

Hospice Art & Literature Show

## Exploring the Tree of Life: Artful Conversations about Living and Dying



Forty gifted artists and seventeen accomplished writers from throughout The Columbia River Gorge made creative contributions to the Hospice Art and Literature Show, held at the Columbia Art Gallery in Hood River, Oregon.

The show, titled “**Exploring the Tree of Life: Artful Conversations about Living and Dying,**” was multifaceted, with artists, writers, and musicians joining hands to share their unique, artistic interpretation of the theme.

The show was a partnership effort of Hospice of The Gorge, the Columbia Center for the Arts, and the Columbia Art Gallery. Sponsors included Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital, Anderson’s Tribute Center, and the law firm of Jaques, Sharp, Sherrerd & FitzSimons.

Show elements included:

- A month-long art exhibit featuring an interactive component to encourage dialog among visitors
- An evening of requiem music to engage music lovers
- An evening of literature where writers read poems and short stories they prepared for the show

The goal of the month-long event was to stimulate community-wide dialog about issues pertaining to the end-of-life in a “safe” and engaging manner.

# Artist Statements

The following pages are the statements that artists wrote about their works of art.

The statements were hung along with the artworks they described, so that visitors to the show could get a clear understanding of the meaning behind each piece.



**Title:** The Great Round of Life and Death

**Medium:** Jewelry

**Artist:** Sarah Burr Arnold

**Price:** NFS



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## Artist Interpretation

This work represents in sculptural jewelry my belief in the unity / interconnectedness of life and death. The piece is more of an intellectual statement than an emotional one.

In the macro sense, death nourishes life; the very molecules on which life depends originate in the death and decay of former life.

To us as individuals, death is the end of known life. It is present in life as a lurking, hovering awareness of the possibility of non-existence. Life can at anytime descend into the blackness of non-existence, yet it can also ascend out of that same blackness.

Death defines and intensifies life, just like you see in a drawing, where the negative space defines the positive space.

The life/death cycle is represented in this necklace as a circle of unity, where the parts create the whole.

The front of the necklace represents life, segmented into age-related sections, marked by symbols of age-related transition points. The back represents death or non-existence, with evidence of the destruction of life and the passing of the spirit represented symbolically by bits and pieces of comets. Chains over the shoulders secure life to death.

The insides of each of the silver plates have been left unworked in order to reveal the random consequences of life's actions.

**Title:** Explosion Books  
**Medium:** Collage  
**Artist:** Artist Way of The Gorge  
**Price:** NFS

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## Artist Interpretation

These *Explosion* books were created by “Artist Way of The Gorge,” a group of women who meet regularly to promote and encourage each other to be creative.

These particular books were made after a weekend of collage making. The theme of the books is to honor, remember, and pay tribute to loved ones who have moved onto another place in the journey of life.

Members of the group are:

- Anita Johnston
- Sherril Nossum
- Judy Barnes
- Caroline Udall
- Maureen Regalbuto

*(Thank you for handling these books carefully.)*

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## Upcoming Class

“Artist Way of The Gorge” will be offering a class in May, to anyone who would like to learn to make these kinds of books. A materials charge of \$5 will cover all costs associated with the class.

Please call Maureen Regalbuto at 386-3099 if you are interested in attending.

**Title:** I'm Going on a Journey  
**Medium:** Oil on canvas; 16 x 20  
**Artist:** Wendy Best  
**Price:** \$250

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## Artist Interpretation

This painting is based on a song that the artist composed some years back, which uses the image of a train to represent the “long journey” we will all take when we die.

One of the lyrics of the song is, “I might come back or I might stay. That railroad track — just leads away.”

The painting portrays a beautiful woman just about to take the leap from the world as we know it, onto an oncoming train, which cuts the canvas and represents that major divide between life and death.

The woman has left behind her suitcases, representing her earthly belongings and human relationships. Her purse lies on the path she has traveled, representing money, and there is also a cane on the trail.

Although she is naked, already the mists of eternity have begun to swirl around her body. She is reaching out to embrace the train. Beyond the train and smoke there is a deep night sky, sprinkled with stars. In the very upper corner is a brilliant light, representing the truth that we are always seeking, or the different existence that awaits us after we have crossed the barrier of death.

**Title:** Passage  
**Medium:** Pastel 17 3/4 x 21 5/8  
**Artist:** Cheryl Williams Cosner  
**Price:** \$365

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## Artist Interpretation

The symbolism in "Passage" is reflective and simple.

The autumn leaves represent the autumn of life. Autumn may come very suddenly for some of us, without warning, without age, without disease. It may only be the few seconds before we take our last breath. Autumn for others may linger, giving us opportunity to reflect and know that our time is drawing near. It may be months or even years. Whatever the timeframe, it exists for each one of us. None of us is exempt.

The black around the keyhole is the period of time from which we pass from this life but have not entered the next—that moment or hour that we are in limbo, we may not see where we are or where we are headed.

The keyhole represents the locked door that we must have opened for us to get to the other side. Our death is the key and we must pass through death in order to reach what is waiting on the other side of the door.

Though the perception of what life after death holds differs with each individual, as a prominently Judeo-Christian culture, most of us believe there is some sort of heaven, utopia or resting place for our spirits after we die. In "Passage," I have chosen to represent this space with the symbols of spring, new growth and a general awakening of nature.

Spring flowers represent a rebirth, the sky hole in the clouds represents a freed spirit and the light on the hills is the opposite of the darkness we had to pass through to get to this new place.

Though the symbols in "Passage" are personal, the concept is universal. We will all experience a "passage" at the end of our lives. It is how we chose to deal with life on this side that determines what awaits us next.

**Title: Reflections of a Hospice Patient**

—*When My Life Began*

—*Grandpa Will See You Play*

**Medium:** Photo-illustrated Hospice-patient interview, 12-by-18 archival print

**Artist:** Susan Garrett Crowley, Photographer; Pat Case, Interviewer

**Price:** NFS



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## Artist Description

These pieces are excerpts from interviews with a hospice patient. The interviews are aimed at capturing key thoughts and memories of patients as they near life's end.

The interviews and photographic illustrations are part of a project sponsored by Hospice of The Gorge, titled: "Reflections on Life."

The goal of the project is twofold:

- 1) To give hospice patients an avenue for expression they might not otherwise have, and a way to pass along thoughts and feelings to loved ones for generations to come, and
- 2) To offer the public valuable perspectives both on life and the end-of-life process, and to help stimulate dialog about the need to think about and plan for the end-of-life.

Anyone interested in participating in the project or in helping to sustain it should contact Hospice of The Gorge.

**Title:** Melody's Garden  
**Medium:** Jewelry  
**Artist:** Nelsie Davis  
**Price:** NFS  
(A similar custom-designed ring could be commissioned through the gallery for \$3,300)

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## Artist Interpretation

The ring, "Melody's Garden," is named for Melody Teppola. She was dearly loved and died too soon of cancer. She supported many causes and was particularly interested in the arts.

I met Melody in the late 1970's, when she and I were board members of the Contemporary Crafts Association in Portland. We became friends and shared many other friends as well. She was also a client and a collector of my work.

When Melody was bedridden and hospice was caring for her, I decided to name this ring for her, and sent it to her to be by her bedside. Melody's connection to the ring helped to give it its life force, and because she saw it and touched it, the ring carries with it a bit of her wonderful spirit.

Melody was as good and pure of a heart as anyone I know.

*(Please see poems that accompany this piece, which were read at Melody's funeral.)*

## Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument  
of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, joy.  
Oh Divine Master,  
grant that I may not  
so much seek to be consoled  
as to console;  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love.  
For it is in the giving that we receive;  
It is in the pardoning  
that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying we are born to eternal life.

## Hopi Prayer

Do not stand at my grave and weep.  
I am not there; I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am the diamond glints on snow.  
I am the sunlight on the ripened grain.  
I am the gentle Autumn's rain.  
When you awaken in the morning hush,  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine in the night.  
When the ripe fruit falls  
its sweetness distills  
and trickles away  
into the veins of the earth.

## When the Ripe Fruit Falls

When fulfilled people die  
the essential oil  
of their experience  
enters the veins of living space  
and adds a glisten  
to the atom, to the body  
of immortal chaos.  
For space is alive  
and it stirs like a swan  
whose feathers glisten  
silky with oil of distilled  
experience.

—*D.H. Lawrence*

**Title:** Nos Vemos Series  
**Medium:** Ceramic, acrylic, beads  
**Artist:** Louise Harris Emerson  
**Price:** \$750 each

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## Artist Interpretation

The term “**Nos Vemos**” means “we’ll see each other” — a common expression of saying goodbye in the short term. I chose this title to express my hope that although death may separate us from our loved ones temporarily, we will again be reunited in a spiritual world, and perhaps again in a physical one.

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“We are spiritual beings on a human journey.”

—*Native American saying*

We are born, we grow, and we die. But, what *is* death, and where do we go when it happens? Do we have multiple lives? If so, where are we when we are “in-between” these lives?

Different cultures have different answers to these questions. The indigenous cultures of the Americas believe that there are two realities or two realms of being that exist simultaneously — essentially, “parallel” universes: this physical one that we live in, and another that consists of spiritual beings who are our ancestors.

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These two pieces (**Mariposa** and **Caracol**, from the Nos Vemos series) are my homage to these ancient indigenous cultures and their belief systems. They are my tribute to their beauty, integrity, and sophistication.

“**Caracol**” means “snail” — but it is also the name given to the observatories that the Maya constructed to study the stars. They were masters of astronomy.

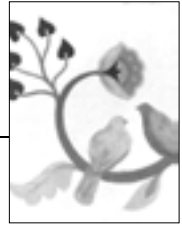
Indigenous cultures believe that human beings are the direct descendants of the sun, literally, and that we are made of stardust. I have come to share this philosophy. The earth was one part of the sun, and we are made of the earth – minerals and organic materials.

They believe that each moment in time, each moment of our existence, is a gift given directly to us from the gods. I think that they are correct.

**“Mariposa”** means “butterfly.” In Pre-Columbian cultures, the butterfly god is the god of reincarnation.

**Title:** Enigma  
**Medium:** Oil on canvas; 48 x 72  
**Artist:** Steve Emmons  
**Price:** \$12,500

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## Artist Interpretation

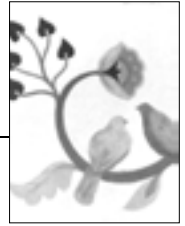
Utilizing figures from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, the perplexed figure in this piece is torn between spiritual and physical contradictions.

**Title:**            **The Blossom Picker**

**Medium:**        Acrylic; 28 x 40

**Artist:**         Janet Essley

**Price:**           \$1,200



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## **Artist Interpretation**

The Angel of Death gently picks the blossoming soul from the heart of the deceased. Perhaps death is just the beginning. (This painting was influenced by a view of my father shortly before he died, resting in his chair across the room, dwarfed by a vase of flowers.)

**Title:** Left Behind  
**Medium:** Acrylic; 36 x 24  
**Artist:** Janet Essley  
**Price:** NFS

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## Artist Interpretation

This piece is from a series of paintings of my grandmother's dresses. When there is no longer any member of the family who will save the bits and pieces of those who have gone before, is that the end of the family?

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Masks</b>
<b>Medium:</b>	Primarily leather, wood and textile
<b>Artist:</b>	Ed Gunderson
<b>Price:</b>	Wooden mask: \$600 Leather masks: \$150

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## Artist Interpretation

Nearly every culture uses masks to express a character or idea, or to hide the identity of the wearer, or both.

Masks are also a part of many rituals that connect the human to the spirit world. Masks can be used as a way to imbue the wearer with mythic powers, and as a bridge between the real world and the world beyond.

Masks and rituals allow humans to touch the sacred and to see things differently.

Masks shown here include:

### Wooden Mask

- Northwest Indian: Wild Man Of the Woods

### Leather Masks

- Northwest Indian: Hawk Mask
- Northwest Indian: Bear Mask
- French Gargoyle Mask
- Chinese Dragon Mask
- Japanese Kobuki Mask
- Irish Celtic Knotwork Mask
- Mardi Gras Carnival Mask

**Title:** Lark  
**Medium:** Acrylic  
**Artist:** Nancy Guzman  
**Price:** \$100

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## Artist Interpretation

Nancy Guzman is a thirteen-year-old Mexican-American artist from Bingen, Washington, who attends the Henkel Middle School.

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This piece of art is about life and death. The right-hand side expresses life and the left-hand side expresses death. There is a crack in-between both sides to show that they are different from each other.

The right side has a waterfall showing that life is steady and calm. This part of the painting expresses that life is a paradise, that nothing will happen, and that everything will be fine.

The left side shows that everything is the opposite of life. Death destroys life like a volcano melting its surroundings; like tornadoes destroying everything in its path; like lightening striking the ground and burning what it strikes.

**Titles:** Harbinger  
Latitude 0

**Medium:** Charcoal

**Artist:** Adele Hammond



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## Artist Interpretation

In the vast landscape of the subconscious, our life experiences merge with our dreams and emotions to create something larger than reality.

Through art we identify this powerful force by bringing it into the real world. We grieve, we purge, we heal, we rejoice, and we learn.

These drawings are about that journey. They are allegories of my own experiences, grounded within a spiritual appreciation of the natural world.

I choose charcoal as my medium because it is direct, fluid, responsive, and immediate.

Both *Latitude 0* and *Harbinger* embrace hope, moving beyond grief, anticipating the risk of discovery and of what lies beyond.

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For over 30 years, the focus of my work has consistently been on the natural world, in particular on the unseen forces of nature. These charcoal drawings result from the mix of experiences I have had over these years, including places I've lived; motherhood; the experience of galloping on horseback immersed in the wind and the vast open spaces of Patagonia; rounding up bulls and native horses in the high Andes of Ecuador --- and more.

In these works, I hope to communicate an inner power of both nature and the human spirit.

**Title:** Stolen  
**Medium:** Watercolor ; 25 x 31  
**Artist:** John Haugse  
**Price:** \$900

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The artist is recreating in painted form, a number of the illustrations he originally created for his graphic novel: *Heavy Snow, My Father's Disappearance into Alzheimer's*. This particular painting portrays some of the thoughts and feelings that emerged after John's mom passed away, and as his dad began slipping deeper and deeper into Alzheimer's.

*(See the book also on display, and the related artist's statement.)*

**Title:** **Hand-Painted Images from the Graphic Novel: *Heavy Snow, My Father's Disappearance into Alzheimer's***

**Medium:** Watercolor; 25 x 31

**Artist:** John Haugse

**Price:** \$900



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The artist is recreating in painted form, a number of the illustrations he originally created for his graphic novel: *Heavy Snow, My Father's Disappearance Into Alzheimer's*. This particular painting portrays some of the thoughts and feelings that emerged as John's mom passed away during the early stages of his dad's disappearance.

*(See the book also on display, and the related artist's statement.)*

**Title:** Excerpts From the Graphic Novel: *Heavy Snow, My Father's Disappearance into Alzheimer's*

**Medium:** Hand-painted, computer-generated images; 18 x 21

**Artist:** John Haugse

**Price:** \$600



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These are hand-painted computer-generated excerpts from the artist's graphic novel:

*Heavy Snow, My Father's Disappearance Into Alzheimer's.*

This particular set of images offers a broad overview of the book, and provides glimpses into the various behaviors, thoughts, and feelings that manifest as the disease progressed.

*(See the book also on display, and the related artist's statement.)*

**Title:** **Graphic Novel: *Heavy Snow, My Father's Disappearance into Alzheimer's***

**Medium:** Soft-cover graphic novel

**Artist:** John Hauge

**Price:** \$13



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*Heavy Snow* is the story of a son taking care of his father, who is slowly and painfully disappearing into Alzheimer's disease. Through the illustrated-vignette style of the book, Hauge is able to portray with poignancy and humor, the tragedy of Alzheimer's and the terrible strain it puts on the caregiver, family, and friends.

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## **Artist Interpretation**

My father's memory began to fail him by the time he was 75. His condition was well known among friends and family, but seldom discussed seriously, and never in his presence.

Two years after my mother's death, when he was 80, his temperament and general confusion made it impossible for him to live independently. We had no choice but to place him in an Alzheimer's facility.

For the next six years I was my father's primary contact with the world of his past—with the world that had not broken. It was not easy for him to talk about personal matters, so we never discussed his disease or used the word "Alzheimer's."

As I talked with people who had experience with AD, I discovered that many found it difficult to seek help or to talk about it. So, I began writing about my experiences, partly in the hope that others might find a pathway, and partly to clarify for myself what my family had been through. That journal of drawings, stories, and poems eventually evolved into the graphic novel, *Heavy Snow: My Father's Disappearance into Alzheimer's*.

When I was asked to exhibit my book for this exhibition I was happy to do so, and I thought that it would be an interesting challenge for me to recreate some of those stories and emotions through the medium of painting.

**Titles:**            **Transition**  
                          **As Time Goes By**

**Medium:**         Pastel

**Artist:**           Rose Kelly

**Price:**            Transition: \$400  
                          As Time Goes By: \$300

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## Artist Interpretation

I was excited to be a part of this show because I think hospice is such an important organization. My husband died in 2000, and hospice was a huge help. They were there for me through every aspect of the experience of dying — from taking care of the medications, to helping with everyday tasks, to spiritual support, to giving breaks to the caregiver. Hospice makes it possible to die without pain, with dignity, at home.

In my paintings, I have tried to convey some of the great work I think they do. It's pretty heady stuff painting about living and dying.

In the painting titled *Transition*, I tried to show the support that hospice gives to patients and families. I included symbols of life, death, and time.

In my other painting, *As Time Goes By*, I tried to capture a second of life, a brief flash — which in the scheme of things, is all we really have.

There is a poem I like, that I think reflects the spirit of hospice. It inspired me, and I tried to capture some of the feeling of it in my paintings. The person in the poem is in the hospital, though hospice is better in my opinion, because it allows us to die in our own homes.

(See “*My Death*,” by Raymond Carver)

## My Death

—By Raymond Carver

If I'm lucky, I'll be wired every which way  
in a hospital bed. Tubes running into my nose. But try not to be  
scared of me, friends!

I'm telling you right now that this is okay.

It's little enough to ask for at the end.

Someone, I hope, will have phoned everyone  
to say, "Come quick, he's failing!"

And they will come. And there will be time for me  
to bid goodbye to each of my loved ones.

If I'm lucky, they'll step forward  
and I'll be able to see them one last time  
and take that memory with me.

Sure, they might lay eyes on me and want to run away  
and howl. But instead, since they love me,

They'll lift my hand and say "Courage"  
or "It's going to be alright."

And they're right. It is all right.

It's just fine. If you only knew how happy you've made me!

I just hope my luck holds, and I can make  
some sign of recognition.

Open and close my eyes as if to say,  
"Yes, I hear you. Be happy."

I hope so! But I don't want to ask for too much.

If I'm unlucky, as I deserve, well, I'll just  
drop over, like that, without any chance  
for farewell. Or to press anyone's hand.

or say how much I cared for you and enjoyed  
your company all these years. In any case  
try not to mourn for me too much. I want you to know  
I was happy when I was here.

And remember I told you this a while ago — April 1984.

Be glad for me if I can die in the presence  
of friends and family. If this happens, believe me,  
I came out ahead. I didn't lose this one.

From "All of Us: The Collected Poems"  
Vintage Books 1996

**Title:**            **The Impermanence of Form**

**Medium:**        Basketry

**Artist:**         Gretchen Lape

**Price:**           \$350 for set;  
                      \$150 for first basket in set



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## Artist Interpretation

Gretchen Lape has been making baskets for over ten years. Most of her works are made from natural fibers gathered in The Gorge and along the Oregon coast.

The baskets in this piece are made from cedar using the technique of “twining” taught to her by Mary Schlick.

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The tightly woven basket on the left represents a young and healthy body. Its vitality, strength, and physicality, often the most noticeable aspects of a person at this stage of life, can obscure one’s humanity and spirit.

The second basket, with holes in the weave and luminous lining peeking through, represents a body when aging and/or illness erodes strength and physicality. It creates space for the possibility of wisdom and spirit to emerge and reveal a different kind of beauty and understanding.

The burnt cedar remnants in the container on the right represent the final release of form, which occurs as spirit leaves the body at death. Merging with the infinite possibilities in the universe, spirit invites the living not to fear the impermanence of their own bodies.

**Title:** Kaleidoscope of Life

**Medium:** Acrylic on canvas

**Artist:** Arlene Larison

**Price:** \$275



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## Artist Interpretation

This painting shows a large kaleidoscope design on the left with ribbons of color coming from each color in the kaleidoscope, looping and twisting until they finally unite in a dove, which is escaping to heaven through a hole in the cloudy background.

The ribbons are a metaphor for the different turns and twists our lives take, or for the different paths that we follow. The dove represents the spirit or the soul.

At the bottom of the picture is a landscape that starts with springtime on the left and ends with winter on the right, representing our aging process.

**Title:**            **The Valley of the Shadow of Death**

**Medium:**        Acrylic and collage on paper

**Artist:**         Arlene Larison

**Price:**           \$275



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## **Artist Interpretation**

This painting is taken from the phrase in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. The red figure represents the person or soul going through the valley, whereas the white figure, painted in iridescent paint, represents God or the Holy Spirit accompanying him.

The canyon walls and rocks are collaged onto the paper.

When viewed at some distance, the light area of sky resolves into the shape of a massive figure. This figure appeared accidentally while I was painting, but I liked it and decided to leave it to represent the figure of God, which the smaller figures are walking toward.

**Title:** Passage  
**Medium:** Acrylic on masonite; 28 x 8  
**Artist:** Amirra Malak  
**Price:** \$500

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## Artist Interpretation

This painting is an expression of the passage of life or time. In a physical life, we move from spirit to form and dissolve back into spirit towards the end of life.

The constant throughout this process is the rhythm of life that goes on regardless of form.

The Arab calligraphy woven through the painting is a belly-dance drum beat.

**Title:** Meet You There

**Medium:** Steam-bent western red cedar, white cedar,  
nylon, bees wax  
8' 4" x 2' 6" x 1' 6"

**Artist:** John Mayo

**Price:** \$1,800



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## Artist Interpretation

I made this piece recently after the death of a good friend. I was able to sit with him for a time each day as he moved through his dying process.

Having two small children, I found strong parallels between birth and dying. Both involve the body independently finding its own way through a process with inevitable conclusions. The mind can only watch, hopefully with acceptance and calm.

In this piece, I am seeking to unite birth and death in form, using timeless materials and techniques.

**Title:** **Traveler: Out Beyond**  
**Medium:** Powder-coated steel; fabric  
7' x 3' x 4'  
**Artist:** John Mayo  
**Price:** \$2,400

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## **Artist Interpretation**

This is a vessel piece that I have reworked recently. I am attempting to create a vessel of another realm, one that projects a majesty and grace.

The combination of the cloth and steel speaks to the dichotomy of the physical and spiritual, although, in this work I have reversed the elements. Instead of cloth sails above the hull, I have put the soft element under the steel, as a keel.

**Title:** Portrait Of My Father-In-Law

**Medium:** Mixed media

**Artist:** Sorcha Meek

**Price:** NFS



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## Artist Interpretation

These shoes, which once encased my father-in-law's feet, have been bound in gauze, white paint, and wax. The gauze symbolizes healing; the white paint and wax represent purity and energy.

John Traquair Paul  
1937 – 2005

Husband; father; father-in-law; grandfather; businessman; sailor; sculptor; and, beekeeper.

**Title:** Freedom From the Known  
**Medium:** Oil, wax, and gauze on canvas  
**Artist:** Sorcha Meek  
**Price:** \$950

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## Artist Interpretation

This painting was inspired by the writings of Krishnamurti. The painting was based on the concept that if we allow ourselves to let go of words and thoughts which bind us, and which create prejudice and fear, then we can truly be free.

**Title:** Sockeye Salmon  
**Medium:** Hand blown glass  
**Artist:** Andy Nichols  
**Price:** \$195 to \$250, depending on size (\$18.00 per inch)

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## Artist Interpretation

I have always had an attachment to water and to the things that live in it. My most recent inspiration came from the sockeye salmon, where I've been able to transform my vision of this species into blown-glass sculptures.

Living in an area rich with the history of these fish, as well as other types of salmon, has given me perspective on the incredible journey that they endure. And at my studio on the banks of Mill creek in The Dalles, I watch these fish come back up stream from the ocean, to the place where they were born, to spawn eggs of their own before they undergo a tiring death.

The circle of life is happening right before my eyes, and I find it rewarding to replicate these creatures in all phases of their fascinating life!

**Title:** My Life  
**Medium:** Acrylic  
**Artist:** Javier Ortiz  
**Price:** NFS

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## Artist Interpretation

Javier Ortiz, known as Javi for short, was born in Abasolo, Mexico in 1990. He lived there until the age of three, and is now a student at the Henkel Middle School in Bingen, Washington.

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“My Life” represents my view of life and death. Life in this piece is represented by roses (fragrant and beautiful) and death is represented by skulls (darkness and fear). I drew more roses than skulls because I want to see more love than sadness, not only for myself, but for those I care about.

The two clowns represent the good times and the bad times.

Finally, the hour glass expresses how precious time is and that there is never enough time in life. We must grasp every moment and make the best of it.

**Title:**            **Threshold**  
**Medium:**        Watercolor     28 x 20  
**Artist:**         Andrew Pate  
**Price:**          \$650

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## Artist Interpretation

What if, at the threshold of life and death, there were no room for illusion, and we could see things clearly? What if every moment was a threshold?

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This dewdrop universe  
Just a dewdrop  
And yet,  
And yet . . .

—*Issa*

. . . Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could all see themselves as they really *are*. If only we could see each other that way all the time. . . But it cannot be explained. There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.

—*Thomas Merton*

What it is that swells here  
I know not  
But my heart is full of awe  
And the tears trickle down.

—*11<sup>th</sup> c. Japanese*

**Title:** Spirit Vessel  
**Medium:** Cast glass; gold 12 x 12 x 2  
**Artist:** Leila Prestia  
**Price:** \$250

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## Artist Interpretation

**Inspiration:** The ancient vessel is a metaphor of the safe holding place for the human spirit. In ancient Egypt, vessels were used to transport possessions to the “next” world. They are a symbol of “taking care” of a special and precious cargo. This is especially important when we or someone we know is undergoing stress, grief, or loss.

**Process:** Sculpted clay vessel, mold made of hydrogel. Poured positive model of glass molding material, built custom box mold, placed positive model in plaster and then cast the glass. The process required a four day firing cycle, followed by extensive polishing. I applied the gold as the finishing touch.

**Title:** Healing Bells  
**Medium:** Oil on Linen  
**Artist:** Cathleen Rehfeld  
**Price:** \$650

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## Artist Interpretation

The “model” for this painting was a set of antique bells that belonged to my mother. She passed away in 2003.

My mother was an eclectic antique collector. She collected by intuition —by whatever caught her attention at the time. Very often, the things she collected had holes in them, or were in some way imperfect. I think she might have been making a statement that these things, though worn, scratched or damaged, still had value. I think the imperfect things had a healing value for her.

My personal vision for this painting was about the colors, the shapes and the three-dimensional quality of the bells.

For me, there is a relaxing, yet at the same time energizing quality to the painting, with its cool greenish background and the fact that its earthy red bells are centered on the canvas.

I didn't have any grand plan when I painted these bells. I painted them intuitively, just as my mother had collected her treasured objects. I simply opened myself up to the objects, responded to them, and did not question. I just painted.

Others, of course, might identify differently with the objects in the painting. They might identify, for instance, with the sounds they could imagine the bells making. Art and music, after all, and the healing power it holds, is in the eye of the beholder.

**Title:** Lotus: Into the Light  
**Medium:** Hand-painted silk fabric  
**Artist:** Sheila Ford Richmond  
**Price:** \$450

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## Artist Interpretation

This is a crepe de chine silk scarf hand painted with dyes.

It's a "portable" piece of art that can be worn, touched, hung on a wall or ceiling, or draped over lighting or furniture. It was created to provide comfort, love, peace, and quality of life.

In Tibet, the lotus is a symbol of purity. In nature, the lotus rises up out of the mud toward the light of heaven.

Each color has been mixed for symbolic meaning, as follows:

- Yellow for wisdom;
- Green for truth, healing and teaching;
- Turquoise for perception and clarity;
- Fuchsia for love, harmony and balance;
- Violet for transformation and freedom;
- White for ascension.

**Title:** Hanging Blessing Ball

**Medium:** Mixed media

**Artist:** Melody Robichard

**Price:** \$135



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## Artist Interpretation

My work for the “Tree of Life” is made from two of my loves — paper and fiber — and is very spiritually driven given the bittersweet subject of Hospice . . . in that world where hugs are more valuable than all the riches. God bless the sweet spirits of those who venture off before us, may they be filled with the everlasting love they take with them.

The **Hanging Blessing Ball** is a twined-woven ball encompassing a tiny vessel inside that could hold small stones or small pieces of paper with prayers written on them. It also contains a cotton ball that can be infused with the scent of a loved one to sweeten the atmosphere and give the room a feeling of comfort and familiarity.

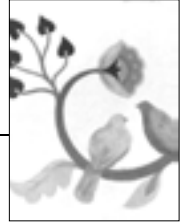
Stones and herbs pertaining to love, support, harmony and peace have been embedded throughout the enclosed body of the piece, and just under the base of the internal container.

The blessing ball can be hung on a bedpost or placed on the bedside table.

Blessings be.

**Title:** Blessing Book  
**Medium:** Mixed media  
**Artist:** Melody Robichard  
**Price:** \$145

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## Artist Interpretation

This is an interactive journal that can be kept at the bedside of a person who is ill and soon to die. Essentially, it's an "open" diary. Loved ones, friends, and caregivers are invited to read entries made in it by others and/or to record their own memories, thoughts, and feelings about the dying person.

This journal can be used in a variety of ways.

- Visitors could ask their friend questions, and record the answers in the journal — questions such as: “What were some of your favorite childhood memories? What was the proudest moment in your life?” The possible questions to ask are endless.
- Visitors could add their own recollections — things they remember about their friend; things they loved most about them.
- Photos could be added, quotes, drawings and doodles poems, prayers, the list is endless.
- If the loved one is well enough to participate in writing in the journal, he or she could add their own thoughts in their own handwriting.
- If the loved one is not well enough, then family and friends can do the recording and read aloud what others have written.

Ultimately, the book can serve as a loving keepsake once the loved one is gone. It would be filled with loving memories, for everyone to enjoy and reminisce over for generations to come.

This book was made with love in hopes it might serve as a safe place to land while spending precious time with a loved one.

Blessings.

**Title:** Memories of a Pressed Rose

**Medium:** Watercolor

**Artist:** Mary Rollins

**Price:** \$300



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## Artist Interpretation

This is a tribute piece in memory of my first husband who died of bone cancer 12 years ago. I've had many experiences with death since then, but the experience with my husband was the most intimate one I've had because I was his primary caregiver.

I used an actual pressed rose had had given me one time as the model for the painting.

I'm not sure why I chose that rose as the subject of my painting, but I think it has something to do with the connection and the thoughts I have about Hospice and my mother's death last January. Hospice was very involved with her, and I really appreciated all that Hospice did both for her and for my dad. Hospice is a wonderful organization — both for the person with the terminal illness and for their families.

**Title:** Remains  
**Medium:** Twining  
**Artist:** Mary Schlick  
**Price:** \$40 each

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## Artist Interpretation

This work consists of three necklaces and a talisman bag representing the steps we take in life toward death:

- The *steps* we take toward death
- Those *entwined* with our lives
- The *hands* that help us
- The *heart* that is the essence that remains after death

**Title:** Flirty Red Cocktail Hat

**Medium:** Millinery

**Artist:** Patricia Shypertt

**Price:** \$320



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## Artist Interpretation

The cocktail hat I'm presenting here represents my take on death, which is best summed up by this verse:

Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with  
the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and  
well preserved body, but rather to skid in  
sideways, chocolate in one hand, wine in the  
other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out  
and screaming, "WOO HOO what a ride!"

—*unknown*

**Title:** Ahh Jeffrey, Jeffrey  
**Medium:** Acrylic  
**Artist:** Janice Staver  
**Price:** NFS

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## Artist Interpretation

I'm so excited about being part of this important show. I became so grief stricken when my son died back in 2001, that I could hardly walk . . . or even breathe for that matter. Now, four years later, I've had an opportunity to be in "communion" with my son through the painting I'm submitting to the show. It's called *Ahh Jeffrey, Jeffrey*. It's a portrait of my son working in Ashland at the Shakespeare Festival —taking down one of the sets he built there. It's a deeply moving and personal piece for me.

**Title:** Spirits Soar  
**Medium:** Kiln-formed glass  
**Artist:** Linda Steider  
**Price:** \$2,385

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## Artist Interpretation

Hospice is asking us to talk. Talk with those you care about. Say the words that need to be said. Say what's in your heart. Don't wait until it's too late.

**My Thoughts:** Life . . . death . . . how to portray the enormity or profoundness of either in one piece seemed daunting. This work was an arduous process, beginning with bittersweet, sometimes painful conversations with friends about the end-of-life.

So, what is life? I think it's about love — who you love and who loves you. The crux of it, beyond the joy, passion, and pride, is giving. Equal to giving is forgiving. Forgiving all the little foibles that each of us imperfect humans have.

And what is death? Leaving this world for the next. Usually shedding pain, and the prison of one's body. Sometimes the release of spirit is more powerful than the sorrow left behind.

**The Interpretation:** I focused on the tree as an analogy to living, growing, gaining momentum through life's paths, obstacles, and adventures.

The tree trunk serves as the base of our journey, our experience, memory, who we are and where we began. It divides into three flower petals, representing the beauty, knowledge and relationships we gain as we travel this world.

The top portion of the tree symbolizes the release of spirit . . . the giving of oneself into the world beyond. Yet as we try to leave, ropes entangle ("strings attached"), holding us a bit longer. Tears make their way down the trunk, expressing the sorrow of those we leave behind.

**Title:** In Transition  
**Medium:** Watercolor; 24 x 24  
**Artist:** Cleo Sterling  
**Price:** \$350

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**Title:** Even In the Midst of Darkness

**Medium:** Watercolor

**Artist:** Bill Sturman

**Price:** \$250



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## Artist Interpretation

Even in the midst of darkness there may be light . . . perhaps brightness.

At the time of one's dying, it may not appear to be worth the effort to search for those touches of brightness, as they may be so fleeting. But it may be possible to hold onto and stretch those moments, so that they will help me . . .

- Make the darkness less enveloping.
- Keep in touch with memories that still live within.
- Give thanks to my present caregivers.
- Rejoice in the wondrous accident of my being, even as my elements are about to be returned to nature's broth . . . to nurture another life.

**Title:**           **Bearing Fruit**  
**Medium:**       Watercolor     28 x 36  
**Artist:**        Denise Vance  
**Price:**         \$650

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## **Artist Interpretation**

“Bearing Fruit” is done on a 22” x 30” full sheet of paper. I thought long and carefully about this subject and what it means to me — it’s actually a very passionate subject for me in that I have very strong spiritual views on it.

The subject of the painting is a large cluster of grapes, hanging on branches. The perimeter is made of large colorful leaves. As in most of my pieces, the objects are very colorful; in this case, mostly purples, oranges and greens.

The picture represents what our lives are to be in Christ Jesus our Lord. He says, “I am the vine, you are the branches: he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit: for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

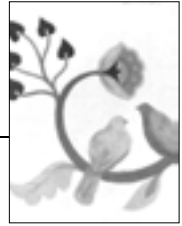
He is life, and in Him there is no death but only living eternity with Him.

**Title:**           **The Meaning of Life**

**Medium:**       Prisma Color Pencil

**Artist:**       Cindy Villa

**Price:**         \$100



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## **Artist Interpretation**

Cindy Villa was born in Guadalajara, Mexico, and now lives in White Salmon, Washington. Cindy became interested in art in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and as she refined her technique, she began entering art contests. She is now a student at the Henkel Middle School in Bingen, Washington.

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The piece I entered into the Hospice of The Gorge show is about death and life. I have included elements of my culture throughout the piece.

The two hands of different races united together represent peace and freedom in our world. The two roses express death and a sad person. The skull and the fire are both expressions of death. The cross represents the “rest in peace” sign for someone who passed away. The mountains and sunrise are expressing freedom. The eagle represents the flag in my culture and the clouds are an expression of life.

**Title:** Witness  
**Medium:** Silver gelatin print  
**Artist:** Christine Morlock Vogt  
**Price:** NFS

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## Artist Interpretation

### Witness

In Loving Memory of Sebastian Garrido-Bor: Friend, classmate, photographer, artist, son, brother, husband, and father.

I met Sebastian in art school, one year before cancer came to claim him.

He was one of my best friends. Photography was our connection—how we recognized, understood, and portrayed ourselves and the world around us. I photographed him throughout a year of treatment encompassing radiation, chemotherapy, surgery, and more chemotherapy. We worked together to capture his experience and to make sense of it.

I spent countless hours with him that year and we laughed a lot. Laughter was who he was. I was lucky.

On September 27, 2004 Sebastian lost his battle with cancer.

This photograph represents my perspective of the circle of life. The portrait is Sebastian, but I am present, taking the photo, in the dark shadow on the right. At the end of a life, our actions and our accomplishments melt away. The real legacy we leave is in what we give of ourselves to others and the footsteps we leave behind on the souls of those we touch. Sebastian is gone, but his life continues in me and in all of us who knew him because he shared himself with us.

Witness.