

2020 Brain Injury Art Show

Presented by the Brain Injury Alliance of Washington

In Collaboration with Bellevue Arts Museum



ART | CRAFT | DESIGN
BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM

Earline Alston

Autumn Showers

Mixed media on
illustration board

2017



A Seattle resident since 1966, Alston served in the US Army Medical Corp after High School. Post military discharge, Alston earned a B.S. in Health Information Administration from Seattle University. Over the next 20 years she worked as an Allied Healthcare professional in multiple healthcare facilities throughout the greater Seattle area and Everett.

“Then one day my life changed in an instant.”

On January 2, 2014, Alston had an Arterial Venous Malformation (AVM aka hemorrhagic stroke.) Prior to her stroke and brain surgery, Alston had absolutely no interest in poetry, but after her stroke, from March through December 2014, Alston had written over 100 inspirational poems and quotes which she eagerly shared with family and friends. Then on February 14th, 2015, Alston reluctantly accepted a friend’s invitation to an arts and crafts party because she said, “I don’t like to create art!” Little did she know, accepting her friend’s invitation would dramatically change her life. Since 2015, Alston has become a prolific visual Artist, exhibiting over 30 impressionistic landscape paintings in solo and group exhibits throughout the Seattle area including BIAWA.

Alston’s process includes using a combination of mixed media to render anthropomorphic landscapes. “I discovered an innate meditative art process that involves letting go control over the painting’s outcome. This allows my creative spirit to flow freely. In order to maintain this meditative state, I try to limit the amount of time that I study my painting before it is completed. By using this approach, I am always surprised to discover what I have created! I review my finished paintings from different positions to discover new perspectives. Months later, my interpretation of a painting will change as I grow in self-awareness.” In addition to the Pacific Northwest’s terrain, Alston’s landscapes are informed by her sister Dottie, who passed away from multiple sclerosis and ALS seven months after Alston’s stroke. “She was known as the Artist in our family. Her personality and style influences my art. Today when I paint a tree, I imagine her face – as branches and twigs join together to form the essence of her familiar smile. And tree trunks that remind me of her elegant long brown legs.” Alston credits the discovery of art for not only aiding in her stroke recovery, but also, for providing an emotional outlet to grieve the loss of her dearly beloved sister.

Alston’s awards and recognitions includes: an Honorable Mention award, Shoreline Community Art Festival, 2015 and a First Place Ribbon, Gallery Onyx 13th Annual Juried Exhibit, 2018. Alston’s work was published in the Onyx Fine Art: 2017 Commemorative Publication Documenting Artists of African Descent in the Pacific Northwest.

Alston’s critical acclaim includes two separate Seattle Times art reviews in 2017. Spirit in Nature, (solo exhibit) at the NW African American Museum and Gallery Onyx 12th Annual Gallery Onyx “Truth B Told” exhibit.

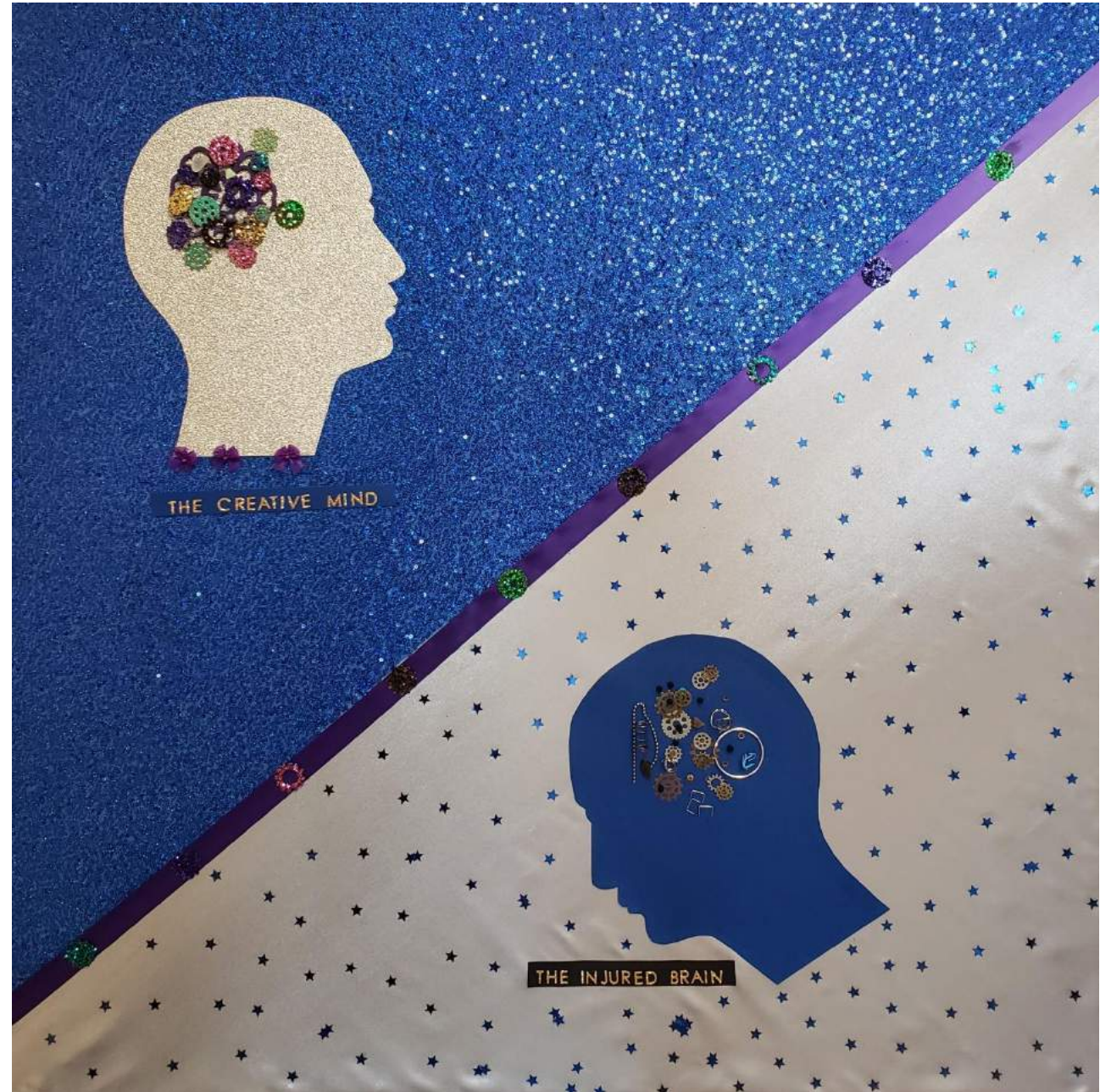
“There is something about creating art with renderings of trees, mountains, water, or the sky that brings me so much hope, joy and peace. Art serves as my bridge to connect – physically, emotionally, and spiritually.”

Connie Ambuehl

The Creative Mind, The Injured Brain

Collage

2020



Emily Apfel

Exposed

Photograph

2020

This piece of artwork was photographed and designed by Emily Apfel. Emily is a self-taught artist working mostly with photography and mixed media. In December 2017, Emily was struck by a drunk driver who ran a red light within a mile of her home. As a result of the collision, she sustained a life-changing Brain Injury. Her work is abstract and often includes many layers representing the complexity of her emotions as she adapts to her new life with Brain Injury.

Emily would like to give special thanks to her mentor and meditative guide, Janet Novinger who has inspired hope and lighted the way for her new journey.





Rob Carr

Post Cards from Home

Pen and ink

2020

For Rob Carr, art has always been expressive, exploratory, and healing. A survivor of Traumatic Brain Injury, his work is informed by personal experience, future visions, music, literature, art history, and the tactile and dialogic relationship with the chosen media.

Rob was born and raised in Seattle and Hawaii. His professional career is in Mental Health. He is currently working on his doctorate in Psychology and lives in Seattle with his family.

Marc Fairbanks

*Dance of the Nucleogenic
Phototrophe*

Oil paint on canvas

2020





Aimee Graham

Pyper's Dance

Photograph

2019

It's takes courage to be an optimist. For me, photography is a practice in being mindful of the good in the world. There are daily struggles living with a Brain Injury and when words fail me, a photo can often convey my feelings and thoughts. The beauty of my mind is being able to see differently and in turn construct a world with no boundaries. Thank you for sharing this experience with me.

Bridget Halfaker

Self Portrait

Colored pencil

2020

On January 31st, 2013 I was hit by a car while walking across the crosswalk. My left shoulder and hip were damaged by the impact of landing on the street, as well as my brain. These injuries are depicted by bite marks in this artwork, Self Portrait.

My memories, words, self-confidence, and interests are depicted swirling out of my damaged brain. My eyes, once a reliable tool used in my favorite past time, reading, are now swirly and unable to focus. My right hand and foot, controlled by my injured left brain, do not work as well. I drop items and trip over my own foot. My emotions are a jumble of confusion, overlaid with anger, depicted by three mouths: smiling, surprised, and frowning.

The colors I used are from my healing practices involving chakra meditation. The frame is mother of pearl which is a gemstone of protection.





Bret Hart

Hank the Cow Dog

Oil paint on panel

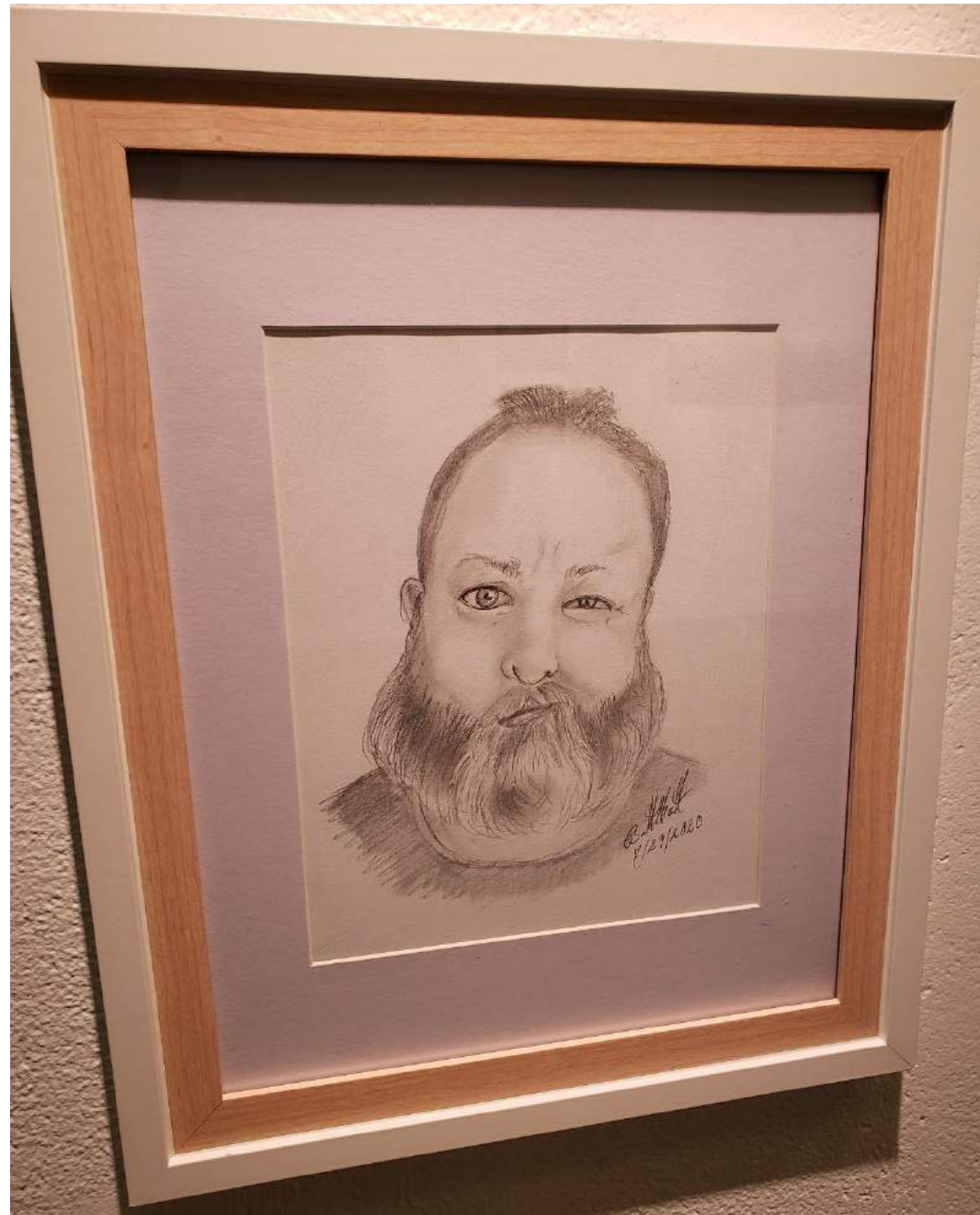
2020

Brett Hiatt

Self Stare

Mechanical pencil

2020



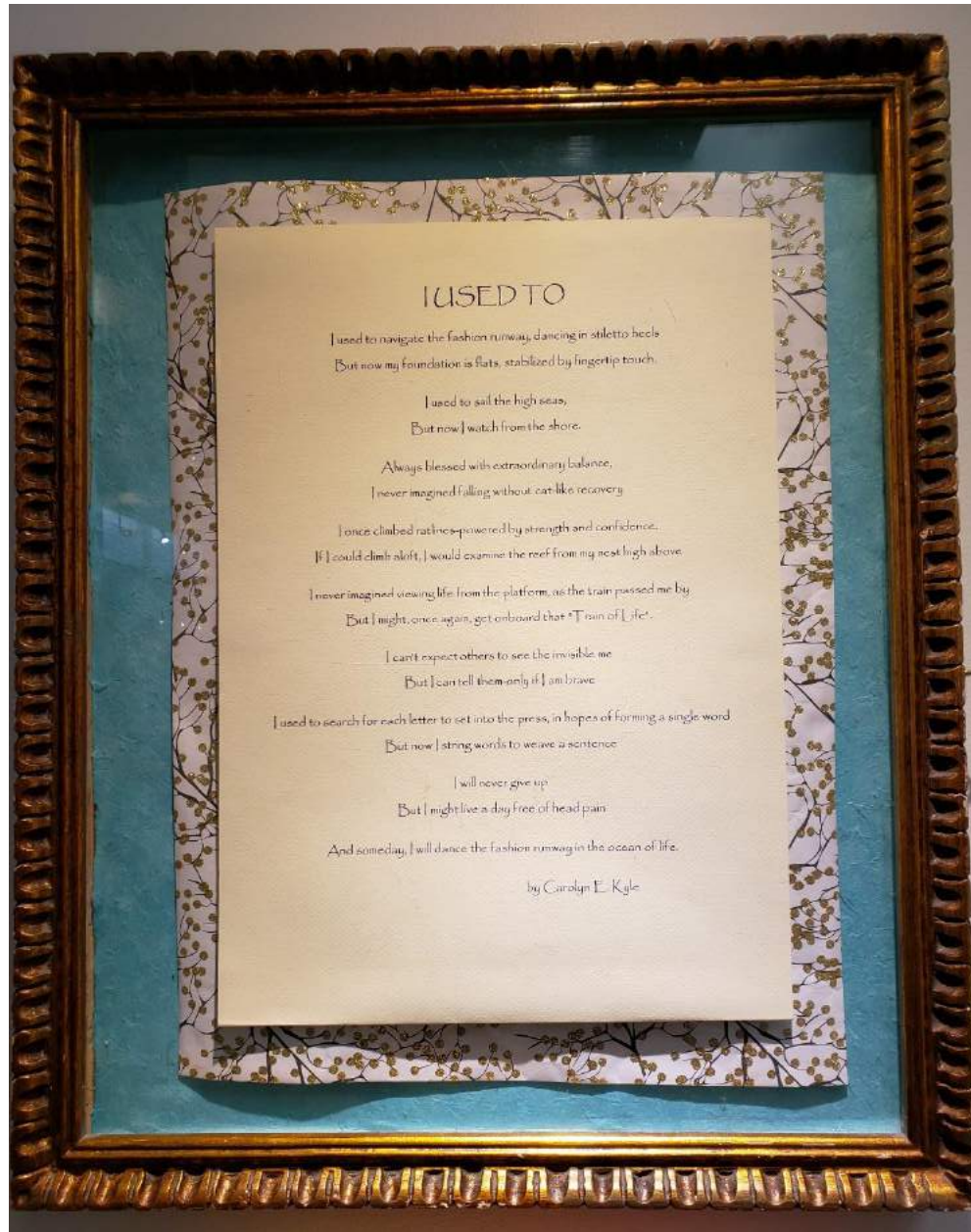
Kelly Hodges

Coral Bells

Photograph

2010





Carolyn Kyle

I Used To

Poetry

2020

My Life Motto: "Do it All, Don't Miss a Thing!" until.....I sustained a Traumatic Brain Injury. I fell on a neglected city sidewalk.

Inspired by my rich, diverse, spontaneous pre-injury life, my poem, "I USED TO", captures my life as an observer of the life I once lived.

Poetry helps me process both the world out there, and the world inside myself.

by Carolyn E. Kyle

AKA: (Educator, Dancer, Performance Artist, Intellectual, Explorer, Historian, World Traveler, Sailor, Friend...a person with a changed brain).

Rodney Lawrence

Smile

Acrylic painting

2020

Rodney Lawrence, age 51, is a survivor of Traumatic Brain Injury as the result of a motorcycle accident shortly before his 18th birthday. At times he has been a landscape laborer while working alongside his father. Rodney has enjoyed drawing and painting since childhood.

Recently he became a resident at Sycamore Glen Adult Family Home in Clarkston, WA. He is happy to have encouragement and support for continuing to develop his artistic interests at Sycamore Glen.





Trish Murphy

Sun Kissed

Watercolor – Rutilated

2017

I have always been interested in creative endeavors. As a preschooler I taught myself to knit using hay baling twine from my neighbor, two sharpened pencils, and following picture directions in the World Book Encyclopedia.

Through the years I learned many arts & crafts such as Rosemaling. When I moved to the Seattle area I started portrait painting. Shortly afterwards due to chemical sensitivity I switched from oils to watercolors.

Then I had a car accident and I couldn't paint. Painting in watercolors requires a lot of forethought and planning which I was incapable of at that time. Comprehending or even being able to read a book whether for fun or instruction was no longer doable. But I so wanted to paint and be creative again.

I kept in touch with art friends and continued to go to art group demos hoping to get better enough to paint again. Then I saw an artist friend demo how to create a background using saran wrap. For some reason this really excited me - no thinking or preplanning necessary. I went home, tried it and it worked.

My friend would then paint a planned image on top. But I wanted to make it my "own". So I paint what I see in the created background almost like tea leaf reading. The lines created by the Saran Wrap remind me of similar fissures in gem stones hence the name "Rutilated Watercolors". I use dowsing to pick the paint colors. By limiting my palette to 3 colors I am able to achieve a beautifully colored harmonious painting.

I hope you enjoy my "new norm" way of painting. May you feel the light and happiness of Sun Kissed (flowers) upon you.

Carolyn Nelson

Magnificent Seven

Oil on canvas

2020





Patricia Newton

Clowning Around

Acrylic painting

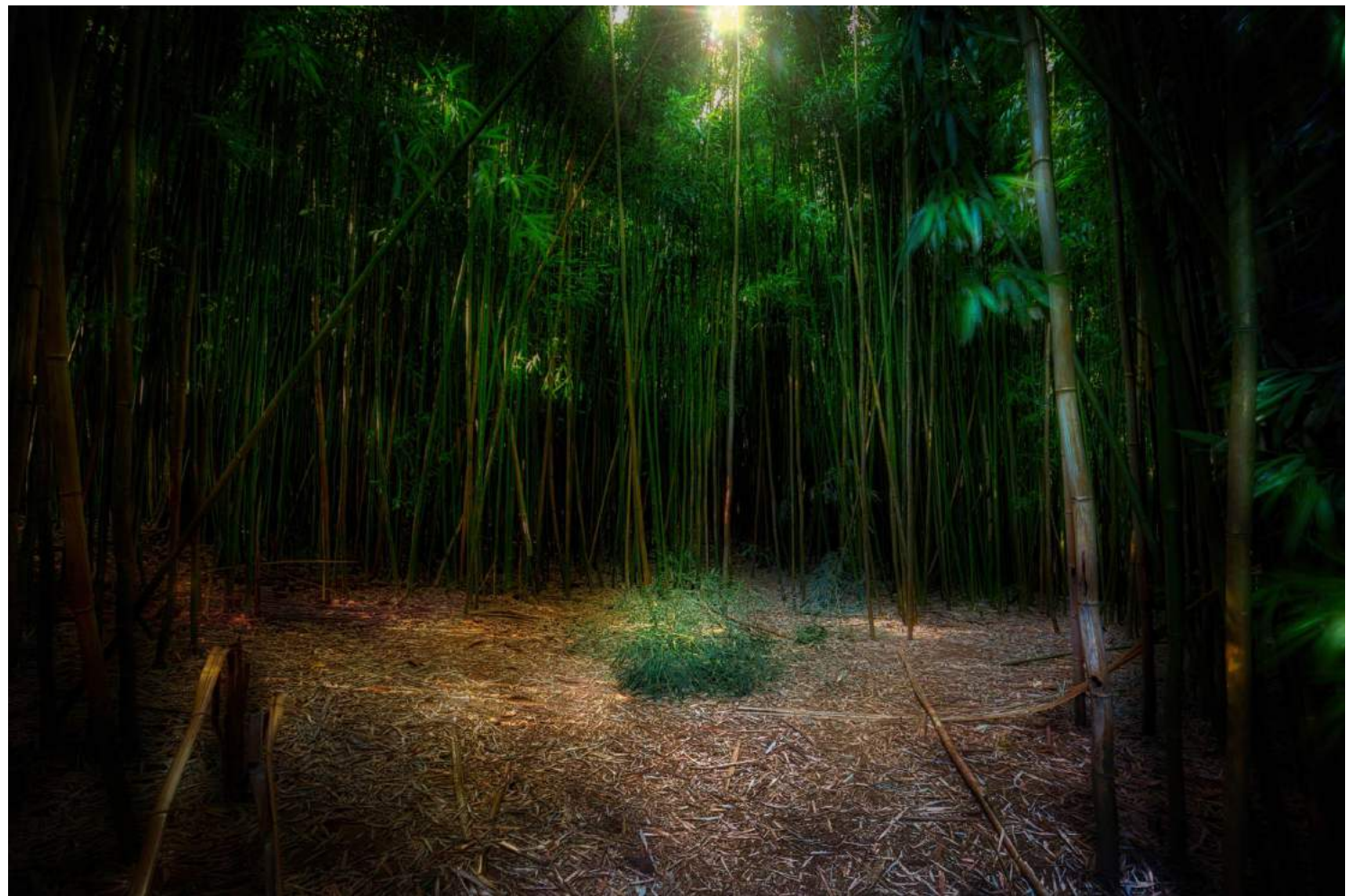
2019

John Pavlish

Hope Within a Void

Photograph

2019



I have chosen this piece titled "Hope Within a Void" to represent the experience of isolation and despair from a Traumatic Brain Injury. While acclimating back into society, I received a different treatment than before my injury. Without a physical handicap, people felt I was able to be at their level. It took me years to understand and accept this new trajectory of my life. I am not completely healed from the psychological and physical impact of a TBI. Through steady progress, I have been able to articulate myself and understand others.

Photography became an outlet in my life after having a stroke. This medium removes objects and focuses only on the subject from the artist's perspective. Photography brings forth harmony and peace in my life, aiding myself in understanding and accepting who I am. Without photography, I would not be able to appreciate the joys of this world beyond darkness. My photography consists of a similar theme of reprocessing my journey with Brain Injury.

David Perry

Sweets Perry

Pen and paper

2020

My ideas are usually “in the moment” and inspired by how I feel. So there’s often emotions of anxiety, angst, and hope at any given time. A lot of my inspiration is expressed much like the punk rock record covers and Rock & Roll art from the 60s to the 90s.

I currently am learning how to cross over into the world of computer-based showcasing, like the use of Instagram. This is a big challenge but I’m aware it’s the way of the world.

This is my first art show and it’s a really cool experience. I look forward to sharing and following others in the Seattle art community.





Rob Pezely

Wood Carved Skull

Wood and paint

2020

Near the end of 2017, a driver ran me down as I was legally crossing a marked crosswalk in Seattle. The car's impact caused a Diffuse Axonal Injury (DAI) to my brain and the symptoms will likely impact the rest of my life. Paramedics submitted me to ICU in Harborview for the first month after impact. My awesome wife Becky found and checked me into Craig Hospital in Denver, Colorado for the next two months. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Craig Hospital. If I had to deal with my situation, Craig Hospital was the best place to be. 2018-2020 has consisted of me continuing much cognitive and physical rehabilitation, on my own. My wife has acted as my primary safety/caregiver for the last 2 years.

I completed college in 1994 in Pennsylvania, receiving a BA in Computer Science. For almost 26 years, I worked at computer programming related jobs. Post-TBI, I currently do not recall most of my computer-related career, or programming skills.

I chose to carve this skull because I felt that shaping the soft pine wood might feel soothing during cutting and sanding. I did very much enjoy the shaping process.

I find my current life situation enjoyable, and very task/list-based. I find great joy in walking our antique push-mower to mow our lawn. I miss Burgers at Buckley's lunchtime visits! I do vividly remember and find joy in performing my bicycle mechanic skills. I frequently worked as a professional bicycle mechanic during 1985-1995. I currently have a recreational bicycle shop in my home and find much joy when performing bicycle tune-ups for friends and neighbors.

Diane Rasch

Warrior in Flight

Multimedia

2020

I made this piece to represent who I am now over the 14 years from the Brain Injury that turned my world upside down.

I was first a survivor then later I became a thriver. Now I am a *Warrior in Flight*.

Just as the butterfly flies around, I am also through my letters and cards to others to encourage, support, and bring hope. I have a birthday card project goal to send birthday cards to everyone in the state of Washington with a Brain Injury. It is still in the early stages. This has become expanded to include thinking of you, congratulations, and more.

I have stated to dream big and never give up in all I put my hands to. I have also become very brave in building a business that others can use my cards to bring hope and encouragement to others. Heartfelt Tidbits of Creativity is now over 7 years old and in more than 60 shops, 16 states and counting!



George Sherwood

Butterfly Effect

Digital Media

2020



This artwork was designed by George Sherwood, with the help of his computer. This piece, called “Butterfly Effect”, is reference to chaos theory, a phenomenon where a minute, localized change in a complex system can have large effects elsewhere. Most anyone who has a Brain Injury, or who knows someone who does, can relate to this abstract concept. George, is the product of multiple head traumas; growing up playing full-contact football, boxing for fun with his friends after school, reckless behavior in his 20s, a few auto accidents, and a closed skull fracture from a scrum in 2007.

Remarkably, George seemed recovered from all of these injuries. In 2017, when George received Cranial-Sacral Therapy on his neck, trapezius, and the back of his skull, all of his past head traumas came back at once, shocking his neurological and muscle skeletal systems. Like a lightning bolt from the skies George had a Brain Injury. The cloud of concussion settled in on him. A Butterfly Effect, irreversible.

This trauma has left George with trouble finding and utilizing the skills and assets that made George valuable, both personally and professionally.

George ends up doing things alone. Multi-tasking and processing information on the fly is difficult for him. Like tracking conversations in a large group of people, and participating in meaningful dialog when there is a lot of stimuli and external distractions. George’s brain is working on overdrive, especially in new or noisy places. His brain’s executive function is processing the information differently now, and this is more-often extremely exhausting for him.

However, George finds peace of mind and a deep and personal connection to ART. Different mediums of art: painting, photography, digital art, design, creative thinking and writing, and defining and meditating with words. “Art is so much fun for me”. He says. “It allows me to center my focus and attention in creating something from my heart and connects my heart to the attention of my mind and brain”.

He thanks Janet Novinger and the people and programs within the Imaginal Network in Seattle for giving him resources, friends, and a community for healing. George has used his imagination to become someone new, and in some ways better, then the person he was prior to 2017.



Paul Shin

Mr. Wolf

Acrylic

2020

After my Brain Injury, I struggled with memory. One day, I saw some of these different items of nature, and all of sudden it sparked a memory for me - good and bad.

I struggle with memories of my growing up years and my son growing up years. I did know many of these items were a part of my past.

I wanted to create a piece using nature and animals' common behavior because I was told that these events were a part of our growing up time with friends. So, I used these words and items and put them on a natural background to represent hidden or lost memories.

May this piece aid you in bringing back some of your memories.

Juli Sipe

The Gates of Hell

Glass

2010



Making art is the driving force of my life, and my work reflects my experiences. As a result, sharing my art is as personal as sharing a journal. In 2017 I took a fall, which resulted in a mild Traumatic Brain Injury, a broken arm, and many vision issues. Recovery has felt daunting, sometimes impossible. But I am experiencing some improvement with my vision, and the impossible seems possible, once more. My introduction to, and love of, the glass arts began in 1992 when I took a stained-glass class, which led me to explore torch work before discovering my true passion—fusing. My work often incorporates words, some visible, some hidden. As my love of glass art grew over the years, I became a volunteer and an instructor at Pratt Fine Art. Ten years into my glass art experiments I unearthed some surprising family history: my Great-Great Grandfather Stephen Slack was an illegal immigrant from England who was also a glass artist. He created stained glass windows for churches and cathedrals from coast-to-coast, including Battell Chapel at Yale University.



Tracy Sprenger

Colorful Galaxies

Poured Acrylics

2020

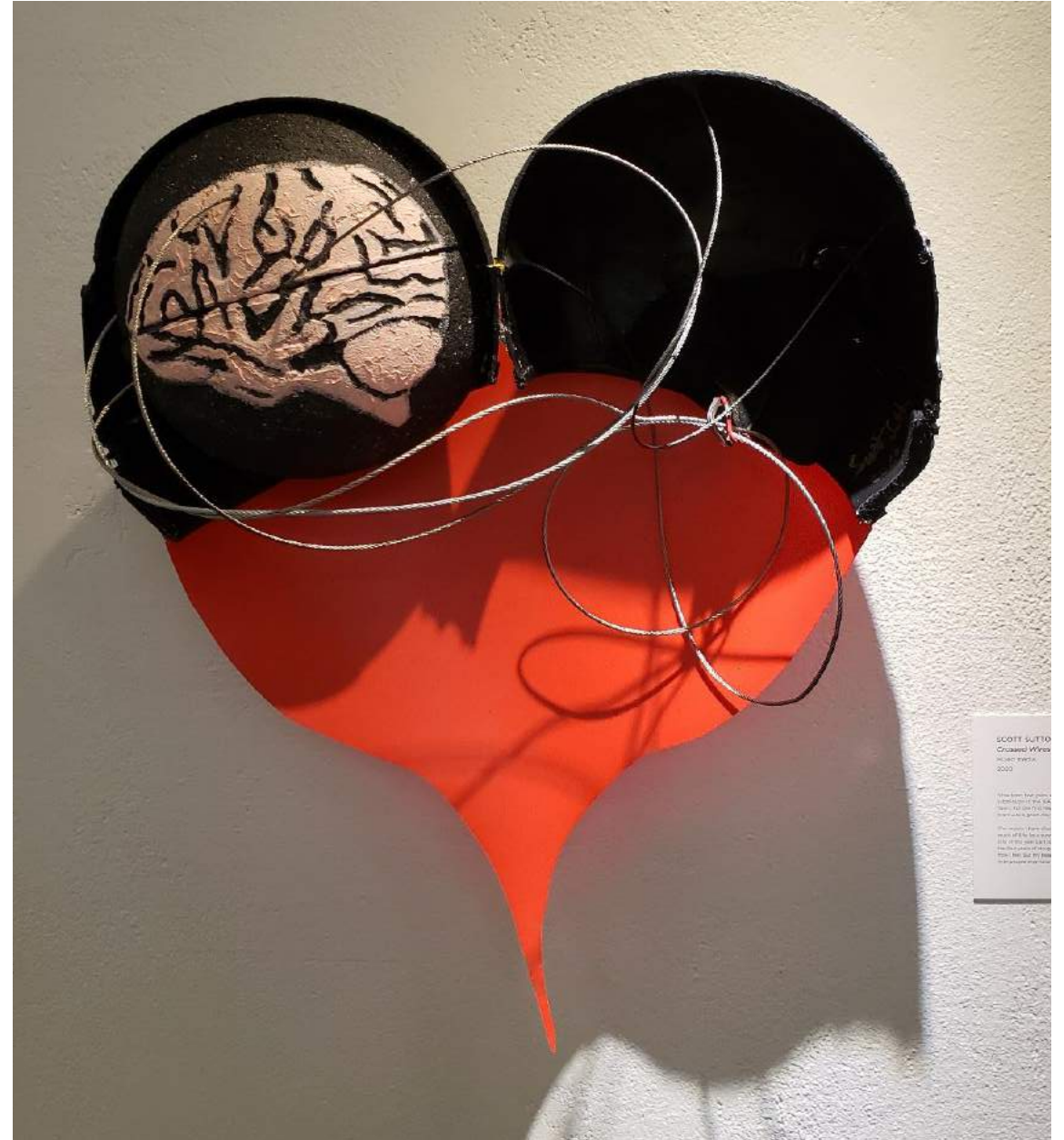
Scott Sutton

Crossed Wires

Mixed Media

2020

It has been four years since a fall changed my life. This is my third submission to the BIAWA Brain Injury Art Show and the third heart. For the first few years getting through the day without tears was a good day. Now they only come when I'm tired. The reason I have chosen hearts for my art is that it takes so much of it to be a survivor and even more to support one. The title of this year's art is Crossed Wires. The four wires symbolize the four years of struggle. The crossed wires and empty half are how I feel. But my heart is strong, and I have surrounded myself with people that have even stronger ones.



Heather Van Vleck

Dentrite

Alcohol Ink, Yupo on Wood

2020

My name is Heather Van Vleck, and I am a survivor of a violent assault that gave me a Brain Injury. In 1998 I worked as a corrections officer for King County Jail, while I was putting myself through college at the University of Washington. I very rarely share all the details of the assault, because it's upsetting. I sustained more than ten blows to the left side of my head, with a closed fist. The man who assaulted me was sentenced to more than ten years in prison for the subsequent injuries inflicted upon myself and another person. I was awarded the Medal of Valor, for the lives that I saved, and a Purple Heart. I've been left with memory deficiencies and a tremor.

When I was taken to Harborview, the nurse told me about BIAWA and how they might help me process my head injury, but I did not interact with BIAWA for the next 18 years. In 2016, I had another head injury. At this time, I found solace in art. I became an artist creating with acrylic on canvas and collage. Working with color, line, shape, and form, I was able to bring peace to my heart. In 2017 I came across an ad calling for artists to submit to the Brain Injury Art Show, and I reached out. Through the annual art show, which I have participated in for the past four years, I found my people. Hearing tales of strength and courage have made me stronger, and helped me recognize my own journey. Thank you to the BIAWA for changing my life.



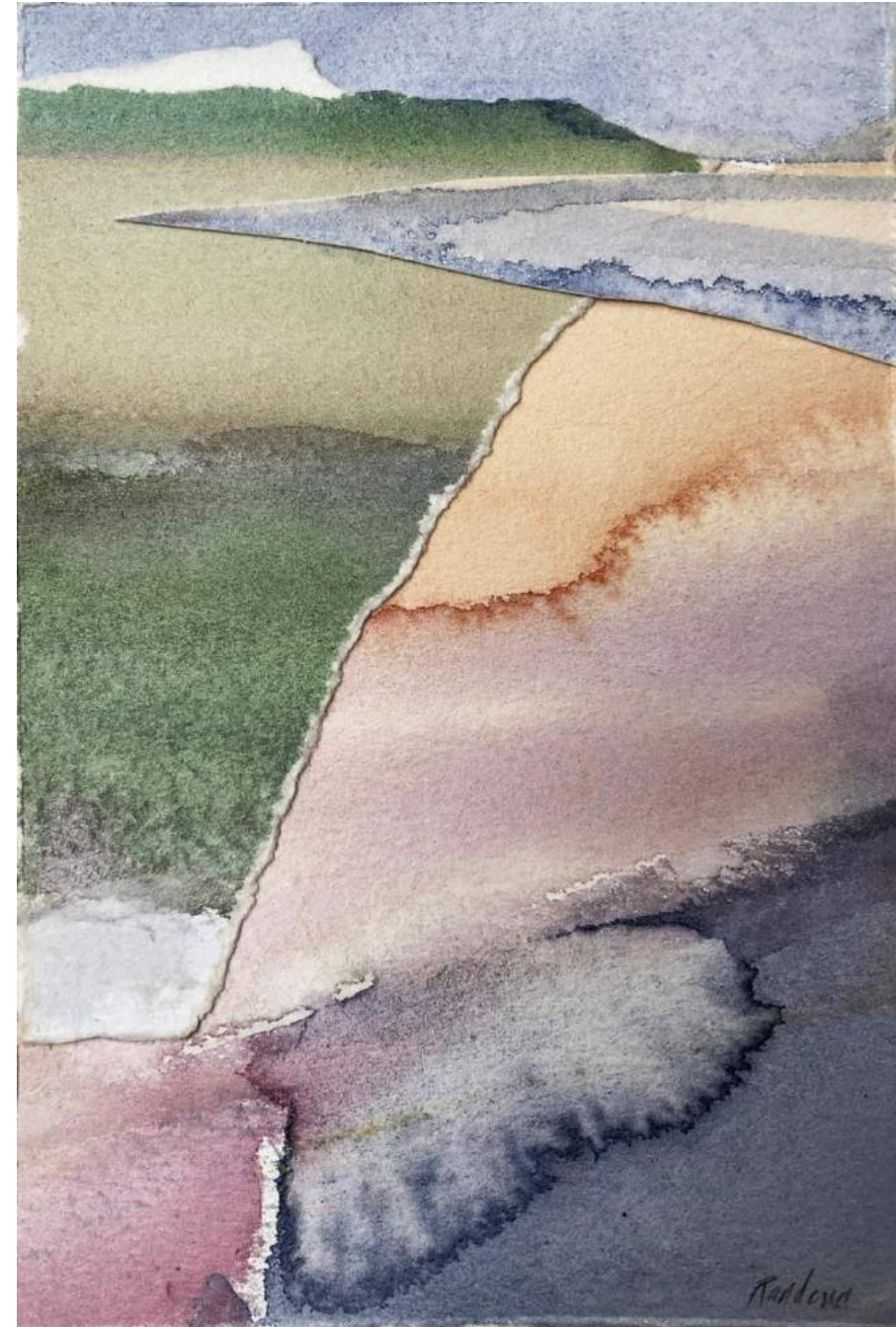
Randena Walsh

Point of No Return

Watercolor collage

2020

Collage has been my favorite way to artistically express myself after surviving a Traumatic Brain Injury four years ago. I combine elements of previous work in new creative pieces that are both stimulating and therapeutic to construct. My life fell apart when my Brain Injury occurred. Now, with my art, I am putting it back together in a new way.



Peg Warren

Apple Blossom

Watercolor

2020



Elizabeth York

Ko'olaus in the Mist

Watercolor

2019



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