



NURTURED, BY JON KOLKIN
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND THE SHADES OF COMPASSION FOUNDATION

HEALING & THE ART OF COMPASSION

AND THE LACK THEREOF!

OCTOBER 9, 2021—SEPTEMBER 4, 2022



AMERICAN VISIONARY ART MUSEUM

**“I DON’T MUCH LIKE THE
NAME**

A M E R I C A .


**YOU CAN REARRANGE ITS
LETTERS TO SPELL,**

I A M R A C E .

**I MUCH PREFER U.S.,
MEANING ALL OF US, IN
UNITY AND IN STRENGTH.”**

-Gerald Hawkes

HEALING & THE ART OF COMPASSION



AND THE LACK THEREOF!

**'BE KIND WHENEVER POSSIBLE. IT IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE.
COMPASSION IS THE RADICALIZATION OF OUR TIME.'**

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

Welcome to an exhibition created especially for you! Chock full of the latest scientific research that clearly proves increasing our acts of compassion and loving kindness positively impacts our physical and mental health in significant, measurable ways; that altruistic volunteers live significantly longer than their peers; and that we human beings are actually hardwired to help, share, and care for one another—shedding light upon the dark old false assumption that we ever evolved through “survival of the fittest.”

In this truth embraced by wise teachers throughout the ages, both individuals and societies thrive best to the degree they mutually cooperate and aid one another.

Our goal is to make clear the case that economic, environmental, policing, schooling, medical, governmental, and immigration practices are all improved when first poured through the lens of compassion. Heck, everything is!

Unabashedly hopeful, **THE ART OF COMPASSION** theme was an inspired request by the current Dalai Lama. Our aim is to point a healing way forward beyond fear, violence, greed, bullying and the twisted need to feel superior to someone else—the malignant pantheon of anti-compassion forces that has always sought to divide and debase our common humanity. AD Williams beautifully championed this ideal, urging, **'IMAGINE WHAT 7 BILLION HUMANS COULD ACCOMPLISH IF WE ALL RESPECTED EACH OTHER.'**

After three decades as AVAM's founder, director, and primary curator, this show so full of healing and compassion, constitutes my final love song before my retirement.

With a heart full of gratitude to all my amazing fellow AVAM staff, our faithful fans, wise board directors, tireless volunteers, visionary artists, and our generous supporters, know that it is YOU, our beloved visitor, who makes everything we do so exquisitely worthwhile.

May we become Masters of Harmlessness and Practitioners of Unjustifiable Kindness, remembering as Ram Das observed, **'WE ARE ALL JUST WALKING EACH OTHER HOME.'**

Rebecca Alban Hoffberger
American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM)

HEALING & THE ART OF COMPASSION

AND THE LACK THEREOF!

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HEALING & THE ART OF COMPASSION

AND THE LACK THEREOF!

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- ANDREW BENINCASA
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- CHRIS ROBERTS ANTIEAU
- RICHARD C. SMITH
- KIM EDGAR SWADOS
- STAN WRIGHT

HEALING & THE ART OF COMPASSION

AND THE LACK THEREOF!



ANIMALIUM BY CHRIS ROBERTS-ANTIEAU

ESSAYS

DEFINING COMPASSION

COMPASSION, our exhibition's key title word, comes from the Latin root *pati*, meaning to suffer; *com* is its prefix meaning with. But unlike compassion's close cousin EMPATHY that likewise feels, or perceives, the suffering and emotions of another, compassion inspires yet a further action – one that tries to provide comfort to alleviate some measure of pain. Hence, compassion inherently implies an intended and positive effort to relieve, put to right, and TO HEAL.

When it comes to humanity's major religions, **COMPASSION** is universally viewed as a key or primary attribute of Divinity.

Most often, divine compassion is embodied via a feminine persona such as Catholicism's Mother Mary, Judaism's Cabalistic Shekinah, or the Buddhist Guan Yin or Kwan Yin – Chinese for “She who hears the cries of the world.”

Both the Hebrew and the Arabic respective words for divine compassion and mercy, *rechem* and *rahim*, have their linguistic roots in their word for the uniquely female organ – **WOMB** – all of humanity's first physical home.



Dr. James Doty, MD and His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

"For the last three decades, my job as a neurosurgeon has been to prevent death. Yet, the greatest wisdom that I have received is from those who are dying that have truly lived.

For the last decade and a half, my goal as a neuroscientist has been to understand what prevents people from truly living." **JAMES R. DOTY, M.D.**

10 FACTS ABOUT COMPASSION

1. Being compassionate is hardwired from birth.
2. Being compassionate is the survival strategy that has allowed our species to flourish.
3. Being compassionate results in increased blood flow to our reward and pleasure centers by the release of oxytocin and other neurotransmitters.
4. Being compassionate shifts us from stimulation of our stress response (the sympathetic nervous system) to one of openness and inclusion (the parasympathetic nervous system).
5. Being compassionate improves our health by improving cardiac function, lowering blood pressure, boosting the immune system, decreasing the production of inflammatory proteins, and decreasing the release of stress hormones.
6. Being compassionate increases the length of our telomeres (a part of our genes) which is associated with an increase in longevity.
7. Being compassionate has more benefits to one's health than being at one's ideal body weight or exercising (but you should still do both).
8. Being compassionate has a rippling effect and motivates others to be compassionate.
9. Being compassionate to oneself improves well-being and increases resilience.
10. Being compassionate is associated with increased happiness, well-being and purpose.



SACRED MIRROR BY MAURA HOLDEN.

WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?

Why do bad things happen to good people? Heck, most of us wonder why so many great things seem to happen to simply awful people!

Since the dawn of humanity, philosophers, theologians, and everyday people have debated, “Why do the good suffer?” William James wrote in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, “The fact that we can die, that we can be ill at all, is what perplexes us; the fact that we now for a moment live and are well is irrelevant to that perplexity.” It is exactly this fear that our lives are somehow capricious, subject to the whims of fate, or devoid of meaning, that scares us so. To remedy that fear, we humans have always turned to religion, philosophy, and to science, in search of a truth on which we can depend. Nietzsche wrote, “What does not kill me makes me stronger.” But that answer does not really satisfy when murder, freak accident, or catastrophic illness act to negate even the possibility of such a happy ending.

The first of the Buddha’s *Four Noble Truths* is the truth of suffering; the second is the truth of the cause of the suffering; the third is the truth of the end of suffering; the fourth is the truth of the path that leads to the end of suffering. Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche is a Tibetan monk who wisely elaborates on this teaching, stating, “There are four benefits to suffering: wisdom, resilience, compassion, and deep respect for reality.” Pastor Fritz Williams wrote, “Suffering and joy teach us, if we allow them, how to make the leap of empathy, which transports us into the soul and heart of another person. In those transparent moments, we know other people’s joys and sorrows, and we care about their concerns as if they were their own.” Rabbi Harold S. Kushner concluded, “Given the unfairness that strikes so many people in life, I would rather believe in a God of limited power and unlimited love and justice, rather than the other way around.”

Particularly perplexing for those among us who subscribe to a belief in an omnipresent, loving, and personal creator God, is this great added dilemma: “How can a compassionate, all-powerful God permit our suffering?” Actually, all sentient creatures, not just humans, experience suffering – be it through injury, illness, hunger, devourment, stress, or pain. If we can agree that there seems to be some great, thoughtful, intelligent design expressed throughout all creation – from the spin of planets down to the microspin of electrons – why was suffering ever hardwired into the life package in the first place?

My own personal guess as to why we still have such suffering is just this: Everything is a gift not of our design – our lives, bodies, and all the complex concert of sustaining functions of planet and self are gifts we mostly just take for granted. Even our capacity to perceive and debate life’s purpose is a gift of consciousness not of our own making. If suffering didn’t exist, we’d be like Barbie and Ken living in the Earth’s Barbie Dream House – all our needs met perfectly, never knowing want or hurt. This may sound idyllic at first, but without the challenges brought to our doorstep by suffering, our higher capacity to win its alleviation could never be won by our own efforts. In the great work to overcome suffering, our own or that of any other living being, we attain something far more magnificent than mere existence.

The great Sufi poet Rumi expressed this great practice of healing loving kindness, “I will soothe you and heal you, I will bring you roses. I too have been covered in thorns.” Both deaf and blind, the luminous Helen Keller, concluded,

**‘ALTHOUGH THE WORLD IS FULL OF SUFFERING,
IT IS ALSO FULL OF THE OVERCOMING OF IT.’**

CLASSIC CONTAGIONS PREVENTION

MASKS, HAND WASHING & QUARANTINE

During the 17th century, deadly Bubonic plague doctors intuitively took intelligent self-protective precautions. They wore bird-like leather and glass masks that covered and protected their eyes from coughed-up projectile droplets and perfumed the air they breathed with aromatic healing herbs, stuffed down into their mask beaks.

Plague doctors also carried long sticks to point to problem areas of infection in their patients, preventing the need to actually touch them, and to keep everyone else a safe distance away.

The word “quarantine” comes from the time of the Black Plague. Venice lawmakers required all visiting sailors first be confined to their ships for 40, or a “quaranta” of days, to prove themselves symptom-less. Only then were they granted permission to set foot in that magical city.

Perhaps the most infamous source of asymptomatic contagion was that of the lovely young Irish cook, Mary Mallon, AKA “Typhoid Mary.” Mary’s Mother had contracted Typhoid during her pregnancy. Absolutely symptom-less, Mary grew to be the picture of health, but outbreaks of the deadly illness were repeatedly traced to her employ as a cook for eight wealthy American families. Later, Mary would admit to not often washing her hands (germ theory was not yet popular or widely practiced for prevention) and Mary’s urine and stool samples tested positive for *typhi* bacteria. Arrested and quarantined on North Brother Island near Manhattan, an escape-prone Mary eventually lived for 23 years in continuous quarantine before her death at age 69.

Precautions against the spread of disease, the presence of which was confirmed by science when viruses and bacteria could be optically identified after breakthroughs in their magnification, remain today much the same first line for our best defense.

Until effective vaccines are developed and widely accepted, the primary means to prevent disease contagion – quarantine, masks, distancing, and hand washing – has changed little over the course of centuries.

ZOONOSIS

REVENGE OF THE BEASTS

Zoonotic diseases are infections—viruses, bacterium, parasites, fungi, prions—that have jumped ship from their original animal host to infect we humans. From there, they can then be readily transmitted, human to human.

In the case of the deadly 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic that caused the death of 50 million people worldwide, and likewise with the current global COVID 19 crisis (caused by a SARS-CoV-2 virus and its fast-evolving variants) the initiating infection source points to a winged creature, be it bat or bird, although rats, deer, snakes, turtles, cats, raccoons, foxes, and lots more animal kingdom dwellers can also host and broadcast human-transmissible infections, too.

As humanity continues to encroach on what was once strictly animal habitat, these kinds of zoonotic infections will increase, but so will our ability to recognize, analyze, and hopefully, evolve their cures and/or preventative vaccines.



ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE DOMINATORS, BY MAURA HOLDEN

WE HUMANS ARE MESSY

We humans are messy creatures and never more so than when we are sick or injured, and at our most vulnerable. That's when we become dependent on the grace of helpers to aid our recovery and survival.

When contagious illnesses cause us to vomit, sneeze, cough, or have diarrhea—all our secretions, even our blood and seminal fluids—can become agents to transmit our disease to others. It is the very poorest paid essential helpers—often wholly dependent on high-density public transportation and housing—who bear the greatest risk to both themselves and their families. These are the brave workers who keep clean our hospitals, change our linens, and scrub the bedpans, floors, and walls of human splatter. Without their essential high-risk care and diligence, healing and the safety of patients, medical staff, and visitors would be nigh impossible.

WE HUMANS ARE MESSY CONTINUED

Helpers, be they family, friends, good samaritans, first responders, or medical professionals, act as terrestrial angels. They deserve our support, respect, and to be cherished and championed.

*When I was a boy and I would see scary things
in the news, my mother would say to me,*

**'LOOK FOR THE HELPERS. YOU WILL ALWAYS
FIND PEOPLE WHO ARE HELPING.'** MR. FRED ROGERS

COMPASSION FOR ANIMALS AND CHILDREN

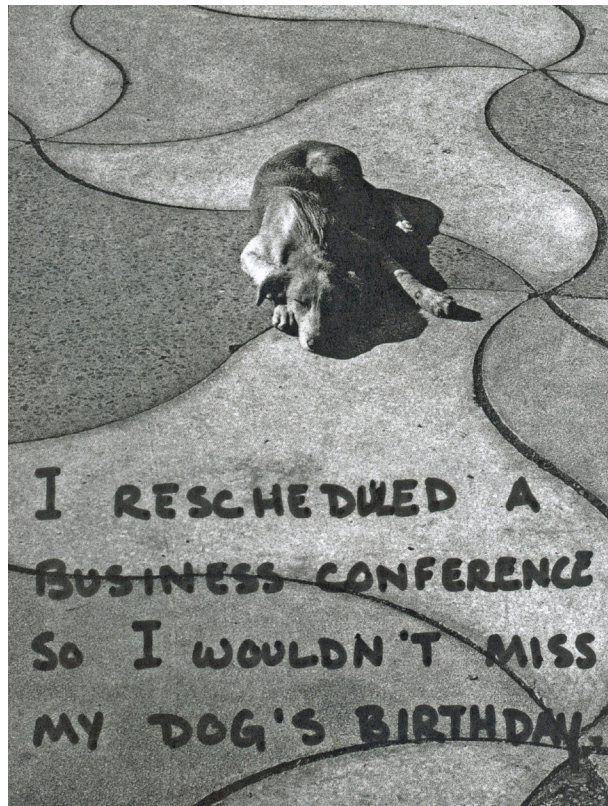
There is a sad but powerful direct link between those who neglect and abuse animals, and those who do harm to children. So much so, that many American states cross-train their animal and child protective service workers to look for and to recognize the presence of abuse outside their primary field.

In an effort to deepen the experience of patience and compassion within prison populations and to reduce recidivism, highly successful animal programs have proliferated that feature inmate care and training of dogs, cats, and even wild horses - giving inmates a personal healing experience of nurturing and bonding of their own. These inmates perform a great and much-needed service in giving back to the community trained, certified disability service animals for those among us most in need.

Humanitarian scientist, Alan Goldberg, PhD, has coordinated a worldwide commitment to halt the inhumane use of animals in medical research while supplying better non-animal research alternatives. A champion of animal, human, and farming/environmental best and humane practices, Goldberg has spent decades inspiring a better scientific understanding of how we humans, animals, and our one shared environment are inextricably linked. Care for one necessitates better care and greater wellbeing for all.

**'IF YOU HAVE MEN WHO WILL EXCLUDE ANY OF GOD'S CREATURES FROM THE SHELTER
OF THEIR PITY, YOU WILL HAVE MEN WHO WILL DEAL LIKEWISE WITH THEIR FELLOW MEN.'**

Saint Francis of Assisi



**I RESCHEDULED A
BUSINESS CONFERENCE
SO I WOULDN'T MISS
MY DOG'S BIRTHDAY.**

POSTSECRET SELECTION FROM
FRANK WARREN

HYSTER & HYSTERIA

WOMEN AND THEIR TREATMENT IN MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEMS

HYSTER: Prefix from the Greek *hyster* meaning womb or uterus

Hysteria was originally defined as a “neurotic condition peculiar to women,” inclined to fits of laughter, and caused by a dysfunction in their uterus.

From the Ancient Egyptian medical records of 1900 BCE to the final sunset of the pseudo medical term “wandering womb” included in the 1980 US “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,” the same false, crazy, and lingering misogynistic ideas that a flaw in a woman’s uterus was the root cause of women’s mental illness persisted.

Predatory husbands and over controlling fathers could legally declare their wives and daughters, “crazier than hell,” and off they would go committed to an asylum with little hope of release, and their husbands free to lay claim to all his wife’s monetary assets.

A brave young investigative journalist who went by the pen name, Nellie Bly, heard rumors of gross mistreatment and abuse of women at NY’s Blackwell Island Women’s Lunatic Asylum. Arranging with her editor at the New York World to go undercover, Bly feigned mental illness and got herself committed. Published in 1887, Bly’s resulting book *Ten Days in a Mad-House*, was hailed as a sensation and ushered in a wave of humane reforms. Of involuntary commitment Bly wrote, “Compare this with a criminal, who is given every chance to prove his innocence. Who would not rather be a murderer and take the chance for life than be declared insane, without hope of escape?”

Women experience a burden of increased mental health stressors, as compared to their male counterparts. Among them, they are:

- **MORE LIKELY TO BE PRIMARY CARETAKERS OF CHILDREN AND ELDERLY**
- **SUBJECT TO MORE FREQUENT AND SERIOUS HORMONAL FLUX, INCLUDING POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION**
- **MORE LIKELY TO LIVE IN POVERTY**
- **MORE LIKELY TO HAVE EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL AND/OR SEXUAL ABUSE**

Even 41-year old Britney Spears, despite being for decades a sufficiently reliable and high functioning performer to constitute her family’s primary source of income, earning millions upon millions, has still not been successful in her effort to regain her full adult independence due to her past history of mental illness.

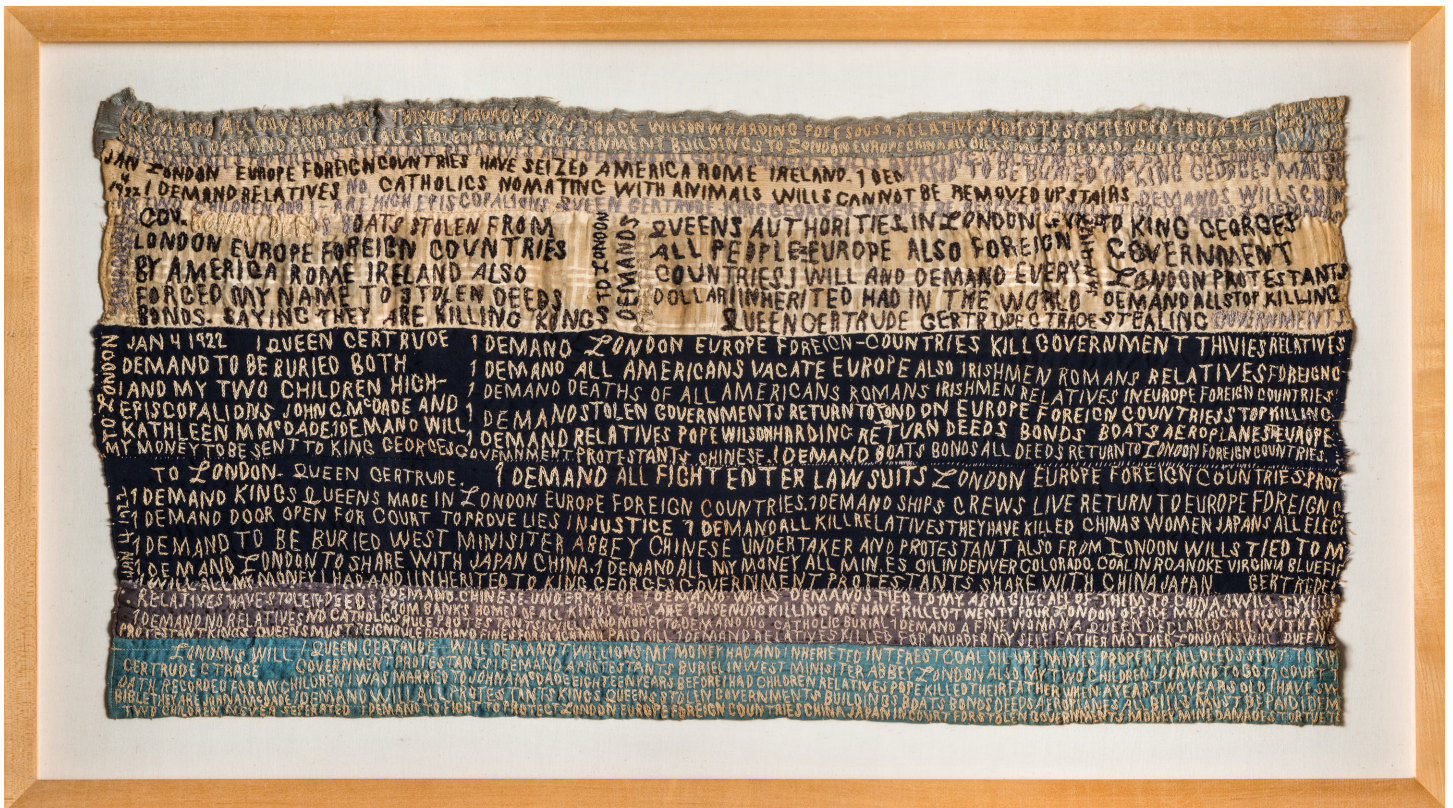
Nearly half of all adult Americans will experience mental illness at some time in their lives. Five percent of US adults over 18 experience a mental illness in any given year.

“WHAT MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS IS MORE SUNLIGHT, MORE CANDOR, MORE UNASHAMED CONVERSATION ABOUT ILLNESSES THAT AFFECT NOT ONLY INDIVIDUALS, BUT THEIR FAMILIES AS WELL.” *Glenn Close*

“IF YOU ARE BROKEN, YOU DO NOT HAVE TO STAY BROKEN.” *Selena Gomez*



UNTITLED BY ANONYMOUS



LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT BY ANONYMOUS

BALTIMORE'S TRUE STORY OF "MEDICAL CAMELOT"

& ITS TRULY VISIONARY CREATOR,
DR. GEORGE WHITTINGTON KENNARD (1855-1929)

In 1885, four years before the 1889 opening of Johns Hopkins Hospital, a brilliant African American physician and minister named Dr. George Kennard opened Christ's Institution Medico, Chirurgical and Theological College of Baltimore. From its start, Dr. Kennard's hospital served all in need and included a racially and religiously diverse medical and pharmaceutical staff. Kennard's institution maintained a reputation for high standards of excellence and inclusive community care. Originally located at 1006 Stirling Street, Kennard's hospital quickly outgrew its location and was moved to 704 Ensor Street in a building that still stands today just across from Dunbar High School athletic field.

In addition to a well-equipped operating room that included tiered seating for clinical observation by medical students, there was a well-fitted pharmaceutical laboratory overseen by a skilled chemist, well-maintained clean hospital beds, a dining room for patients, a nursing school, Dr. Kennard's handsome office, a church, and an outpatient clinic. Dr. Kennard subsequently opened and operated a convalescent home in the countryside of Anne Arundel County. By 1907, Kennard was also instrumental in founding a beneficial insurance company, maintained by small subscriber weekly dues, that provided burial and sick pay benefits that promised, "All claims paid promptly."

The President of Kennard's healing oasis, Dr. John F. D. Brown, had received his medical training at the University of Pennsylvania and returned to Baltimore to live and open the city's first Black-owned pharmacy, just one street away in Baltimore's Federal Hill neighborhood from where you now stand reading this. Dr. Brown was also an accomplished singer and artist who painted figures from classical Greek mythology as well as the first painted astrological map of the United States that was exhibited in 1905 at the Maryland Institute. These renaissance men, whose colleagues also included white European trained physicians, presided over a patient clientele and nursing school that was primarily white, as was Baltimore's citizenry at the time, and where compassion and respect for all prevailed.

At Dr. Kennard's death in 1929, the Afro American newspaper gave this account, "...With his Masonic apron upon him, and a smile upon his face, Dr. Kennard presented a picture of one more in peaceful slumber than in cold death. By his casket from nine in the morning until one o'clock, white, black, gentile, Jew, wobbling old men and women, children hardly able to see above the rim of the casket, passed by and gave a last look at this man who had healed the sick and administered to their religious needs for three decades."

This Kennard-founded hospital, church, and school was, from its inception, fully integrated and had a steadfast policy for welcoming and caring for indigent patients alongside those able to pay. Segregated Johns Hopkins Hospital would often refer their 'colored' and Jewish patients to treatment there. Tragically, this idealistic and thriving institution was shut down, along with a dozen other top U.S. African American-run medical institutions, by the Flexner Report, a later-formed, government-sanctioned hospital licensing and accreditation body that also closed many naturopathic hospitals. It is noteworthy that the Flexner criteria was based on the Johns Hopkins structure of patient care. The Kennard Hospital was forever closed in this way, along with North Carolina's respected Leonard Hospital. Both proved tremendous losses in the quality of compassionate and equitable care no longer available to their respective communities.

All that remains in operation today at the Ensor Street location is the abandoned Christ Church Institution. We advocate for the need to preserve both the historic lessons and physical location of this rare and early holistic healing institution, so very far ahead of its time. Its one-time existence stands tall in testimony to the beauty, compassion, and courage that existed in actual practice, despite the ugliness of an ambient culture that fostered segregation and exclusion. Our heartfelt appreciation and utmost indebtedness goes to African American history expert, Dr. Philip J. Merrill. Merrill's research and passionate scholarship in bringing forward to us the true story of Dr. Kennard as well as the remarkable medical artifacts he uncovered at the invitation of the late pastor, Reverend Fenton Horton, has made this exhibit possible.

Uncovering and celebrating the moments where humanity has shined brightest and most lovingly against all odds is artful and historic storytelling at its balanced best. For more information, Dr. Philip J. Merrill can be contacted through www.nannyjack.com. *For more information, Dr. Philip J. Merrill can be contacted through www.nannyjack.com.*



DR. GEORGE WHITTINGTON KENNARD (1855-1929)

I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC

-WALT WHITMAN

Our human bodies are complex, utterly amazing electrical systems. Our nervous system is wholly dependent on the transmission of electrical signals that make it possible for us to move, think and feel.

Our cells are made mostly of water with positively charged hydrogen atoms, and a slightly negatively charged oxygen atom. Our bodies are full of conductive stuff - sodium, calcium, magnesium, and potassium, with our cells wrapped up in a lipid or fatty acid membranes engineered to make good use of ions - (charged particles) that together enable our body systems to function and communicate.

Electricity, vital to all aspects of our being and for maintaining the healthy pumping of our hearts - that's why emergency medical folks grab paddles to administer a blast of electricity in the effort to jumpstart failing hearts back into rhythm, or by the employ of a defibrillator. Some people feel more alive during lightning storms.

SIR FREDERICK G. BANTING

"INSULIN BELONGS TO THE WORLD, NOT TO ME."

Sir Banting

While still a very young man, Canadian medical researcher, award-winning artist, and humanitarian, Sir Frederick G. Banting, shared the 1923 Nobel Prize in Medicine for his co-discovery of insulin with John James Rickard Macleod. At that time, people with Type 1 Diabetes rarely lived more than 1-2 years post-diagnosis, and many went blind prior to their death. Sharing both the patent rights and Nobel prize funds with their lab assistant Charles H. Best, Banting and Macleod agreed to sell all their American commercial patent rights for insulin to the University of Toronto for just one dollar, in recognition that their invention was truly life-saving and should never be exploited for profit. Sadly, Americans pay exponentially more for their insulin than do persons with diabetes elsewhere. *(See Chart Below.)*

THE SHOCKING COST OF INSULIN IN THE U.S.

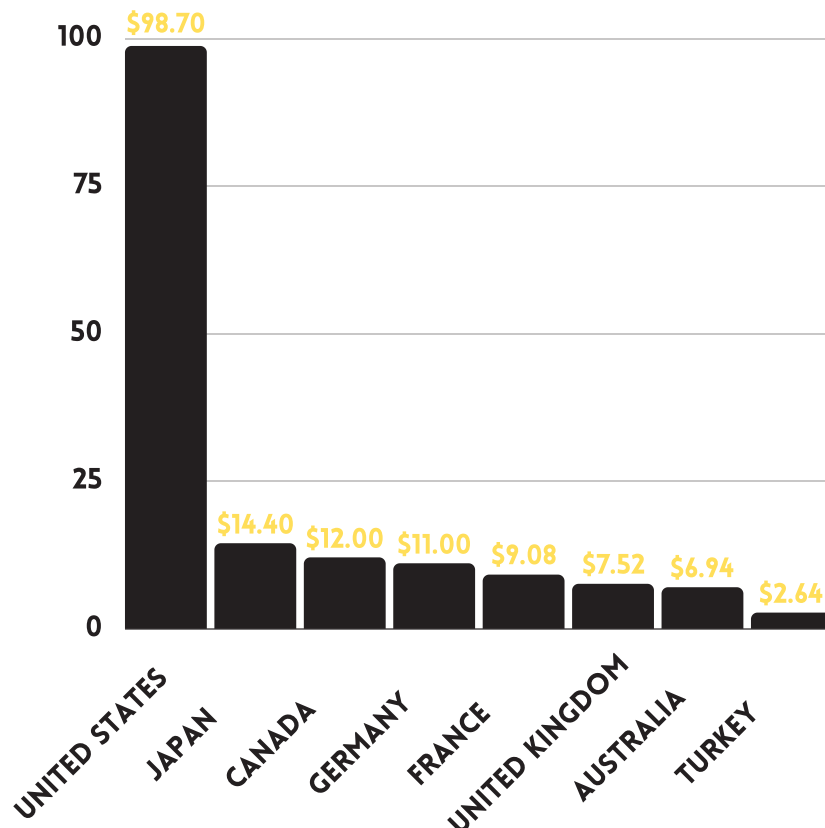
THE UNITED STATES IS THE

1

MOST COSTLY PLACE TO GET INSULIN IN THE WORLD

According to an extensive study conducted by the RAND Corporation, the cost of insulin in the United States was often 5 to 10 times more expensive than the 32 other countries examined.

AVERAGE MANUFACTURER PRICE PER STANDARD UNIT OF INSULIN IN 2018 (\$USD)



Since 2018 new insulin prices have risen to between \$175 and \$300 per dose in the United States.

SOURCE: RAND CORPORATION



FREDERICK BANTING, CHARLES BEST, AND A DOG.

UNSUNG MEDICAL HEROES

MADAME CURIE

Maria Salomea Sklodowska Curie was a Polish-born French physicist and chemist who discovered radium and polonium, and pioneered new treatments for cancer. Madame Curie was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, the first to win yet a second Nobel, and the first person to win a Nobel Prize in two different fields.

Working side by side with Pierre, her physicist husband, they joined Henri Becquerel in developing the theory of radioactivity. Madame Curie also invented a mobile X-ray machine for deployment in the battlefields of WW1. Curie died of aplastic anemia, at age 66, believed to be a result of her years of lab exposure to radioactive substances in the effort to help us all.

THE INCREDIBLE ABEL WOLMAN

Baltimore's own Abel Wolman has acted to successfully save more lives worldwide than any legendary Super Man. Waterborne diseases continue, even despite the COVID global pandemic, to constitute the world's largest cause of death. But Abel Wolman, a global hero from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, pioneered the world's first efficient way to cleanse and protect municipal water systems—ending the scourge of typhoid fever and other disease-causing contaminants while engineering an abundant flow of public water from his design of a series of reservoirs. Wolman went on to become a moral voice of caution and concern for the nuclear power generating industry, questioning the impact on human health of their industrial use of water to cool radioactive rods. Abel Wolman continued to teach and to be celebrated as a global hero of human health right up to his death at 96.

THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE

"TAKE THE ONE AND SEE ME IN THE MORNING"

BY WAYNE JONAS, M.D.

THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE COULD BE:

- 1. SALUTOGENIC:** Based on a new type of pharmacology that induces salutogenesis (healing processes) in the body restoring functions rather than just controlling and inhibiting them.
- 2. INFORMATION BASED:** Delivers salutogenic processes by embedding electromagnetic signatures of substances into a variety of vehicles – water, cotton, patches, EM devices or directly over the internet. "Information Biology" has replaced drugs.
- 3. RESETS THE MINDSET:** Has treatment rituals that rapidly and successfully Reset the Mindset, in which the patient and treatment team open the mind and heart of a suffering person and direct the mind and body to heal itself via intention, though a combination of specific words and images. Re-perceiving of the unity of all things is the basis for these "resets."
- 4. REGENERATIVE:** New cells, tissues and organs are now routinely regrown in healthy ways when they wear out through simple injections of cell "cocktails" that travel to any of our organs and renew them. We now can be physically immortal if we want to be.
- 5. FREE:** Simple to deliver, inexpensive to produce and free for all people of the world.

"FUTURE MEDICINE WILL BE THE MEDICINE OF FREQUENCIES."

Albert Einstein

WHITE SUPREMACY, NAZISM & WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PROMOTE INSTEAD A KINDER INCLUSIVE WORLD

The FBI and the US Department of Homeland Security characterize US-based white supremacist groups - who are now increasingly networking with like-minded groups abroad - as America's deadliest domestic terrorist threat. The deadliest act of terrorism on US soil prior to 9/11 was committed by Timothy McVeigh –responsible for killing 168 people and wounding another 680 in a grand scale bombing of an Oklahoma City federal building and in direct aim of its child care center. Abusive or alienated childhoods, addiction, and addictive narcissistic traits make young people exceptionally vulnerable to that greatest of ancient evils - the need to feel good or superior to someone else by the demonization and marginalization of another.



MUG SHOT XXXII - AGITATOR (ALEX JAMES FIELDS)
BY DAVID HAUGHTON

WHY ARE WE IN THE US SO VIOLENT?

**“HATRED IS A POISON WE INGEST THINKING
WE HURT THE OTHER FELLOW.” - DR. MARTIN
LUTHER KING, JR**

Consider this:

- We Americans have 3x the average confirmed incidence of *serial killers than do fellow industrialized countries who carefully track those grim statistics. Two primary characteristics of psychopaths are narcissism and control. Although serial killings represent only about 1% of total US annual murders, the FBI estimates there are between 25 and 50 serial killers operating in the US at any given time. *A serial killer is defined as a murderer of at least 3 people with a cooling-off period between each kill.
- Americans lead the world in gun ownership: 120.5 per 100 people, or more guns than there are Americans - newborns through seniors - put together. There are now approximately 400+ million guns in private American hands.
- Americans also lead in mass shootings, commonly defined as a public shooting of 4 persons or more, at any one time.
- Beyond its incalculable emotional toll, gun violence costs the American economy over \$229 billion annually in hospitalization, lost wages, and other crime impact costs.
- The American Psychiatric Association (APA) deems US gun violence “an epidemic.”
- In 2021, the Southern Poverty Law Center identified and tracked 940 distinct US-based hate groups - an alarming increase over the last five years. This number does not include rogue internet hate trolls or individuals who generate hateful rhetoric cyberspace postings. A hate group is defined as a group that organizes itself with a specific path to membership to promote beliefs and actions that aim to malign, injure, curtail the rights, or destroy, persons based on their race, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, or gender identity.

WHY ARE WE IN THE US SO VIOLENT?

CONTINUED

- Far outspending all our fellow G-7 allies, the US allocates the biggest proportion of its GDP to defense, military, and the research and development of weapons.
- The US has the world's highest rate of incarceration of its own people. Although Americans constitute just 4.25% of the world's total population, we maintain nearly one-quarter of all the world's total prison populations. The US also disproportionately incarcerates women at an even higher rate when compared to that of other countries. Since 1980 the number of women serving time in the US has increased seven-fold. More than 60% of them are mothers of children under the age of 18.
- Domestic Violent Extremism (DVE), especially among those who espouse white supremacist rhetoric, has now emerged as an even greater threat to America's wellbeing than do threats from our foreign adversaries. Especially worrisome has been an increased networking between US DVE groups and non-US foreign entities who hold similar, hate-based, activist beliefs.

**“IMAGINE WHAT 7 BILLION HUMANS COULD
ACCOMPLISH IF WE ALL RESPECTED EACH
OTHER.” - A D WILLIAMS**

HEALING & THE ART OF COMPASSION

AND THE LACK THEREOF!



FIRST DANCE BY STAN WRIGHT

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

STAN WRIGHT

1935–

Stanley Wright is a native of rural West Virginia. During his boyhood and youth, he fought to overcome a learning disorder marked by an impaired ability to recognize and comprehend written words. “Dyslexia—that’s the ruling factor of my life. Growing up in the 1960’s, you were just considered stupid.” Wright entered the Air Force in 1962. While in the service he gradually found the ability to “see” words and began to read. Today, his appetite for written material is unquenchable.

After he left the Air Force, Wright worked in Spencer, West Virginia, as a house-builder and cabinet-maker. Without formal training in art, he devised his own brand of free-form wooden sculpture to satisfy an intense urge to create. Wright considers art as a way of expressing deep emotions—“It’s so hard to communicate with words, that’s why I do art with my hands...”

As his premier work in the medium of wire, *First Dance* represents Stanley Wright’s awakening to the world of music and dance. The genesis for this self-portrait in wound metal came suddenly one night in July of 1999. “I was sitting in a chair, and heard music for the first time. It’s hard to understand that a person could be 54 years old and never have danced and ‘heard’ music. I analyzed music—but I couldn’t feel it in my body. I had to try to show how I felt at that moment. I felt a lifting of armor. We go through life and cover ourselves with a façade. At that moment, I started dancing, the armor melted away.”

Exactly one year after that joyous awakening, *First Dance* was completed. Stanley Wright has continued to create wire sculpture, and he’s still dancing. “It’s simply an art that comes from the soul, inside; what you feel, and need, to explain.”

ANDREW BENINCASA

1983—

The youngest of three siblings, Andrew Benincasa was born in 1983, in New Brunswick, New Jersey – a rural and beautiful place to grow. Raised by a school teacher mom, and a dad who directed a charity, Andrew remembers a happy childhood as a chubby kid with bowl-cut hair, and days full of making “toys”, and creating “giant-playscapes” out of cardboard and hot glue.

Fascinated by literature from an early age, Andrew struggled to find the same level of emotional engagement in an academic setting. He left college to pursue emotional gratification elsewhere, worked many jobs from school teacher and tutor to barista, all the while continuing to write his own work – mostly poetry in a style both archaic and mythic, like the literature he loved most.

After a major heartbreak, Andrew began to have long and vivid visionary dreams, many punctuated by fantastical narratives. These dream images inspired him to try and more fully embellish his written stories, at first adding shadow-puppets and paper-cuts – two forms of expression he had never before employed. Andrew then taught himself stop-animation, further enlivening the expression of his stories.

On reflection, Andrew realized each major creative development was preceded by coping with the most difficult experiences in his life. His evolution as an animator was precipitated by the sudden death of a family member. “My greatest experience with healing has been this entire process: making art that expressed my feelings and inner-visions, making art that engaged others, moving others with my art, and having my feelings and sense of self witnessed by others. I felt like I couldn’t fully be seen until I had found a language in art that expressed myself, and was intelligible and moving to others. In that way, I transitioned from feeling alienated, into feeling woven back into society. If grief is a charge, making those chaotic feelings into art is making a closed circuit for the charge to run so you don’t blow a fuse. To finish that metaphor; a closed circuit produces light.”



THE BOOK OF JOB, BY ANDREW BENINCASA



STILLS FROM "THE CURE AT TROY," BY ANDREW BENINCASA

JON KOLKIN, MD

1951—

Born in 1951 in New York City, Jon Kolkin's father, Marvin Kolkin, was a thoracic and cardiovascular surgeon, and his mother, Caryl, managed her husband's medical practice. Dating back to his difficulties learning to read as a child, Jon recognized the visual world as his primary language, rich beyond any written word. While Jon went on to earn a Doctorate in Medicine, he chooses not to define himself solely by his profession, instead prioritizing his fuller emotional and physical being as a father, husband, artist, athlete, photographer, and physician—blended together harmoniously.

During Jon's many years of global humanitarian medical work, he began to appreciate the core principles central to living a less stressful, more balanced and fulfilling life regardless of one's spiritual beliefs, socio-economic status, race, or nationality. Jon chose to reflect and offer insights into these core principles through his photographic series, *Inner Harmony: Living in Balance*.

Cherishing the guidance and his continuing friendship with His Holiness the current and 14th Dalai Lama, Jon remembers their first meeting in which he and the Dalai Lama held hands for 45 minutes. "In an effort to savor the moment and absorb even an infinitesimal morsel of His compassion, I often cupped the Dalai Lama's right hand between my two hands. His Holiness' grasp was gentle, steady and firm. Warmth and a positive energy emanated from within Him. Prior to our encounter, His Holiness was already aware of my longstanding commitment to fostering life balance and well-being through medicine and art. He asked if I would join Him in promoting Compassion worldwide. I accepted."

Jon continues his photography and works passionately as a physician and member of Health Volunteers Overseas (<https://hvousa.org/howeare/>) and is especially grateful for his wife of 42 years, Cecilia Kolkin, two daughters, Melanie Kolkin and Laira Kolkin Roth, his son-in-law, Joe Roth, and the love of all their lives, his granddaughter, Caroline.

CHRIS ROBERTS-ANTIEAU

1950–

Chris Roberts-Antieau was born in 1950, in Brighton, Michigan, to a fashion model mother, Rosemary Lee, and Finch Lee Roberts, a home-builder. She still lives in the Michigan woods, surrounded by wild turkeys, and with a series of her beloved bulldogs.

She attended public schools in Brighton, Michigan, and won 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place the first time she entered her high school's art competition. The next year, Roberts-Antieau was awarded only a 2nd place prize because, as the teacher explained to her parents, "We just can't continue to give all the prizes to Chris." Her high school counselors did not recommend college, which, in hindsight, may have been a great blessing. "I like being self-taught because I don't ever want to have ideas of what not to do," she says. Roberts-Antieau later took an art class at a local college where the teacher told her: "You'll never be an artist."

After seven years together with boyfriend Darrell, Roberts-Antieau became pregnant with her only child, Noah Antieau. Upon becoming a mother, she stated: "I just knew I had to prepare a path for my son and me." Her first attempt to produce a work of art to sell was a 3D soft, stuffed sculpture that took her 18 hours to complete. At first, Roberts-Antieau was thrilled when it sold at a Michigan fair for \$20, then the reality of the hourly pay for her new enterprise set in.

By 1987, Roberts-Antieau had worked long hours to create a wearable art sample clothing line to pitch at craft fairs. The line consisted of just three vests and two jackets. Thankfully, the American Craft Council (ACC) juried her into their giant Baltimore ACC Fair. With only those five samples in hand, she had wholesale buyers lining up at her booth. A star was born!

Roberts-Antieau continues to enchant audiences with more and more diverse and complex works. Her one-woman galleries are today one of New Orleans' and Santa Fe's most successful. She holds the distinction of being the most repeatedly exhibited artist included in group thematic exhibitions at the American Visionary Art Museum.



BIRD HEALER BY CHRIS ROBERTS-ANTIEAU

ANONYMOUS HORSE DRESS

The woman who hand-crocheted this horse dress was a longtime patient of the Sheppard and Enoch Pratt Hospital, a mental health institution in Baltimore County. Because patient records are confidential, the woman's name was never released. Little is known about her outside the hospital except that she was diagnosed with schizophrenia, and she wore the dress in defiance of the hospital's dress code. A photograph of this dress appeared in Madeline Ingram's textbook, *Psychiatric Nursing*.

Schizophrenia is a disease characterized by extreme difficulty in thought organization, but the intricacy of the dress design, made without any pattern, belies the diagnosis. The front of the dress depicts a large horse head with eyes easily recognizable as breast coverings. The horse snout and flared nostrils are expressed on the area covering the wearer's lower belly and two ovaries. Hidden within the chest area's giant horse face, are two additional horseheads, depicted in profile. The dress sides express the horse's legs, and the horse's haunches cover the wearer's hips. The horse's tail is located on the back of the dress as an extension of the wearer's tailbone. Symbolic of raw power, independence, grace, and freedom, the horse is a poignant selection of personal expression for someone institutionalized and under the constant eye of others.



ANONYMOUS HORSE DRESS

NANCY JOSEPHSON

1955–

Nancy Josephson, a New York City native born in 1955, gave up a career as a musician to create art that was inspired by both the spiritual and the secular. A follower of Vodou, Josephson spent over a decade frequently traveling to Haiti to prepare for her initiation as a Vodou priestess. In 2013, she was fully initiated into the priesthood. *LaSiren*, who embodies the ocean's dual qualities of strength and serenity, is her “met tet,” or “head” spirit.

Josephson sang and played bass with several well-known bands in the 1970s, and her son Jake learned to walk on Arlo Guthrie's tour bus. But the strains of touring forced her to reconsider her career choice and she became a visual artist, partially because she could work by herself.

Josephson uses beads, mirrors, rhinestones, sequins, and glue to create art from everyday objects in a style evocative of Haitian flags, banners, and artworks. Nancy is inspired by her travel to Haiti to study and work with both artists and spiritual mentors, especially enamored with the intricate bead and sequin-work. She is also a well-known artcar artist. Along with her husband, the guitarist David Bromberg, and daughter Ruth, Josephson moved in 2002 from Chicago to Wilmington, Delaware, recruited by the city to be catalysts for a downtown arts district.



HEALER BY NANCY JOSEPHSON

RICHARD C. SMITH

1950—

Richard Smith is a self-taught artist, born in Kent, England. Before dropping out of school at 15, Richard's only interest was in making art. He experienced a turbulent early life complicated by drug dependency, which led to his incarceration in various prison facilities in the 70's and 80's. During Smith's imprisonments, he always managed to create by some means or other, using any materials that he could procure. Since the late 90's, Richard Smith has completely dedicated himself to his art. Working mainly with found materials, Richard has created drawings on found paper and totem style figurines carved from found wood on local UK seashores. His pieces convey images from his inner world. Richard explains, "I put everything into what I do, and when my artworks are finished, I look upon them as protectors."



THE NEW BORN BY RICHARD C. SMITH

SERENE ELFREI

birth date unknown

This Seal Means Safety is an entry from a personal journal kept by a woman who was a long-term resident of a Southern psychiatric hospital. Serene Elfrei's collaged journal is filled with postcards, holiday cards, and magazine images, that she adapted by personal, meticulous, handwritten embellishments. Elfrei's circa 1937 journal was donated to the American Visionary Art Museum's permanent collection by the late Dr. Otto Billig, a personal student of Freud. In it, Elfrei explores the concept of God, themes of religion, home, and fashion—all aimed at constructing a very personal sense of protection, belonging, and the freedom of non-institutionalized participation in life. No other testament to her life beyond this journal remains.

BOBBY ADAMS

1946–

Bobby Adams was born in Dallas, Texas, but raised in Baltimore City. His father, a former boxer and strict—at times brutal—disciplinarian, operated a floor sanding business in Dundalk. His beloved and gentle mother taught school. She tragically committed suicide in 1976.

In 1964, Adams graduated from Sparrows Point High School, where he says that the only wisdom he learned came from an exercise in typing class that required him to repetitively type: “There once was a man, they called him mad. The more he gave, the more he had.”

During the draft of 1969, Adams was picked from the lottery to serve in the United States Army. However, upon his examination, Adams was designated 4-F (a candidate found to be unfit for military service) due to his impaired hearing and was able to avoid being sent to Vietnam.

A self-made pirate radio DJ, Adams began playing functions around Baltimore as “The Psychedelic Pig,” and spun records for a station he dubbed W.E.E.D..

In the early 1970s, John Waters filmed *Pink Flamingos* at the Baltimore County farm where Adams was living. Around that time, Adams befriended Waters and became the filmmaker’s unofficial documentarian, taking photographs on film sets and chronicling the exploits of Waters’ band of renegades known as the “Dreamlanders.” “I just point and shoot,” notes Adams. “My approach is simple: I start with love, and the camera sees it.”

Inspired in part by Waters’ art, and an Edward Kienholz exhibition he chanced upon, Adams began creating his own works in 1996, after the devastating loss of his adored toy poodle, Odie. Since then, the artist has created more than 50 multimedia tribute pieces to Odie, and installed them throughout his waterfront cottage. Adams’s ongoing work ranges from his famous handmade holiday cards – each unique and made for his special friends – to life-size installations.

SERMET ASLAN

1961–

Sermet Aslan was born to a family of bakers in 1961 in the ancient mountain village of Amasya, Turkey. His family members were Bektashi Dervishes with a lineage dating back many centuries with connections to various other Sufi orders. After losing both his parents at a young age, Aslan was comforted by a family friend telling him, “A true Dervish is a beggar for knowledge.”

With that, he left Turkey to work in the kitchen of a cargo ship and traveled throughout Europe and Russia. He met his American wife, Celia, back in Turkey and the couple eventually settled in Charleston, South Carolina with just \$300 in savings. “Directed by an inner compass,” Aslan sharpened his cooking skills and opened *Sermet’s Corner*, a gourmet restaurant, on the fashionable King Street. It proved a big success, where customers enjoyed both his inventive dishes and Sermet’s paintings adorning the dining room walls.

After studying Sufism and embracing elements of Buddhism, “I found that I could best express my spiritual experiences through art,” says the self-taught Aslan. “Now, I wake up for others’ happiness. Giving is the best receiving.”

Aslan sold *Sermet’s Corner* in 2011 and can usually be found at his latest restaurant, *Sermet’s Courtyard*, on Daniel Island, South Carolina. A proud husband, father, and grandfather, Sermet is invited to speak and teach at many spiritual gatherings and the demand for his spiritual paintings continues to grow. “Why put turtles with angels?” Sermet explains, “Turtles withdraw from the outer senses to experience the great silent vastness within.”

“When you walk to the edge of all the light you have and take that first step into the darkness of the unknown, you must believe that one of two things will happen. There will be something solid for you to stand upon or you will be taught to fly.”

PATRICK OVERTON

JOHANNA BURKE

1972 –

Johanna Burke was born in 1972, a “free-roaming flower child” in Williams, Oregon. Her mother swears that she was conceived under a redwood tree. Her parents later divorced when Johanna was only five. But both shared with their daughter a love of nature and the joy of working with their hands. Burke’s father was a carpenter and fishing guide, who later built his own off-grid straw bale house. Johanna’s mother worked in the wine business, but preferred working on art projects.

Johanna’s favorite nature-laden memory came after moving to Round Mountain, a guru-less, joyful commune nestled in the hills of Fresno, California. There, she spent long idyllic days with her best friend Syelus, who too was an only child. “There were extensive gardens for food—each house had its own vegetable garden, there were fragrant orange groves, elder fig trees, apple, pear, and stone fruits. We played house under the orange trees—the interior creates a natural shelter—and one fig tree I recall was definitely a spaceship. The fig trees had incredible shapes and possessed an extra level of magic to us kids.”

The reality of then going to school and having to integrate with straight society came as a shock to Johanna. She was good at school but found it socially confusing. “I knew we lived differently. We were told to not let people know how we lived, ‘don’t mention we use an outhouse, people won’t understand,’ or ‘don’t tell anyone adults smoke marijuana.’ My lunches were weird—organic food, vegetarian, no sugar.”

Johanna says that being a child of divorce, and the experience of knowing her parents’ partners, happily expanded her sense of what family can mean.

After college, Burke moved to New York at age 22. Four years later, she started working as a fabricator for the famed holiday windows at Bergdorf Goodman, where she continues to work to this day. Bergdorf’s Senior Director of Visual Presentation and Design, David Hoey, calls Johanna “the most brilliant person with whom I have ever collaborated.” In addition, Burke is a co-founder of Burke & Pryde in Brooklyn, New York, renowned for a fierce devotion to natural elements, pattern and obsessive handicraft.

The green monkeys were part of Bergdorf Goodman’s 2016 holiday window display in New York City, and were inspired by “1960s psychedelic art, the paintings of Louis Wain, Indian block prints, and intricate decorative patterns” mined from Johanna’s own historic treasure trove. Her family of green monkeys became stars of AVAM’s *Secret Life of Earth* exhibition, and Johanna has since generously donated them to AVAM’s permanent collection. We are thrilled to welcome Johanna’s wolves!

MICHAEL GREEN

1943–

Michael Green was born in New York City, the same town where he received his Bachelor's degree for film, at New York University. Green continued his studies at the University of São Paulo, after an exciting and adventurous move to Brazil. While there, Green hitchhiked into deep parts of the Amazon jungle.

Upon his return to the United States, Green had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work on germinal light shows with Timothy Leary, an American psychologist and writer best known for his pioneering exploration of the therapeutic potential of certain psychedelics. Ralph Metzner, another American psychologist, participated in studies and research at Harvard alongside Leary. Metzner introduced Green to the idea that “his creative life could be rooted in the tradition of the nameless shaman-artist, a tradition reaching back to the Paleolithic cave-painters.” This idea inspired Green to explore primeval art “characterized by the intention not to express the ‘self’ but rather by abandoning the self to open a doorway to the Great Mystery.”

Green moved to Pennsylvania in the 1970's, and began his study under direction of the renowned Sufi master, Bawa Muhaiyaddeen—an interaction that Green says changed everything. Green began to create visual art, as well as write books, and in the late 1990's Green created an illustrated best seller titled, *The Illuminated Rumi*, with poet Coleman Barks.

Green now resides “on a small organic farm in the rolling hills of the Brandywine Valley with his artist wife Sally.” Their only son is Kabir Green, a dedicated environmental activist and a respected musician. Michael Green is also a musician who has toured with The Illumination Band—an eclectic group that transforms the words of Rumi into American blues—visiting colleges and spiritual conferences around the country.

NAHUM HALEVI

1957–

Nahum Halevi is the artistic acronym inspired by the Hebrew name of the scientist, physician, professor, and self-taught artist, Nathan Moskowitz. Born in New York City to an observant Jewish family, Nathan met his wife-to-be Helen, visiting from Melbourne, Australia, while he worked summers as a waiter at a popular Catskills resort. It was Helen who first bought Nathan a child's watercolor paint set as a birthday gift. "We were very poor in the beginning, and it was not until 1999 that I began to paint in oils. It is my lifetime ambition to one day create sort of a Jewish Sistine Chapel." Although not dissatisfied with Judaism, Moskowitz early on became a voracious student and respector of sacred texts derived from many traditions. Among them, he read the Christian Bible, The Upanishads, the Vedic texts, Aristotle, Ancient Semitic texts, and Aboriginal thought—a special love of which he shared with his Australian-born wife. His literary influences also included readings of the Bhagavad Gita, the Koran, and Spinoza. "I was trying to better understand the most essential thing—the Nature of God. The more you learn, the more the differences melt away."

Nathan Moskowitz earned his MD and PhD (in neurochemistry) degrees at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. He currently serves as Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Medical Institute and as Chief of Neurosurgery at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital in Rockville, Maryland.

Nahum Halevi's artwork has been exhibited in Israel, Prague, the American Visionary Art Museum, and in Australia and is shared on his website, *www.nahumhalevi.com*, along with his full interpretive commentary.

ARTHUR HAMMER

1932–2012

Arthur Hammer was born in 1932 in Cleveland, Ohio. His father sold tires, and his mother was a stay-at-home mom. Hammer, outgoing and extroverted, felt like a misfit in Cleveland and moved to New York City at the age of 18 to pursue an acting career. In New York, he also drove a cab and landed roles in various soap operas, sitcoms, commercials, and made-for-TV movies such as *Rage of Angels*, which starred Jaclyn Smith.

A self-taught artist, Hammer started painting in his mid-20s after his mother gave him a set of paints and eventually gave up acting to make art full-time. He befriended artist Romare Bearden, when the two men had studios on Long Island City, admired the portraiture of Alice Neel, and went on to develop a bold and evocative style of his own. “Everything he did was big, bold, colorful, and upbeat,” notes his daughter, Deirdre, who says her father “lived a very hopeful life and was always jazzed about his work. He was also quite a ladies man and a consummate storyteller, who had a story for everything.”

Of this particular piece, Deirdre notes that *El Martillo* translates to hammer, and her father certainly felt a kinship to the famed idealism of Don Quixote: “My father fought against windmills his entire life. And he was always looking out for the underdog and sticking up for the little guy.” Hammer passed away in 2012, after a 20-year struggle with prostate cancer. *El Martillo* and three additional Hammer pieces are in AVAM’s permanent collection.



EL MARTILLO BY ARTHUR HAMMER

"When life itself seems lunatic, who knows where madness lies?... Too much sanity may be madness, and maddest of all is to see life as it is and not as it should be."

—Miguel De Cervantes

DAVID A. HAUGHTON, M.D.

1956 –

David Aristotle Haughton was born in Philadelphia on April 10, 1956, the eldest of three children born to a brilliant mother who traveled after WW2 from Greece to America as an adolescent to study, then became both a pediatrician and a child psychiatrist, and a father who was an Episcopalian minister. Summers were often spent in Greece by the sea, and David was given great freedom to independently explore cities and countryside on his own from a very early age. He discovered the beauty of reading the Greek myths from his many trips to the library. Haughton attended Harvard as an undergraduate and Cornell University Medical College. He worked as a landscape artist for ten years, but it was during his work as a pediatric resident in a cancer ward in Los Angeles where Haughton was inspired to paint figuratively. He describes his darker, figurative paintings as a response to his sheer anger and horror of daily witnessing so many young children so painfully ill. “It was the constant irony of seeing the nicest families with the sickest children. I felt hopeless.” Haughton’s 100 plus paintings form a series he calls, *The Kindertotentanz*, from the German meaning Children’s Death-dance. “During the plague in medieval Europe, a *totentanz* was a series of paintings or engravings portraying Death embracing, in turn, peasant and pope, cobbler and king.” Angered by the capricious roulette of care available for US children whose parents did not have insurance, Haughton now lives and works in British Vancouver Canada. “I love the Canadian medical system and would never happily return to the morally-exhausting medical system of the U.S.” Deeply alarmed by the rise of violence fed by white supremacy, Haughton has created a new series, a selection of which are exhibited here, called, *Angry White Men*,—donating any and all proceeds to the Equal Justice Initiative and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Proudly a self-taught artist, “I am too stubborn to listen to ‘what art is’ from a teacher.” Dr. Haughton’s paintings aim to depict the struggle against the malevolence of both disease and race-based hatred, and a call for humankind to be, in fact, kind.



MY BECKY WOMAN OF THE YEAR BY GERALD HAWKES

HOLY FIRE

THE MATCHSTICK ARTISTRY OF GERALD HAWKES
(1943-1998)

GERALD HAWKES was born the youngest of three brothers, joined decades later by a beautiful baby sister, to parents Luvenia and Ernest Shelby Hawkes. Raised in the middle-class community of Baltimore County's Turner Station, Gerald's father worked at Bethlehem Steel. Both parents were respected leaders in their church and community. Gerald's oldest brother, James, became America's first African-American executive at Exxon Corporation.

In high school, Gerald was handsome, both an exceptional athlete and a dancer. Like Fred Astaire, Gerald could dance up walls. Remembered for his striking turquoise-colored eyes and quick humor, and a mole in the center of his forehead he called his "third eye," Gerald missed out on a recruitment opportunity to baseball's major leagues when he was suspended from school for clowning. Gerald graduated, one semester late, from Carver Vocational Technical School in Baltimore, excelling in the training he received as a printer. Gerald fell in love with the precision needed to set type and then taught printing at Mergenthaler High before working full-time as a compositor at a commercial printing company. After a brief stint in the Army where Gerald received training as a medical specialist, he reset his course to work for the prestigious Shock Trauma Unit of the University of Maryland Hospital.

After a lifetime of solid middle-class life and a couple of marriages, Gerald became permanently disabled by a brutal mugging that left him brain-damaged. Unable to return to work, Gerald became homeless for the first time. In utter despair, he turned to heroin and became HIV positive from shared needles. To combat the rage he felt – "I didn't want to hate for the rest of my life" – Gerald began to obsessively focus on building complex matchstick sculptures that proved an ideal expression for his life-long fascination with a precise pattern, number, geometry, and his own symbol-laden spiritual philosophy.

*"People are like matchsticks.
Each of us has the capacity to give light—or not.
My work shows what beauty and strength can happen
when people work together."*

GERALD HAWKES



On the American Visionary Art Museum's (AVAM) Opening Day over Thanksgiving Weekend 1995, Gerald was the very first person through the museum's doors, followed by farmer and whirligig master, Vollis Simpson. Gerald had used his charm and visionary artworks to help lobby for and

win AVAM both legislative and popular support, fascinating politicians with his all-matchstick briefcase that would open to reveal an intricate backgammon set.

Gerald produced a wide variety of over 200 intricate matchstick sculptures, soaking them to allow the matchsticks to curve without breaking, and dying them in symbolic colors. Gerald sold and exhibited his works widely – from ardent Japanese collectors to front-page coverage in the *Wall Street Journal*. Some works sold for thousands of dollars. An early one-man show at the George Ciscle Gallery broke attendance records.

Hawkes was complicated, at times manipulative to feed his addiction. He could also be extraordinarily thoughtful and genuinely caring. He reconnected with his only daughter, Karen, shortly before his death, praising her intelligence and her hearing impairment, "She'll never hear or speak evil." When HIV hastened his death at 54, the respect and affection that Gerald had inspired drove people from throughout a wide variety of our Baltimore community and far beyond to come in droves to help spread Gerald's ashes in the AVAM's wildflower garden, as was his wish. It was a windy day, and his family and admirers recall, "We all swallowed a few ounces of powdered Gerald that day!"

Our American Visionary Art Museum has the largest collection of Gerald Hawkes matchstick works, most of them shared here with you today, right beside Gerald's original thoughts and wisdoms.

MAURA HOLDEN

REBORN “PROMETHEA”

1967–

Promethea was born in Philadelphia and named Maura Holden by her parents, a scientist and a survey research analyst. Her mother was also a sculptor who loved African art, and her grandmother was an archaeologist who made large-scale, symbolic needlepoint pictures collaged with bird feathers and Native American arrowheads. Promethea credits many diverse people in helping raise her—she was babysat by architects, high schoolers, and an artist’s wife, and most influential of all—her school teachers. Some were throwbacks to the rigidity of 1950’s America and others were progressive “long hairs.” Able to read well from a very early age, she borrowed a library copy of *The Diary of Ann Frank* that proved a deep and profound, lasting revelation.

Even in her earliest memories, Promethea would have vivid and complex visions which she felt compelled to portray. As an adult, she has dedicated herself to a cleaner, healthier, and more compassionate vision of the earth, utilizing her artwork and increasing her personal acts of kindness to all in that effort. Promethea remains heavily influenced by her frequent visits to other worlds. She believes she has learned much in altered states and especially from her favorite artist/hero, Ernst Fuchs—meeting him on astral planes hundreds of times—prior to their actual meeting in person by “complete accident.”

Inspired by the power of her frequent otherworldly visits, by sacred architecture, and her own empathic nature—both traumatic and transcendent—Promethea’s healing artworks confront disaster, death, corruption, pain, and rebirth.

Today, Promethea lives modestly and independently, manning vegetable stands, co-ops, at a deli, or as a doorman, in Brattleboro, Vermont—still focused on her visions and her art in the service of healing her little part of this world.



MUPPET SHAMAN BY MAURA HOLDEN

ARTHUR LOPEZ

1971–

Arthur Lopez was born in Santa Fe, New Mexico to Cecilia and Jerry Lopez. His mother worked for the New Mexico Department of Labor, and his father was a self-employed plumber. Arthur has one sibling, older sister Janet.

Arthur can't remember a time he didn't love art—from just a small child through his days as a high schooler, Arthur was always sketching or doodling. As a young adult, Arthur worked as a graphic designer. Preparing to move from Los Angeles to New York to pursue a job offer, Arthur stopped home in New Mexico to visit family. The same day he arrived, Arthur's Dad was diagnosed with throat cancer that necessitated an emergency tracheotomy. Arthur turned down the job in New York to stay in Santa Fe and help care for his Dad, who was newly divorced. Early in this return to Santa Fe, Arthur met his beloved wife, Bernadette. During this extremely challenging time, Arthur watched his father rapidly deteriorate from his former vibrant 54-year old self. Granted his father's medical power of attorney, Arthur followed the suggestions of the doctors to begin home hospice care, placing his father on a morphine drip to help ease his enormous pain. Arthur's father had a large family, who took issue with Arthur's decision. "When I told them what the Doctor had said they were all upset and telling me not to do it and that the doctors are not God and that my dad could still make it. I made the hard decision to start the drip to ease him from his pain all against my family's protests and knowing that this day would be his last. I sat with my father and whispered in his ear that I forgave him for any wrongs I felt toward him, that I loved him, and that it was okay to go. I don't know if my choice was compassion or the lack thereof, but I take comfort in knowing he is no longer in pain and in a better place."

After his father's passing, Arthur felt a calling to try and make art for the first time in 9 years. While visiting the Traditional Spanish Market in Santa Fe with Bernadette, Arthur fell in love with the painted wooden sculptures and decided he wanted to dedicate himself to that tradition despite having never before made any sculpture.

Today, Arthur is a practicing artist who draws upon processes that have been used for generations dating back to the 1700's by the first *Santeros* (Saint Makers) in New Mexico. While Arthur creates modern works of art dealing with contemporary themes, he has a deep respect for his adherence to the traditional New Mexican way of creating a *Santo* or *Bulto* (3 dimensional carving) or a *Retablo* (2 dimensional painting). His practice honors the old traditions, including woodcarving, producing his own rabbit skin gesso, using marble dust for additional sheen, and his own handmade paints made with natural pigments. This year will mark his 22nd year as an artist using these ancient methods. The work of Arthur Lopez is now widely collected. Out of his great respect for health care professionals who cope with life and death and suffering every day, Lopez began making COVID-related saints at the start of the current Pandemic. Arthur and his wife Bernadette are proud parents of two college-age sons, Darean and Jeremiah.

KIM EDGAR SWADOS

1922–2011

Much is known of the successful Hollywood career of the late, film and stage set production designer, Kim Edgar Swados. Even the freak accident on the set of the popular TV show *Dallas*, which put a Swados in a wheelchair for the rest of his life, became part of LA theater lore. But precious little is known of Swados' youth beyond the fact that he was born on Halloween in 1922 in Buffalo, New York to a wealthy family, the younger of two boys. Swados' Mother had intense periods of mental illness and focused her paranoia and obsessions on her youngest son, at times hiding under Swados' bed or in his closet to "protect him." To help him escape such unwanted and terrifying attention, his father arranged for Kim to briefly attend classes at the Pratt Institute, and then got young Swados his own apartment and a prestigious job as an assistant to George Ambert, the then director of the Museum of Modern Art's Theater Department. On his birthday and out with his friends, Swados returned to find police in a standoff with his mother who had let herself in and stood wielding a knife and a hammer with which she had already destroyed most of Kim's artwork. At the request of the police, Kim was able to calm his mother and she relinquished the knife and hammer. Ambert's star pupil quickly parlayed his training into what would become a more than 60-year creative career working in theater, television, film, and art, and a new life mostly on the west coast. Kim won numerous awards for his creative art direction, working on prominent movie sets including *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and *The Amityville Horror* (1979).

Kim Edgar Swados' beloved wife died in 1993. Not long after, the paralyzing accident on the set of *Dallas* brought Kim's career to an end. Swados refocused all his energies into a powerful painting series depicting the great cruelties of notorious Nazi war criminals. The series of works, titled *Abattoir (1933–1945)*, included portraits of Josef Mengele, Joseph Goebbels, and Adolf Hitler. The word "abattoir" means a slaughterhouse.

Swados wished his disturbing portrayals would serve as a warning to future generations of the danger of twisted racist supremacy movements and thinking. Swados said of these works, "What is inexcusable and what sends me into a towering rage is when I think about the children, ... This is my statement for the children, so that the children will be warned." But Kim intended his works to be for all people, as a standing reminder to never forget the past, and to be wary into the future. Ultimately, Kim never completed the series he had begun. He couldn't bring himself to finish his Goering portrait.

What began as small sketches from his wheelchair and home studio blossomed into these large-scale portraits funded graciously through an open-ended grant from a generous benefactor that provided Kim with the support he needed to bring to completion his project. Kim's hands were debilitated from a disease that caused the elongation of his fingers, in spite of this, Kim worked tirelessly. He was known to paint from his wheelchair and steady his right hand with his left, with a paintbrush taped to his hand.

Kim Edgar Swados is survived by his daughter Christina Lahti Swados, and two grandchildren, Ryan and Xander.