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Art Matters

Art: The mystery inside what we see



By Janet Sellers

“It is easy to forget that behind the polished mirror of history is a messy and cumulative reality. There is little difference between the intelligentsia of years past and the friends sitting at your dining room table.”—Brainard Carey, The Art World Demystified.

Kids and adults alike make drawings, paintings, and sculptures. We’ve got art everywhere—even birthday cakes are now in the realm of elaborate sculptures. Art just takes giving it a try with simple materials and maybe a friend and a class or two to ignite a lifelong enjoyment and satisfying pursuit. We are surrounded by art and art thinking all over the place. Every school and business and news media presentation is grounded in the skills of art. Art is not actually a mystery, it is our everyday life.

I think one of the most important parts of getting our art made is having a skill comfort zone to express an idea—sometimes we need to express ideas in ways that are not in words. Our vision and mind catch on to a picture much faster than words, and the persuasion industry, aka media marketing, uses visuals to get us to be great consumers. It’s not just for commerce! Making art and craft, taking a class in art to improve skills can offer us a powerful way to put our ideas out into the world, and with any luck we will share them with others and enjoy that together. Art is a specifically personal but also social involvement, and it is everywhere.

Why do humans create? Is a better question, “Why do humans ask questions?” If someone else “gets” our art, we feel an approval of sorts, that they some-

how see inside of us and approve, connect, appreciate us. That is a powerfully good feeling.

The need to create comes from ideas about solving problems, an impulse to create a solution. It takes a while and some skill to solve the visual problems, but mostly it takes heart and desire. I teach and make art for a living, and there is a special something in the creative process that is not material, mental, or mechanical. It is a certain special impulse, albeit grounded in skills related strongly to math (via patterns and geometry) and physical perceptions.

At the end of the day, visual art is a trail, a marker made via a creative person, and within the artwork itself is a sensibility that makes it art and not just a functional object. For music, it is the sound that shows the essence of the impulse, and for dance it is movement. The human-ness of the act of imagining and making something of that imagination is truly pleasing, and we can share that with others and they are pleased. How good that feels!

Do get out and enjoy the last of our warm evenings for art! The last Art Hop of the year is Sept. 15, 5-8 p.m. More than 16 venues will have art on view and for sale, along with refreshments and live music all over town in the arts district of Second and Third Streets between Jefferson and Front Streets.

Janet Sellers is an artist, local art teacher and writer. She welcomes your questions and comments: janetsellers@ocn.me



Above: These are two views of a confirmed Ute Indian Prayer Tree, known locally as “Ascension Tree One.” It is located above the King’s Deer community. The tree, or trees, curve and undulate above and along the ground in an elaborate creation of human imagination and crowned at the top by Nature. It is likely hundreds of years old. *Photos by Janet Sellers.*

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