my higher self, my wiser self. The title of the piece comes from me asking 2 of my children what activity it looked like the figure was about to be engaged in, and my son exclaimed “Make Toys!!!” while my daughter answered “Destroy the World”. I find this to represent the creative and destructive forces that are potent within us all and how we shift between creation/destruction depending on the task at hand to guide us towards our higher selves.

Kao Ra Zen was born and raised in Chicago and developed an intense love of art, writing, and music at a very early age. Kao is a very creative soul and involves himself in many forms of expression, ranging from visual art to performance. Much of Kao's visual work deals with "deifying" the subjects that the artist chooses to paint, by incorporating elements into the piece that make the figure a bit larger than life. Subjects may be models or from photo reference. Comic books, pro wrestling, and the artist's interest in different religions and mythologies all serve as an influence to his work. Sometimes these influences are used subtly, other times direct reference to a specific source of inspiration is incorporated.

Kao has exhibited in Chicago at the Polish Arts Museum as well as the DANK Haus, the German American Cultural Center. This past summer, the artist traveled to Syke, Germany with other members of the International Arts Group to participate in an arts residency at the Kreismuseum and a group show at a branch of the Sparkasse Bank.

Kao Ra Zen's work with children includes teaching a rapping/poetry class at the Southwest Youth Collaborative, as part of their University of Hip Hop program; assisting in art making workshops as part of the Glenwood Arts Festival; and perform and/or work with children at inner city schools. He currently works as a Science Mentor at Chicago Public Schools as part of the In Search of Genius non-profit organization. Kao recently returned to school and will be completing the Associate in Fine Arts program at Harold Washington College.

Diana Rudaitis

The Forgotten Hero (2013)

16 x 20

Mixed Media, Acrylic & Oil Pastels on Canvas

\$200

This painting is in memory of my late fiancé, retired Chicago Police Sergeant, Arthur E. Hamilton. In his younger days Art was a rough, tough robbery detective, who was shot while engaging in hand to hand combat with a wanted bank robber. For this he was awarded the “Police Blue Star Award of Valor.” But Art was also modest and humble. Most people never knew he had earned this honor.

Art retired after 25 years of service partly due to issues of diabetes and heart problems. A tragic fall down stairs in March 1992 forced the amputation of his left leg. It was heartbreaking to see Art’s loss of self-esteem as he no longer fit the image of the “young, tough, guy” who could kick down doors. Cruel people, who could never have his courage laughed at the “old guy” in the wheel chair. His relations with his family and friends changed as he struggled with his feelings of anger, frustration, loneliness and isolation. As his sole caretaker; I was exhausted and had to watch as he sank into deeper despair and depression. Finally, forgotten by his friends and abandoned by his family, Art lost his will to live. He lost his last fight October 14, 1993, succumbing to heart failure.

Art was big grouchy bear outside; but inside he was as tender as a lamb. Art always fought for what he thought was right. He hated abuse of anyone and defended “the little guy”; those who couldn’t defend themselves. I can truly say Art was “one of Chicago’s Finest.”

Diana Rudaitis was born in Chicago in 1947 and has lived there all her life. She started drawing and painting when she was a small girl and when she was 11 years old, she won a scholarship for young students at the Art Institute of Chicago. She later took various art classes but is mainly a self taught artist. She has worked in pastel chalks and watercolor pencils, but now paints in acrylics, oil pastels and uses paper and sequins in her work.

Diana recently started painting seriously after retiring for 28 years of service as a Chicago Police Officer, and paints under the name “Danusha” to honor her grandmother who came from Poland. Diana likes to paint human and animal portraits in bright, bold colors and textures, with whimsy and humor. She also paints fantasy and visionary works.

Anatoliy Snigirev

Flowers (2001)

30 x 30

Oil on Canvas

\$1200

Children are our flowers and they live among flowers.

Cowboy (2001)

16 x 20

Oil on Canvas

\$600

A sensitive man loves to be amongst nature.

Anatoliy Snigirev says: I am from Russia, where my work was shown in many exhibitions and I won local and state prizes. In 1983, I was a participant of the *All Union Exhibition* in Moscow where I became a laureate – the highest reward. My art works can be found in collections in Japan, China, Germany, Russia, and USA. Also, I created many sculptures and architectural projects.

Being a bicycle racer, I've spent all my vacations in the mountains, close to the stars, since 1970 and have seen a lot of worlds. Basically, my bicycle trips took me close to the highest peaks of Caucasus, the plateau of Pamir and the Tian-Shan mountain range. I climbed to an altitude at about 14,000 feet to a border of eternal snow. I crossed the Kara-Kum desert, steppes, and arid wastes and accumulated 20,000 miles on my bicycle during my nine vacations, a month long each travel.

Sujata Tibrewala

pratibimba.in

Pam Reed: The Magic of 300 Miles (2014)

11 x 14

Acrylic on Canvas

\$400

Pam Reed is an ultra-running legend and the first person to complete a 300-mile run without sleep in 2005, breaking Dean Karnazes's then-record of 262 miles. She completed the run in slightly less than eighty hours.

In 2003, she set the women's record for the USATF 24-hour track run, which she still holds. She is the only woman to have won the Badwater 135 Mile Ultramarathon (in both 2002 and 2003). In 2002, her win set the women's course record, which was broken in 2008 by Jamie Donaldson. Reed is the current female American record holder in six-day marathons after completing 490 miles in the Twelfth-Annual Self-Transcendence Six-Day Race in New York. She completed the multiday race on Saturday, May 2, 2009.

Reed is the author of the book *The Extra Mile: One Woman's Personal Journey to Ultra-Running Greatness*.

She is a 53 now and is still active in ultra running as a runner and is also the race director for the Tucson Marathon. She runs a household with 5 children and exemplifies what a human body can achieve irrespective of gender and age.

Cecilia Payne: The Explorer of Stellar Atmosphere

(2014)

12 x 14

Acrylic on Canvas

\$400

Cecilia Payne, now considered the founder of modern astronomy, could not even get her Bachelor's degree in 1919 because Cambridge did not confer degrees to women. She travelled to US to join Harvard because in England she could only become a teacher since she was a woman. She had to declare her Doctoral results to be "of course not real" because her guide/mentor at Harvard thought she was wrong.

Today her brilliance is recognized by astronomers around the world. She showed how to decode the complicated spectra of starlight in order to learn the relative amounts of the chemical elements in the stars. She discovered, surprisingly, that the Sun and the other stars are composed almost entirely of hydrogen and helium, the two lightest elements. Before her discovery the popular belief was that if the Earth's crust were heated to the temperature of the Sun, its spectrum would look nearly the same.

It is because of her that we know what distant stars and planets are made of, even before setting our foot on them or sending probes. This makes our space missions more predictable and less risky and our knowledge about the universe more complete. Also before we discovered the way stars acted as atoms

factory we needed to know that stars were only made of hydrogen and helium, the latter being a byproduct of fusion.

From the time she finished her Ph.D. through the 1930s, Payne advised students, conducted research, and lectured—all the usual duties of a professor. Yet, because she was a woman, her only title at Harvard was “technical assistant” to Professor Shapley. It took 26 years for her to become a full professor (the first woman so recognized at Harvard) and chair of the Astronomy Department and another 20 when her fellow astronomers finally appreciated her genius. In 1976, the American Astronomical Society awarded her the prestigious Henry Norris Russell Prize.

Through her hard work and passion, she paved a path for all the future astronomers by advancing human knowledge and made it possible for women to hold posts in academia . This is why she exemplifies what is good and great in the "Human Spirit".

Sujata Tibrewala is a self taught artist who in 2009 gave up her electrical engineering career for her first love, art. She now uses her knowledge of science to spread art and issues close to her heart.

Born in India, Sujata had successful solo exhibits and conducted many art workshops, some of which resulted in student exhibitions. Sujata moved to the U.S. in 2010. Her works are currently on display at many reputed galleries including the Regional

Commission of Arts, St Louis and Marine Foundation, California. Her noted exhibitions from the past include Life Force Arts Center, Chicago IL; Gateway gallery, St Louis MO; Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi; and Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur, India. She is an artist member of many artistic organizations including the St. Louis Artists' Guild, Women's Caucus for the Arts, and Art Concoctions. Starting from her school days, Sujata won many awards, and her art has received rave reviews in leading print and electronic media of India and USA. Presently, Sujata resides in San Jose, California. She is a member of the Naperville Art League, FIRE Arts Studio & Gallery, and Woman Made Gallery, Chicago.

Mark Van Dyk

Mother Nature with Music and Medicine in Meditation

(2015)

20 x 26

Graphite on Paper

\$950

This piece was in part inspired by a friend's vision that he shared with me. The snake with the vines and feathers coming from its mouth is a manifestation of mother earth which he saw while on Ayahuasca. The woman is another manifestation of this same being. Another friend of mine told me of a very intense dream he had in which he met God, who appeared in the form of a woman with close resemblance to this drawing. I intended for the woman depicted to have

an elevated spiritual presence and give the viewer the impression that she is an enlightened individual. She is naked without shame and in the process of creating music with her guitar. As a passionate guitar player myself I know her stare to be the kind one has when they daydream as they play, something that I often do. I believe highly spontaneous daydreaming, especially as one is doing something creative, is a great and very deep form of meditation that can inspire an artist to create their best work.

The many different patterns in the woman's hair are similar to patterns that occur in nature. I mixed these patterns in a random manner to show the beauty of diversity with respect to natural patterns that occur in plants and on the skin of animals. The head of the bird in this piece is the third head of the unified spiritual and enlightened being. The bird head has eyes for feathers much like a peacock and has an eye on his beak which is symbolic of wisdom. In the book of revelations the Bible talks of animals with many eyes all over their bodies that surround and worship God. Also in Greek mythology, Argos Panoptes, also had eyes all over his body, and according to the stories when Argos was killed Hera placed his hundred eyes in the tail feathers of the peacock.

I strived to create the most beautiful thing that I have ever drawn in this piece and I believe I have succeeded in doing so.

Self Portrait (2008)

12.5 x 13

Graphite on Paper

\$399

This is a self portrait I made my first year of college, it was the first time I had drawn myself. It was an attempt to not only capture my image but to create the best drawing that I had made at that time. It was part of a very successful attempt to push my creativity further. I grew a lot during my college years artistically.

Mark Van Dyk is a Chicago-born artist who studied studio art at DePaul University in Chicago. He had a transformative experience while studying abroad in Rome and while there was greatly inspired artistically. Growing up with a Dutch father and a Haitian mother in the very diverse city of Evanston he received a very cultured upbringing and was exposed to many very different styles of art. He is a chameleon of an artist who often absorbs what he sees for inspiration and then changes his style purposely to create something that is unique and related.

Life Force Arts Manifesto

By Joan Forest Mage

- 1) We call for a community of artists and audiences to boldly acknowledge, explore and activate The Spiritual Power of Art.
- 2) The Spiritual Power of Art affects EVERYONE. By

spiritual we mean the non-material, including the human spirit, universal energy and mystical experience. Every culture and human being ever known has been powerfully affected by the arts. It is a huge disadvantage to lack awareness of the spiritual dimension of the arts. Everyone can benefit by understanding and utilizing The Spiritual Power of Art, including what we call the Art Continuum (from perception to expression to art) to be aware of how they are affected by The Spiritual Power of Art, and to take charge of consciously activating this power for the highest good of themselves and the planet.

3) The Spiritual Power of Art is the elephant in the living room for modern people. All art is inherently spiritual. Yet, modern people, including many in the art world, shy away from discussing the spiritual dimension of both art and human experience.

4) The arts are 100,000 years of the technology of consciousness that help us process our perception, expression and communication. The arts already have methods in place for how to perceive, express and communicate anything we need to ourselves, our fellow humans or the larger world.

5) The arts affect people so deeply because they have perfected the craft of the 3 Modes of Perception and Expression: the senses of hearing, seeing, feeling (auditory, visual and kinesthetic).

6) The Art Continuum is a continuum of experience

that begins as basic perception (both of the internal self and the outer world) to expression, communication and interaction with both fellow humans and the larger community of all beings. Art, the craft of perception, expression and communication, is the highest development of this Continuum.

7) There are 4 Fields of human life that art greatly impacts: Communication, Learning, Healing and Community. There has been a tendency for these fields – education, psychology, cultural events – when they are the locus of art activity, to define the spiritual power of art for their own purposes. Vice versa, arts organizations tend to focus on the methodology of creating the art itself, though being aware (often on a subconscious level) of art’s powerful influence on learning, healing and community. We propose to stand that on its head: to ask, “What spiritual effect (human spirit, universal energy and mystical experience) does art have?”

8) In the modern world, people have looked to other fields such as psychology and education to define art’s power to affect consciousness. It is time for artists themselves to fully understand and claim the power inherent in their work, and to bring it fully into the 4 Fields (Communication, Learning, Healing and Community). The Art Continuum helps us understand the connection of basic experience, the 4 Fields and the arts, providing the missing link to allow the arts to truly blossom.

The spiritual power of the arts

- 3 Levels of spiritual power of art: human spirit, universal energy and mystical experience
- The Art Continuum – the 3 Perceptual Modes (auditory, visual, kinesthetic) that are the basis of human perception, communication, healing modalities, learning styles and cultural expression, and that at their highest level of development are called “the arts”
- 4 Fields of human life that the spiritual power of the arts impacts: Communication, Learning, Healing and Community
- 4 Types of spiritual art: Informational, Instructional, Transformational and Cultural

*What is the difference between play, ritual and art?
All of them are about the other world, but play is about inventing other worlds, ritual is about invoking other worlds, and art is about fabricating other worlds.” Ellen Dissanayake*

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Life Force Arts Foundation 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
Like us on Facebook
Follow us on Twitter

The Human Spirit Exhibit Catalog created by
Chris Bednash, Joan Forest Mage & Jaimie Shepardson

Catalog design by Maggie Baker

About Life Force Arts Foundation

The mission of **Life Force Arts Foundation (LFA)** is to activate the spiritual power of the visual, literary and performing arts in artists and audiences. We focus on the arts as a common ground of human expression, where artists of diverse spiritual traditions present artistically excellent exhibits, events and publications to awaken human potential, create spiritual transformation and connect audiences to the mystical dimension.

Life Force Arts Foundation was founded in 1988 as a non-profit, tax exempt 501 (c) 3 organization to present the modern dance and performance work of Joan Forest Mage. The organization grew to support the broader exploration of art and spirituality, opening Life Force Arts Center in Chicago in 2008.

Life Force Arts Center presents an average of 20 events each month, including performances, workshops, lectures and ceremonies: a total of over 1000 life-transforming events since we opened, with 500 presenters.

The Spiritual Power of Art: The Human Spirit is our 26th juried art exhibit as we begin our 7th year of operation. Our shows are based on themes related to the connection of art and spiritual practice, and run from 2 - 4 months each. Our Art Gallery has featured the work of over 130 artists from throughout the U.S. and the world, including Egypt, France, England, Ireland, Canada and South Africa.

