

The Creative Forum

July 2019

A Monthly Publication of Creative Wellness Opportunities
A Peer Run Service of the Mental Health Association

First Friday Artist : Mary K Grant



First, I'll speak about the art pieces in my show: Most of the print ink pieces were done at Creative Wellness Opportunities workshops. I did paintings there as well, and at home - landscapes from photographs taken near my home. I also did a series of colored pencil renderings from when I was a member of the "Rochester Area Colored Pencil Club". Finally, I worked in wood for the last few years as an artisan in a marquetry workshop at the J.C.C. The cartoons for these were my own, mostly created from the period 2006-2008.

What makes me create art? I am inspired by nature and the stories of the Bible. I particularly love the Genesee River. I like to portray personages and scenes from both the Old and New Testament. This preoccupation with visual art has been going on for a long time! My interest in visual arts began at about age three (3). My first pencil sketch, which I still have, shows a chicken. Some relatives along the way encouraged me, but it was mostly me, something inside driving me. Well, my cousin Joel Crystal was also my high school art teacher. Dad painted at home for several years. They both encouraged me with gifts of art supplies.

My favorite medium? I don't really have one, as you can see! In life, I have explored many areas of fine art including painting in watercolor, acrylic and oil, printmaking, sculpting in stone, woodworking, and more. I will part with any of my works - if they find a good home! They are intended to be enjoyed! Right now, I am working in textile and fiber arts with crochet and quilting. That's not showcased at CWO right now.

My work is influenced by my heart, my emotional state at the time of creation as well as the scenery and weather. I like it to be spontaneous but sometimes I plan and cartoon carefully to prepare for the final rendering. Believe me, I am drawn to the Old Masters' work including Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, the Van Eyck brothers, Albrecht Durer, and many more. For Moderns I enjoy Peter Max, Monet, Van Gogh, and Winslow Homer.



I wish to express beauty in my work. I also try to show reverence and deep insight into religious motifs and miracles. Sometimes my work gets symbolic. Creativity has been the center of my claim to health for years. From the beginning, it gave my life structure and direction. I found a way to channel my soul into something I could share with others.



CWO has given me a tremendous platform to climb to wellness. It is like a second home - the studio I could never afford to build. In these rooms I have had moments of happiness, balance and peace which combine with a sense of companionship to replace some of the commonplace things, people and places most people take for granted - things I do not have because I was shunned. I have rebuilt my "oomph" at C.W.O.!

Please join me and Michael Kolb at our First Friday show from 5:30PM to 8:00PM on July 12th, 2019 at Creative Wellness Gallery, 320 N. Goodman Street

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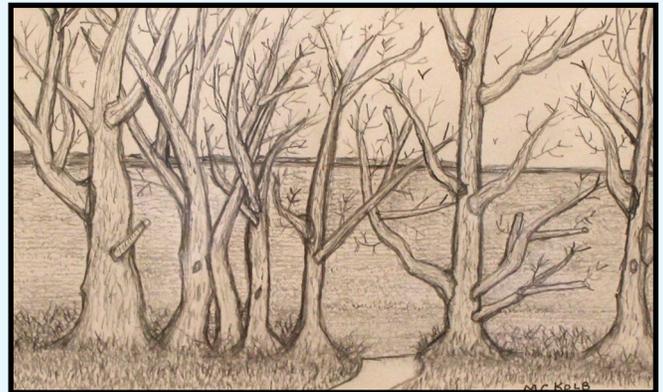
First Friday Artist : Michael Kolb

It was later in my life that I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. This explained my manic highs and dark lows from earlier in my life. The pain started to hurt so bad that I began to self-medicate to deal with it and I did this for many years. I got to a point where nothing was working and it was getting worse. I wanted to die. I was sent to U of R Partial where I was introduced to Creative Wellness Opportunities. I went to the Mutual Support Group and I immediately felt like I belonged. Then I went to some art workshops and felt welcome and treated with respect. My love for art was awakened. I started to draw and paint again.

I've worked in pencil, ink, and watercolor. I have been trying new styles with watercolor and stay busy everyday working on as many as three projects at once. I respect the work of the great art masters, especially Michelangelo's work.



This is my first show at CWO and I feel happy and honored to have my work in competitions, shows, and available for purchase. Thank you to all the great people and artists I have met along the way here .



Please join me and Mary K Grant on Friday, July 12 from 5:30 to 8:00PM at Creative Wellness Opportunities for a celebration of our art!

Reel Minds and CWO Art Exhibit



Are all creative minds alike? Do ability, mental illness and creativity intersect? What role does creativity have in our lives and how does it manifest? How do we creatively maneuver through life in the face of our lived experiences and do our mental health and disability challenges help us see the world differently? How do they help us create?

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Reel Minds and CWO Art Exhibit



These questions and more were explored by the closing films of the Reel Minds Film Fest held on Tuesday, June 18th at the Jewish Community Center. The first film was a preview of an upcoming documentary, *A Beautiful Day Tomorrow: Taking Suicide Awareness on the Road*, a road trip documentary film made with love(bug) featuring OC87 Recovery Diaries Editor in Chief, Gabriel Nathan and his beloved car Herbie the Love Bug on a road trip to raise awareness about suicide prevention. The Love Bug had already made an appearance during the welcoming artist reception and attendees were able to engage with Gabriel, the car and the powerful message that was created. The primary fea-

tured documentary, *Design-ability*, centered around a professional design business in Spain, La Casa De Carlota, which is guided by the philosophy that the artists and designers' experiences and abilities are assets and essential to creating fresh and unique work. They hired a team of artists with disabilities including mental illnesses precisely for their unique perspectives, abilities and specialties.

The films were followed by an engaging discussion that explored the role of creativity and how our unique lived experiences and abilities shape that way we create. My fellow panelists Gabriel Nathan from OC87 Recovery Diaries and Karen James, Rehabilitation Counselor II, Rochester Psychiatric Center, reflected on the questions introduced above. Guided by the overarching theme of the films and audience insight, we discussed how creativity takes many forms in our daily lives not only in art expression in the workforce. There is power in the ability to use creativity to negotiate solutions and rise above the challenges of living with a mental illness or disability to find meaning, purpose and community. We can creatively perform little acts of rebellion to stand up and show people that it is because of our lived experiences and mental wellness journeys, partnered with our creative spirits that we purposefully engage in our workforce and communities.

Early in the evening, a juried selection of work from Creative Wellness Opportunities Annual Show for 2019, *Illumination* was highlighted in the sunlit lobby and Lipson Lounge of the JCC Theater. The artwork was a cross section of some of the diverse mediums, techniques and vibrant works of the full exhibit from Creative Wellness Opportunities. Art pieces consisted of a variety of paintings, drawings, mixed media and photography. [Artists and film fest attendees mingled as they walked through the art exhibit and enjoyed live music by Tina Costanza and Annie Fox.](#) The reception was both a celebration of creativity and community. This was my first time attending and participating at a Reel Minds event and I was inspired by the films, conversations and



community I experienced. The collaborative efforts of all involved left me feeling connected to others working to break stigma and sharing hope through their experiences through their varied experiences.

Featured Artists: Karen Rheinstein, Ron Suppé, Susan Plank, Tim Wood, Andrea Latragna, Lori Pacific, Jeffrey Greeno, Laura Mancuso, Lorin Alder, Evelyn Cammarano, Diane Field, Diane Ryan, Karin Staples, Andrew Lopez-Delgado, Bron Dunning, Michael Bowen, Belinda Brasley, Sheri Treadwell, Cynthia Iannaccone, Khang Trinh, Mike Benvenuti, Thomas Kuzmik, Michael Kolb, William Dunning, Richard Thomas, Aaron Gardner.



July 18 @ 12:00
CWO's Community Circle
"Conversation on Suicide"

Explore together how to support friends or loved ones who might have suicidal thoughts.

What to say, what resources there are, how to be supportive.

CWO's ARTIST'S FELLOWSHIP

Share and provide constructive insights on pieces of work that are still "works in progress" or "completed"!

July 18th @3:00

**Mental Health Association's
Drop-In Center
539 South Avenue
Rochester, NY 14620
(585) 454-3530**

Need to talk to someone but your therapist's office is closed?

It's not an emergency room situation yet, but if you don't find someone to talk to it could be?

The Drop-In Center may be just what you need!

**The Center is open seven (7) days a week
5:00PM - 9:00PM**

**No referral or appointment necessary.
SIMPLY DROP-IN!**

Support is provided by individuals who have overcome mental health concerns and now offer support to others as they find their own path to mental wellness.

#5 South Avenue Bus will bring you right to our door at the corner of South Avenue and Hamilton Street



MHA Employment Highlight



I walked into the Mental Health Association office and broke into tears. I had been laid off 3 months ago and was still grieving over the separation from the only company I had ever worked for since college. During those 3 months, I attended workshops that taught navigating the job search, writing a resume, updating a Linked-In

profile, networking skills, and interviewing. However, every time I attempted writing my resume, I was overwhelmed with anxiety and sadness. How can I put 30 years on a piece of paper? I was stuck and needed a different type of employment support.

Stacy Sheradin was the Employment Specialist at MHA that helped me move forward. She saw how much I was struggling and told me "We Got This"! We met the following week and started working on my resume. For the first time, I started to see my value and worth apart from the company where so much of my identity had been formed. She helped with the next steps of submitting my resume and getting interviews scheduled. Even if I didn't want the job, it was good practice, she said.

We met consistently at first, then as needed throughout my search. She knew I would land eventually and her faith in me comforted me through every rejection I received. I landed a position 6 months later. As I tell my kids, its okay to ask for help. - Julie

MHA PEER COMMUNITY OUTREACH



MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
FIND WELLNESS.

Find Your True Self

Building Your Self-Esteem

A safe, caring, non-judgmental group to facilitate finding and building ones' own voice both inside and out.

Out Alliance - 585-352-1077

100 College Ave #100, Rochester, NY 14607

Meeting every 1st & 3rd Mondays @ 6 - 7PM

Healthy Connections

A group that uses the 8 Dimensions of Wellness to build and cultivate connections and strengthen ties.

Pinnacle Place Apartments - 585-442-9440

919 S. Clinton Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620

Every Thursday @ 9:45 - 11:15 AM