

The Story of a Collaboration

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April 2014

An e-mail from two artists I deeply respect - Pauline Braun and Audrey Lute

Dear Sarah,

You are invited to participate in a unique and challenging art project. ...take a leap of faith and join us in this adventure... try to maintain as much confidentiality as possible.

The following categories and adjectives have been selected for you by a random draw.

Technique - mixed media
Layout - based on a historic example
Text - collaborate with a writer or poet
Paper - pre-treated, crumpled , textured, pre-treated
Colour - primary
Image - none (i.e. no guidelines)

*Adjectives: Complicated or confusing, sculptural, surreal, opposing or contrasting,
Wild card - Design an enclosure, box or container as an integral component of your project*

*When you complete your project please email us a maximum of 3 images, one image with a full view of the work and one or two detail views. Use jpeg files with a resolution of 300 dpi, image size approximately 10 x 15 cm and file size no greater than 1 MB. Please title each image file as follows: artist's last name_first initial_title_full view **OR** detail. Please include your full name and email address.*

Deadline for images: no later than May 1, 2015

They listed their aims and this one made me smile:

· To encourage fellow artists to stretch themselves creatively and perhaps even to work outside their comfort zone. The wild card – an enclosure or box as an integral component.

This raises drops of perspiration on my brow. Quickly I discard shadow box and wicker comes to mind. Spruce roots perhaps. This is starting to feel like sculpture – sculptural is one of my project's adjectives - way out of my comfort zone already. But something about this project intrigues me. I send my response: **Count me in!**

Monday May 12, 2014

I've driven to and from Melfort Saskatchewan for Jury Selection (not selected) thinking about what I've got myself into.

Thoughts so far:

Technique -Mixed Media: So far leaning towards encaustic because it lends itself so well to using more than paint.

Layout -Based on a historic example: This is tricky. Haven't got there yet.

Text- Collaborate with a writer or poet: The person who comes to mind is San Francisco singer/songwriter Lori B who is also therapist, dancer, photographer.

Paper: Pre-treated (crumpled, dipped, textured, decorative, etc.): Reasonably easy – I can include it in encaustic. Will give that more thought.

Colour - Primary - Really? I can mix surely? No? The adjective “surreal” and primary colours? Humm. Have to ponder that one.

Image – None: I clarified that with Audrey – means *no guidance* when it comes to image. Whew!

Friday June 30, 2014

Buz has left for a Bridge Tournament in Prince Albert, and I find myself dealing with houseplants that have not fared well through the winter. One is a giant which reached 8 feet before I cut it down earlier this spring. It was hopelessly pot bound, and when I wrenched the mat of roots from the giant pot **THE PROJECT** came to mind and this picture of Lori when we spent time together in Mexico. She's looking coy in the roots of a ficus tree growing atop a wall. The swirl of liberated pot bound roots remind me that Lori's mother called her “*hurricane child*” and she has lead a whirlwind life on a downward spiral before quitting drugs and alcohol..

Summer 2014

Saw Leo George Trevor born, the completion of my twenty-year circumnavigation of Amisk Lake, a Bridge Tournament with twelve players staying with us, the cabin filled continuously until the end of September when we attend a big family event in Ontario. I can now visualize imbedded inside the swirl of hurricane roots. I'm going to have to learn layering in Photoshop. Buz found a bird's nest to show the grandchildren, and I like the idea of incorporating a nest in the image. Perhaps Lori is reaching toward this nest.

Monday October 6, 2014

As I clean up the yard for winter I find those pot bound roots. Their fine filigree of rootlets have rotted away but I like what I see...

... now more of nest than hurricane. Nest – place of calm and safety where a young bird can grow from the potential of its egg to fledgeling and finally full glorious flight. Yet the hurricane signifies the essence of unpredictability and destruction. THE PROJECT adjectives *opposing or contrasting* is starting to apply.

The next image sets me looking for a photo I took in Lori's Bernal Hill home: She found this hummingbird dead and laid it in a nest of petals. The day I saw this she received a letter from Fred who endures an endless prison sentence. She told me some of his story, but what stays in my mind is her concern for him. Four years later in June 2013 she visited him in prison in Colorado and wrote this:

*the courage of truth
it begins with saying just what is seen: profound hardship.
deprivation that breeds a kind of hunger which cannot be satisfied.
a gnawing desperation that erodes all thought beyond the present which
looms utterly insatiable as: I WANT. I NEED. I CANNOT HAVE. GODDAMNIT.*

*the sense of deficiency that attends this deprivation stinks like rotting food.
well-dressed within the clean and pressed greens of the visiting room, it is
nevertheless palpable, present, a kind of subterranean broken heartedness that
erupts, volcanic or subtle, into tears, pleading, apologies, over the course of the
hours.*

*what is burnt on the retina:
4 o'clock, one man in green left sitting at every single table, an empty chair
recently vacated, an army of hurt faces looking toward the line of visitors now
queued at the exit, some brave waving, before the heavy door will slide open to
spit these friends and loved ones back out into the everyday world, made suddenly
surreal by this slice of incarceration. only one small boy, free from standard
social strictures, yells
"Bye y'all! Love you!"
singing voice of the silenced
thoughts from every parted pair.
lonely men pinned to lonely tables.
and when we have gone, when we, the free from the outside, have boarded the
brightly colored bus emblazoned gaily with the words Fremont Correctional
Industries in italics, that will take us back to the heavily guarded entrance where
we've left our cars, our keys, our wallets, all worldly possessions save for the
clothing on our backs (vetted and approved - nothing tight or revealing, nothing
green or orange, no hoodies, no jewelry and an authorized ID, they, the
convicted, are led back into confinement by their uniformed keepers to face
another dreary stretch of deeply unforgiving time.*

Tuesday September 30, 2014

An update on THE PROJECT from Pauline and Audrey:

Writing! I know that some of you are keeping notes or journals about your project progress. If you haven't already done so, maybe you would like to start a journal for

yourself. It will make some interesting reading for you down the road. This might be a good time to mention that when it comes time to start preparing your images for "the book" we may ask you to write a few lines about your project. More about that later Your own notes and journals would be an invaluable reference for you.

They also say that anyone who has finished their project should send images ASAP.
OMG Have barely begun!

Friday October 10, 2014

This is the third day of Indian Summer and I have just got back from having a full body bone scan in Saskatoon – done because of hip pain. So much of the experience was pleasant and this quasi verse of mine came from the spirit that imbued it:

*Though winter lurks, ready to devour
this third Indian Summer day is a reprieve.
Sweet as wine it is to live
within the moment
before the world is utterly changed.*

Following an afternoon at NorVA I check e-mails and websites where appears this post from Lori:

*Andrew has re-positioned the hummingbird feeder from the living room window (where i NEVER am) to a back window in my office. I am now sitting about 2 feet from the MOST delightful ruby-throated creature whose wings operate at the speed of light, an astonishing force of nature, **this tiny jewel being!** (This is how Lori sees each individual - those she works with at Narcotics Anonymous)*

Just got granted a phone interview for another job, this one at a school that operates INSIDE the county jail! very progressive/radical program, first in the country and pioneered by amazing people, it's been going for some time, called Five Keys Charter School. i'm excited and terrified!

Tuesday October 14, 2014

Another post from Lori:

Had an hour and a half preliminary interview with the director of Special Ed at Five Keys Charter School. It was VERY stimulating. I liked the woman a lot (she was smart, had a sense of humor, listened well and asked great questions) and SHE'S BRINGING ME IN FOR A REAL, LIVE FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW next week. the job sounds wonderfully challenging, working with 17 to 22 year olds, supporting their educational goals. It's all very short-term (their average client is "in school" for 40 days... which means, mostly, that they are released from jail or disappear?) and the work is MUCH more on the coaching end of the spectrum (less "therapy", per se, and more interventions

to assist in establishing and moving toward behavioral changes). A good beginning - many things i still don't know and need to find out about but it's great to have a Next Opportunity...

October 15, 2014

I take another look at the roots. Seems this is the final day of Indian Summer and Hurricane Fay and Hurricane Gonzales are causing tension out east. I want to find the bird nest Buz rescued but I cannot find it.

The next morning I wake with the image of Lori reaching to place an egg in a nest as the hurricane swirls around her. Her purposefulness is absolute. I see pieces of song and poems in the twisting roots which have torn from their footing however there is nothing unsteady about the image of the woman. She is sculptural, balanced and fully aware of what is around her she focuses on her task to save a life with all its latent possibilities.

October 16, 2014

A group-directed e-mail from Lori:

On this final day of my 50s, I am writing to ask for a gift that I will be able to carry with me over the threshold into my next Large and Preposterous and Unpredictable Decade.

Many of you know I have been Job-Hunting: something rather new for me! I had a wonderful phone interview on tuesday and the woman said: "USE ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF." My God. What a CHALLENGE – maybe for anyone, but especially for such an eclectic accumulator and multi-partite personality as myself! hard-pressed, I said: "EAGER!" and then I added: "DEEP..."

I awoke this morning thinking about ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS and APPRECIATIONS, and about the power of ARTICULATING WHAT IS. I am blessed to know that you all love me and I am beyond grateful and constantly honored to be held in your hearts and on the receiving end of your care.

What I am wanting now is some simple (or complicated - your choice...) articulation of what parts of me you value. This need not be exhaustive (and I hope it is not exhausting!) but merely a way to frame the presents I am wanting to carry into 60. It can be a word or string of words. a sentence or sentences. a poem. a story. pithy or rambling. Again, your choice: form is not the important part.

I am a great believer, I think you all know me well, in being direct about what it is I want (or trying my damndest, at any rate). Thank you for indulging me in whatever way you choose. (no absolute deadlines - if your salute doesn't arrive on 10.17, let it come when it can and, of course, if this is NOT something you feel to do, by all means PASS)

Here is my response:

I have to tell you indeed you will have to wait to have your BIG 60 gift. I'm working on an encaustic that is in the very beginning stages. It will be yours- and it is you trying to get a blue egg back in a birds' nest while a whirlwind spins around you. Why it came to me I don't know but there has to be music and words from your songs spinning in the vortex. Perhaps it was inspired by Fred and this potential job. Whatever it is the metaphor seems to say what I think of as the essential YOU.

Sunday October 19, 2014

Lori is helping me locate photos and reminds me of one used for an album cover of her curled up in a white fabric nest. I'm troubled by the container requirement of my project, as I'm sold on encaustic and photo imaging. I've selected my board. The egg-like oval is perfect. But the WILD CARD says *design an enclosure, box, or container as an integral component of your project.* **Perhaps the egg shaped ground fits this wild card?** Humm. I'm also required to use paper. What if I engulf the front of the board with narrow strips of a firm paper, emulating but a lighter tone to the roots.. but from Dean Bauch I've learned about attached photographic paper to board and applying encaustic - **there's the paper.** But what about "confusing, chaotic" – what were the adjectives?

An e-mail this afternoon titled BINGO! and this..
...with these words:

*this is the Me that Hatched from the Tiny Blue Egg i put back in the Nest?
following
dreaming
fantasizing
about how we heal our own selves back to wholeness*

I walk dogs. The fall smell, leafless trees and steel grey lake disappear as I see the image of Lori shape changing and evolving, hair becoming cloak, rising from the nest below – healing self the way of the Elder reaching to come to another's aid; tornado/hurricane roots becoming bars. Why? I don't even try to answer. Let it rest and become what it will.

Monday October 28, 2014

After a trip to Winnipeg where I spent lots of time with three-year old Tommy and the image for *The Project* now in my head, has the picture of Lori in the nest at its base and she rises out of it.

Another image keeps knocking at my consciousness. From my childhood this Christian image called Light of the world:

Though I keep pushing it away it returns. From Wikipedia:“*The Light of the World* (1851-3) is painting by William Holmen Hunt representing the figure of preparing to knock on an overgrown and long-unopened door, Illustrating Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me". According to Hunt: The door in the painting has no handle, and can therefore be opened only from the inside.

This is much the same as therapy. The offer of healing is made but only if a door opens. How will this meld with THE PROJECT? I have no idea but it does speak to **Layout: Based on a historic example** and the similarity is the oval shape the light creates.

October 30, 2014

The picture above arrived today with this e-mail from Lori

I am wanting to paste this Remedios Varo image directly underneath your Light of the World. This is MY LIGHT OF THE WORLD, or sometimes I think it is a painting of ME LIGHTING THE WORLD. (The Call - Remedios Varo) Do you know her work? Did I share her book while you were here? A MOST remarkable creature, this Varo woman. extraordinary things filled her head.

How comfortable I am with this picture - Hunt's fits the Victorian mind-set, Varo's fits now. How great is collaboration!

LORI - October 30, 2014

The varo painting above is named The Call / La Llamada

(This unique and sacred creature was born in Spain in 1908. Remedios always struggled to combine the mythic with the scientific, the sacred with the profane. In Europe she was influenced by the surrealist movement and the metaphysics studies, by ancient studies and literature, but also by physics, mathematics, engineering, biology and psychoanalysis.)

After I noticed the NEST book in my entryway (it is funny to be “noticing” things in my own home - things I have chosen to display, placed intentionally, but suddenly I am using Other Eyes. eyes that have you inside them, perhaps? yes, that is true, you are a little bit in my eyes now....), **I then noticed, in the guestroom, a nest my grandmother had collected before I was born** that hung above a double doorway at the lake cottage. and it is sitting beside a tarahumara basket i brought back from our copper canyon adventure.

Nest 4

Inside the nest is a sea urchin's shell - so egg-like? And inside the basket are baskety-like things I found washed up on the pacific shore, things I think grew out of the ground but i'm not sure and I want you to see them.

BULB 1

I hope you can see the intricacy, the delicacy, the absolute WEAVING of these things that nobody, no mortal, has actually woven...the tendrils are like the vines, like my hair, and now, like our consciousnesses, and unconsciousnesses, interlacing in ways most unpredictable.

Sarah here:

This is speaking volumes as I think of connecting Lori in the nest with the elder healer attempting to return the egg to its nest. May I use these photos. The one of your grandmother's formation fits the whirlwind/hurricane perfectly. I know these images are going to develop a life of their own - by no means too much. This feels the best of collaboration.

Had an e-mail from Audrey and Pauline today:

Pauline is starting to shape the book and its layout. We are looking at different ways to display your work in "the book" and on the "website". We want to ensure each piece is featured in the best way possible. How exciting!

=====

Lori here: There is something akin to DREAMING in this process, in the art-making process in general, yes, but maybe something more, here, in the shared process. i am trying to shimmying up next to it, to the experience which is maybe too new to name.

it is a kind of like thinking but more fuzzy, soft-focus, like allowing a MOTE to FLOAT through the vision without trying to track and identify, without attempting to pin or name.

i am typing right here on this shared doc and i am wondering if you could SEE ME TYPING looking at the doc right now. like a wejee board, could you see the letters appear, as if by magic, sent from the beyond which is really just a few thousand miles away, from brain, through the flying fingers and keyboard onto this previously whitespace and then VOILA it is suddenly dense with alphabet and you are reading my mind.

it is like that. We are each other's crystal balls.

Sarah Thursday November 6: Fuzzy soft focus YES and the alchemist's pot from which comes dreams - I was in a maelstrom of confused thoughts last night after hearing Wake up and reading your e-mail.

TIME TO HEAL THESE TEARS

wake up

do you remember me?

i'm who

you dreamed you would be

back before the smoke

swallowed your hope

stand up

step into the sun

make amends

for the harm you've done

back when all the smoke

swallowed all your hope

(chorus) now i'm here

yeah we lost a couple years

time to heal these tears

(bridge)

an endless winter

in the darkness, mostly dread

the angry voices

shouting in your head

then shame surrenders

and there's no place left to hide

that's when you hear it

the whispering inside

it says:

rise up

test these wings

soar above

the field of broken things

clouds of smoke have cleared

hope has reappeared

(chorus) now i'm here

yeah we lost a couple years

time to heal these tears

time to heal, time to heal,

it's time to heal, it's time to heal these tears.

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Have to say it was not a pleasant feeling - stirred up, impending storm, unsettled - you get the picture. I tried some play with Photoshop and was annoyed when the root image I wanted to stretch horizontally went vertical on me looking more like a rough-spun fabric. Then I became obsessed with what I've labeled Bulb 1 from your Tarahumara basket, but I couldn't move this or the photo of your Grandmother's nest.

Of course sleep settled and now I awoke seeing Bulb 1 rising from behind Lori in nest, transforming into a homespun robe (I'd thought ROYAL earlier!) with the nest overriding the initial roots-as-hurricane.

Still in a state of fluidity I'm anticipating Photoshop play will allow this to jell. Could you send your Grandmother's nest and Bulb 1 in an e-mail? Can't seem to paste what you have here into Photoshop. This process continues to amaze.

Thurs. November 6

Lori here: I am VERY interested in what impending storm got stirred in you after listening to the song. VERY. INTERESTED. perhaps you'd be willing to do a very short free-association, or maybe you just know, already, what got unsettled? Even if there is a vague image, i would appreciate the transmission and; i know this may be WAY outside the box (the nest?) but I am wondering about including SOUND in the final piece. if and how and maybe? i am imagining music WHISPERED, like sound is WOVEN into the NEST. or SPILLING out of the nest. Of course, i imagine whispering a lot. For years I have imagined a website that begins in BLACK with whispering, whispered sounds, not even language, and there ensues an accumulation of both light and sound, very very very gradual so it's almost undetectable (although 21st century humans need to be assured that SOMETHING is COMING so it would, in fact, NEED to be detectable. just almost not). like a black and white photograph developing in an old chemical bath and, at the same time, like the invention/evolution of language. Ambitious in any medium, perhaps. but worth dreaming. Always worth dreaming.

Sarah: I knew the moment I woke what had happened. It was the process I've experienced whenever a major piece grows outside its original parameters or changes direction. Whatever part of the brain is in the production line goes into recalibration, who knows? It could involve ego resisting a pet concept. What I do know, and magically forget, is this loss of energy and stormy brain always precedes a break-through, a move up a level.

The creative process is no cakewalk. No one knows how the brain works in this regard but I wonder if killing the pain with one's drug of choice might be a chosen antidote. I don't need modesty to acknowledge my creative genius pales beside the likes of Robin Williams and cannot imagine what his idea generating re-calibration felt like.

The scarcely audible whisper you describe. Wow. Sound is a natural addition and remember you can do as you wish when this piece is in your possession. Put it on your website - I'd be proud! Just hope I do justice to the subject! Initially several images are going in a book - any other form of show hasn't been thought of.

Audrey to this point!

nov 8 lori B:

fat moon, rising pearl.
fecund, egg-round perfection,
bound for heaven's nest.

suddenly, like Maslow's hammer,
when all you have is a nest,
everything looks like an egg...

the sky, swathed in leftover evening cloud,
a festoon of bunting, awaits her moon-ish egg,
which swims slowly, up, up, and up, into her inky arms....

Sarah: The moon image created by the words of **Time to heal these tears**, forms behind the figure, and then a sad e-mail from **Lori**:

*very demoralized monday
scraping along, bottom feeding, must begin looking for light
..and more the next day:
i was in a state quite beyond talk so i took myself out of the house, drove to the Castro,
had a walk, then went to a 12 step meeting and listened.
that was good. to be simply a human among my kind.
this going backwards is hard - most people do all the working and then they retire and do
the un-working.
i did all the un-working (though i did plenty of art-making), so much adventuring and
playing and dancing and singing
and now i want to do the working and am stymied.
but worse - i am feeling victimized
which doesnt serve me and is just a story -
one squinty spin on what is really happening here.*

Sarah:

Do highly creative people
feel emotional pain more intensely than others?
Do their brains run depressive ideas

an ever stronger negative loop
inventing the way their music/novels/images come?
Thoughts about the moon images that Lori's words evoked swirl with a resistance to change what are already strong metaphors, but the re-calibration continues on a low- key manageable level.

Then a blog post from writing friend Lauren Carter who is currently in a writing workshop with Eric Maisel who she quotes:

“the act of making art involves looking into the unknown, making choices we are often uncertain about, dwelling in chaos, and that produces anxiety.”

Anxiety? Is that what he calls
the crippling angst that hit me after hearing Lori's song?
That required a pharmacopoeia
for the likes of Robin Williams, Freddie Mercury, Janis Joplin
the legion of creative giants the world has lost?
If it is, perhaps we should REALLY examine it.
Not just pass it off as
“what happens when art is brewing .”
Was this what hamstrung Lori's songwriting after becoming sober?
anxiety of quite a different order to the non-creative kind.
painful hyper-tense anxiety that only marijuana could dissolve?
Without whose smoke
songwriter's voice is silenced?
Maisel's key is: “learning how to create while at the same time
learning to manage the anxiety that arises,” sounds straight forward,
but first we have to examine-
pull apart and name -
this anxiety,
because “managing” anxiety of this calibre
can too quickly be doused
by food/alcohol/sex/drugs/

When forwarding Lauren's blog to Lori I added this:
I'm getting close to the painting / hands on stage
with the egg project
though something more is stirring
something that wants to capture
what you've been through.
I've written through it
and have a sense I want
DISCERNABLE

From Lori:

can we plan a CHAT???

the sensation of contact through the google doc is something of a tease.

after i sent the SONG, and you had a DIFFICULT REACTION and i really wanted to know something about that.

as far as i understand now, the reaction got writ off to: that's what happens when art is brewing.

all this to say:

a chat would be wonderful at some point.

Sarah: How easily we can be misunderstood.

What did my "all in caps" indicate?

The difficulty in expressing

in my image

this INTENSE CREATIVE ANXIETY

in a way that can be

COMPREHENDED

by the viewer.

It isn't enough to know

I have to show

in a discernible way

just how complex it is to create

while at the same time managing the anxiety that arises

how to express

my sense of urgency/importance/impotence?

would CAPS do it?

lori LOBBING back:

nov sixteen

you know i am a GREAT believer in using ALPHABET as GRAPHIC.

grammar itself has next to no claims on me.

that said, i DO wish to be understood, i DO wish to effect communication.

in fact, "wish" is too measley a word. "communication" may be too measley too.

EXPRESSION is the thing, is it not?

and you wish to "show

in a discernible way

just how complex it is to create

while at the same time managing the anxiety that arises"

suddenly, i see myself LOOKING BACK DOWN AT THE GROUND, down at the earth,

as i reach to put the egg in the nest, like there is a COST,

a price to pay

sarah speaks about listening to the song and experiencing something
“painful, a complete loss of energy... a rush of anxious impending storm stuff
which was exhausting” and she woke up the next morning and something about the piece
had changed.

this kind of documentation of the process fascinates.

Sarah checking in: This documentation is fascinating because the anxiety would have
passed without examination otherwise.

I had said I'd post the results of photoshop exploration and then decided it would be
a solidification of what is not.

Though I will print soon,
i need to feel it is in a state of flux.

Printing didn't happen how I expected but then Buz reminded me: our friend who is Lion
in Wizard of Oz has a drafting printer and he always prints posters for all the shows.

(How had I not thought of him???)

He's away until Monday but has the matt paper and will do the printing ASAP! I can
already see where I want to apply paint.

Lori Back to Sarah, nov 20:

your words are somewhat mysterious but who am i?
merely the Keeper of the Holy Chickens.
matt(e) paper (i have LOTS and BIG!)!
apply paint? leaving that to you, oh lead coLABorATOR

because of all the MOON TALK,
i uptook two songs that have long lain dormant.
one is called MAN ON THE MOON and never got finished but has enough beauty and
umph to have stuck around for years.
the other is called DANGEROUSLY BLUE and was an early song (of later iteration -
meaning, not a teenaged song but an early song from adult-period-return-to-writing...)
that never received any public showings.

they occupy the same MINOR KEY and THEME ZONE - both about unhappy
relationships.

MAN ON THE MOON is about someone whose love object is far away and never gets
truly intimate

(You had me hoping
you could spin
just a little bit
closer

to me
but now i see
you're the Man on the Moon
i won't be waiting up for you)

DANGEROUSLY BLUE is about a suicide. not ABOUT really. it's ABOUT an abusive relationship but the narrator, the singer, the I, is taking her life at the end of the song (Guess i'll lay my body down now, let the little pills work, there's not too much more to say, by the time you boot up and you read these words i've written, i will be so far away...)

the other night, after our talk, i was messing around on the guitar (which, itself, is SUCH a WILDLY CREATIVE thing for me to do and so uncommon these last years) and the two songs SUDDENLY and HAPPILY COMMIXED (if you can use the word HAPPILY and SUICIDE in the same breath).

i have some questions about having a suicide in a song.
like: is it morally responsible?
of course, i have a rape in a song and that is morally reprehensible.
but it happens. every day. every hour. every minute goddamit.
so, therefore, does suicide.
maybe ART that includes HARD THINGS creates a SPACE FOR HARD CONVERSATIONS or HARD CONSIDERATIONS? maybe that is actually moral responsibility.
i am not glorifying suicide. just including it in the human condition.
(and, ps - do NOT worry. it is NOT in my considerations. plus i have never been in an abusive relationship. i have stuck around in relationships where i was not getting a lot of nourishment - but not long!)

my used copy of the writing book arrived in a box today.
i will open eagerly and look for ANXIETY inside.

also maybe i will record the new commixed songs.
love you saroyan.
xo

=====
me again, **november 24**

the word
INDWELLING

came up the other day
and has been staying. and staying. and staying.

Sarah here:

Is this positive? This indwelling?
More on the ideas surrounding this.

...and my thoughts on rape and suicide in song.
Suicide in song troubles in the same way
as one about
the perpetrator contemplating the next rape.

lori b here:

indwelling

is SO positive. it seems to be the resonant homemaking instinct of the essence that animates me, something like the verb that describes when the deepest me is at home inside myself.

so it is neither flitting about in the world, working hard to impress, engage, manifest in a kind of manic Other Directedness nor is it stuck so deep inside that there is a density that blocks light.

INDWELLING seems to be a permeable state,
a very sweet sensation i am witnessing.

S: How fitting this centeredness of being.

...this all happening while I came here to speak of serendip.

Photoshop came along well but efforts to print the image were thwarted
and plus the oval board I planned for the project niggled at me.

JUST 21 inches high - too small for something strong, so I've investigated getting more of the larger ovals but none will be available before spring.

During the week I came across two small circular boards while cleaning up the home studio area and these I offered to artist friend Lois who was delighted. Surprise! She had a large oval she didn't want which she swapped with me. 32 inches high - perfect!

Tom who was Lion in Oz, has a drafting printer with all the photographic paper but couldn't print the piece before Oz was over.

Meanwhile in Friday I could try a first encaustic on a small photograph with excellent results. Last night I gave Tom the thumb drive and today he planned to get to work.

Also Patti, a photographer I'm helping with encaustic is going to Winnipeg next week.
What could she pick up for me from the art store? Metallic oil paints - silver, copper, gold
- I know metallics will come in somewhere before this project is complete.

Thus a piece comes together...

me, Lori B (12.1.2014):

(how'd i get so BIG and BOLD? i'm just the Holy Chicken Wrangler here...)

glad to hear of all the inchings forward - technical, creative, spiritual, material.
and

FLASHED this morning on the notion of
"MAKING AN IMPRESSION"

fascinating expression

there's the professional or social meaning, walking into a meeting or a party with an
intention

then there is a dental impression which is more concrete (can you just FEEL that choking
GOO in your mouth?? did you ever GET a dental impression??)

when i first came to california in the 90s (i'd been here in the 70s also) and drove north
over the golden gate bridge, up into sonoma, those ROLLING BROWN HILLS, so like
ANIMAL SKIN, like the softest suede, affected me strongly.

i told my companion:

IF YOU OPEN MY CHEST, THOSE HILLS ARE INSIDE ME.

THIS IS MY TOPOGRAPHY.

i explained my theory of EMOTIONAL TOPOGRAPHY -

that everyone has SHAPES inside that get matched by other shapes - for instance
landscapes, in the case at hand

the Sonoma landscape was like a KEY that FIT perfectly into the SHAPE of my inner
chest.

and now, oddly, it feels like i am UNZIPPED and you are making
AN IMPRESSION of SOMETHING INSIDE ME.

like what you are making already exists inside some dimension of my being
and you are "translating" it into tangible material (encaustic et al).

DOES THIS MAKE ANY SENSE TO YOU?

if not, i promise to further elucidate

Sarah here: Making sense, yes!

Reminding me of a conversation with Dean about his portraits

which are in the process of breaking down into pixels

- like an overused video.

I hope my encaustics do something similar

the wax providing a veil,
a mystic sense of one not seeing all there is.
The reason being: a portrait cannot show all - it is a glimpse, an instant
but unlike the conventional realist portrait
which looks complete
(which is almost an arrogance on the part of the artist -
what I have made **is** the person)

Dean and I want our pictures to say
this is what I see, but there is so much more I cannot know
you think this is beauty?
you see the tip of the iceberg

love the landscape within
shapes made me think (lightly) of Shel Silverstein:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mT0wKeJQvGk&feature=player_embedded

Lorib here again, 12.1.14
**before you go greasing your knees
and fleecing your bees..**
this little video slays me
for more reasons than i can possibly enumerate.
but i will try.
later.

later it is:
i have NEVER been one to imagine there is ONE for ME.
just ONE.
it has always struck me as a vaguely foolish concept, that i will find The One who will
Make Me Whole. maybe i find it foolish only because i am not made that way.
and because so many who crave The One seem to fall to pieces.
i have been beyond fortunate to experience a multitude of loves in my life.
but
and
on the other hand,
the idea of WHOLENESS is deeply appealing.
but it is a FLEXIBLE WHOLENESS, not a fixed wholeness.
a matter of INCLUDING whatever IS
rather than a matter of perfection that gets glued down.

i am rambling.
time to leave the alphabetic lexicon
and dive into a luscious pond of hummingbird visuals

LO, here - december three

entranced, a bit, by image pasted below. to add to puddle. xo

Sarah here: A beautiful face, magical hair but wings? Hair melting into a suggestion of wings - that could work for me; the current ones , no. The mask OTOH...

Yes! “many who crave The One seem to fall to pieces” - how I agree. I thought that way in my youth to my peril - a fairytale fantasy.

Sarah Friday: I felt disappointed when I mounted the picture Tom printed for me, on the board. The photographic paper was thinner than one is used to and it buckled, even though I used matt medium on the board and not directly on the paper. I worked centre out smoothing as I went then turned it face down and weighted everything with heavy books.

I took a peak last night and it was still damp and still blistered BUT this morning -it had **dried as flat as I could wish.**

Plus this afternoon when I applied the first thin layer of encaustic medium it took it like a dream. I’ve brought the picture and oil paints home with me. Sunday is the first possible day to start and I am feeling optimistic. This morning the anxiety that Eric spoke about was rumbling away but this afternoon’s painting on a large landscape was magical - I can do this!

LORI HERE: december sixth twenty fourteen

sounds like you are going GREAT GUNS (or the non-military equivalent!).
moon on snow from your lagoon post is VERY appealing to this light-hound.
pearl on pearl, the outrageous shine of subtle- yes indeedy.

SARAH - because i am FAR from the locus of doing, and the process sounds VERY intriguing to a person like me, i am wondering: WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO DOCUMENT STEP-BY-STEP? just journal style? not for publication or general sharing but just for me, your holy chicken muse, masked with red hair winging out behind?

i already wish i could SEE the difference between “damp and still blistered” - “dried flat as (one) could wish” - plus the taking of the encaustic “like a dream”.

IF it’s possible and does not add TOO much anxiety of the Wrong Kind, i’d love to share in that level of process.

(quickly checking: would I be willing to let you hear stages of my writing of a song?

VERY NAKED indeed. may not be possible! may not be useful or desirable! just a thought...)

Sarah at the keys: The process is SLOW dear one - I painted and love how it is developing but...

oil paint dries slowly and I don't want shifting to happen when I apply the next layer of encaustic medium. Patience when so badly I want development.

As to sharing the process - I will take my camera tomorrow and have Patti take some close-up pics as I work. I'm hoping she will have some metallic paint because the lettering of the song should have some highlights - hair too. A weekend ahead with lots happening. Sunday at NorVA will be the whole encaustic and printing groups.

Sarah continuing: Well Patti has 'flu and on this snowy day (Sunday) the only people to show up for the Printmaking/Encaustic group fun was initially Karen and I and then Fran Cooper who drove in from The Pas.

How good it was to work on the piece
and get it to a point
where I can leave it to dry thoroughly
during the winter months
while I'm away in Mexico
where I can buy gold oil paint
(ordering in winter can bring a frozen offering)
because the hair needs it,
as does the upper nest
and lettering enhancement.
I'll layer encaustic first
so I can see where more
corrections need attention
there are place
that I might have fixed in Photo Shop
for now - here it is:

lorelei - ielerol

Sarah here: *Lorelei is the name of a rock at the narrowest point of the Rhine River in Germany. This picture shows words by Heine and painting by Turner. Lorelei is also the name of a feminine water spirit, similar to [mermaids or Rhine maidens](#), associated with this rock in popular folklore and in works of music, art and literature.*

The name comes from the old German words [lureln](#), [Rhine](#) dialect for "murmuring", and the [Celtic word](#) [ley](#) "rock"...The heavy currents, and a small waterfall in the area (still

visible in the early 19th century) created a murmuring sound, and this combined with the special echo the rock produces to act as a sort of amplifier, giving the rock its name.

This ties in so beautifully with the whispering Lori envisioned.

The above information comes from Wikipedia which adds more about the legend of the destructive long-haired siren - the oldest of woman-blaming myths harking back to Odysseus. The opposite is expressed in my encaustic - destruction replaced with healing to full potential as a shining jewel being.

=====

LORI HERE:

ahhhh,

did you get to LORELEI through my Hurricane Child song or?????????

i THINK you know (will remind) that my FATHER called me LORELEI.

did i shipwreck him? perhaps.

but this piece RECLAIMS the beauty SO beautifully.

i love this MIRROR you've made = **lorelei - ielerol**

thus named, aptly and appropriately on the anniversary of my DIVORCE (shipwrecked a husband? perhaps but methinks we done it together...).

MURMURING suits every aspect

very much a part of healing and also of CREATION somehow

and also MAGIC-MAKING, like INCANTATION.

and,

that said, i will now venture ONE SPECIFIC VISUAL COMMENT/FEEDBACK.

IF it fits with your vision at all, i would see the words MUCH less definite, less "defined", more figmentary, MURMURED if you will, tempered, and PERHAPS this is what encaustic will do? layer upon, haze, and mute the absolutes?

IF this does not fit with your vision, onward! you lead, i look.

(hope it is okay for me to remark on the visual like this, lightly. and i walk VERY softly here as i know how DELICATE the process is in every aspect of its unfolding...)

Sarah here: This pleases me - while the moon shape I'd like to define more, the words murmured and muted by the encaustic medium will work absolutely.

Somehow I felt you wouldn't want your words indistinct - presumptions unconscious but there none-the-less.

So I'm hugely grateful you spoke up. Henceforth please ignore all previous thoughts from me on this score: don't hold back where your intuition directes.

LORI HERE / december 19

reLieved (that there is nothing PRICKLY here in my reactions/reacting) and
ExCiTeD (that there is receptivity, here, to my inTOOitions)!

something about this piece includes/approaches an examination of the intersection of
Inner life and Outer life, something about bridges perhaps? every kind - thought bridges,
spirit bridges, creative bridges, suspension bridges, time bridges, galaxy bridges,
archetypals bridges, friendship bridges.

you and i have crossed this collaboration frontier holding hands.
and maybe our hands are a bridge? a Hand-Mind-Heart bridge.

that my words would be “coming in” is correct - like radio waves being tuned, at first
indistinct or coming from SO far away that they are whispered/murmured/mumbled, the
words, raw alphabet, trying to shape themselves even as YOU, the Artist with the Hands,
are trying to SHAPE the PIECE.

yes, that i something i See/Hear/Feel.

this is a kind of Pre-synesthesia, the arrival of artistic impulse,
multi-dimensional, fragmentary, tickling us from/through various senses...

SARAH HERE: Something is stirring - hands, bridges methinks another collaboration is
composting. Let's see what strong images speak in the next while.

Lori posts Friday january 30 2015

at 3 oclock yesterday afternoon, a woman named Donna **offered me a job with SF
Unified School District!!!!!!**

it is temporary, to cover a maternity leave through the end of the school year but there is
every likelihood

i'll be offered a tenured position at another school for next year (tenure is granted after
only 2 years).

the job is WELLNESS COORDINATOR at SF International High School which opened
in 2009 to serve

SF's burgeoning IMMIGRANT population. information about the school below and i
have yet to speak to the

out-going social worker or to HR at the District to find out the myriad of details that are
on my list.

i WILL begin as soon as they can get my fingerprints cleared by the FBI and the Dept of
Justice and i will

hit the ground running and learn as i go.

i am stunned, a little shell-shocked and STOKED beyond belief!

the reality will probably not set in until i've begun the hiring process in earnest but, suffice to say, this is a VERY VERY VERY GOOD OUTCOME after a VERY VERY VERY DIFFICULT PROCESS.

"SF International offers a unique program designed for recent immigrant students who have attended school in the United States for four years or less. SF International teachers are specially trained to offer extra support to help every student develop their academic English skills while they learn the content they need to graduate and be prepared for college.

Each grade level has only 100 students. Our team structure promotes personalization, growth, and success for our students. It also allows every student to be known well and supported to succeed. Learning goes beyond the walls of our school through community participation. All subjects teach English development through meaningful projects that keep students motivated and connected to their learning."

"**Wellness center** services include nursing, individual and group therapy, case management, connections to city services, and community resources. Our advisory program creates a tight and safe community that fosters relationships and a network of support between students, school staff, and families."

[http://www.sfusd.edu/en/schools/school- ... ional.html](http://www.sfusd.edu/en/schools/school-...ional.html)

This project has taken Lori from the start of her job search in 2014 to January 30, 2015