

“The Way we See (...see, hear, feel, or dream...) The Things we Create”

Richard D. Beebe

November 2025

Tracy Art League President, 2024-present

Photography Instr., Grand Theatre Center for the Arts

Photographer, Visual Artist, Writer



“What to Leave In...
...What to Leave Out...
(...What to do with It)”



“Burned Cottonwoods, Mono Lake County Park, June 2025”

My image that Tiffanie chose for the TAL flyer for the November TAL general meeting, Thursday, November 13, 2025.

June 2025, the aftermath of a wildfire in Eastern Sierra’s Mono Basin... (the “Inn Fire”). The setting is the little county park at the northwest corner of Mono Lake, with the (volcanic) Mono Craters framed between the trees.

Sometimes little scenes we found once upon a time are discovered can not be repeated even just a few months later. These burned trees were cut down and removed before our visit in October. What was just a simple, interesting framing, now has a very different look, and far different “feel.”

Sometimes there’s an unknown “time” factor with what we create, along with the “how” and the “why.” Times change. Our memories evolve. Or creative avenues evolve. How we see and create becomes altered... we just didn’t know it yet.



“Mt. Shasta, US 97, “Sunrise”

The chilly Friday morning after Thanksgiving 2009.

How did I think to drive 20+ miles in very quiet, still, ~15-degree pre-dawn air to get this image?

- I knew this view was here, from decades earlier, northeast from Weed, Calif, towards Klamath Falls, when I'd camp with my mother at Lava Beds NM.
- I knew the dawning sky was clear by simply looking out the window of my niece's house.
- I had a *hunch* it was “possible.” And was, simply, hopeful.



*Nov 2009
Mt Shasta, Calif
© Richard Beebe 2009*

With scant traffic on that road at that time of the morning, planting a tripod dead center wasn't too scary. The camera saves a rectangular image file, I only wanted the middle square: Two triangles, each VERY different, stacked one above the other. With the feeling of Michael Parks singing "going down that long lonesome highway.." (from '60s TV series Then Came Bronson) with those two cars far down the road with a giant "inverted double snow cone of a mountain" filling their side view mirrors.

Visual "magic" sometimes takes a little chilly-morning effort, with some fingers-crossed hopefulness.

And, sometimes...
Sometimes, we just get a little bit lucky.



*Nov 2009
Mt Shasta, Calif
© Richard Beebe 2009*

What is “Art?”

(AI Overview...)

- The phrase "*arsestcelareartem*" means "*it is art to conceal art.*"
...it's a Latin proverb often attributed to the Roman poet Ovid. It suggests that true artistry lies in making complex work appear effortless by hiding the underlying technique and effort. The phrase is also interpreted as meaning that the most skillful artists conceal their own personality to allow the work itself to be the primary focus.
 - Meaning: The core idea is that the **perfection of art** is to hide the craft, so the final product seems natural rather than labored.
 - Interpretation: A successful artist, according to this idea, makes their work look uncontrived.
-
- Many people see artists as these amazing creators, maybe a little abstract and elitist, of what they see interesting in the respective artists' lives, creating things from ultra-realistic to abstract in form or interpretation. And “ordinary people” can't possibly create their own “art” (to which I, and most if not all of us, disagree).
 - (I disagree with the idea that skilled artists “conceal” their personality from their work... the work ***IS*** an expression of their personality and life. Have ten artists create from the same original subject, and each will reflect their own skewed, quirky, biased, maybe warped interpretation... their personality!)
 - Some artists feel that “expressiveness” ***DOES*** exist in each of us, whether brought to life or kept quietly tucked away because someone told them “art” wasn't a worthwhile pursuit in life. ☹️

- We're storytellers, one and all, to some degree or another.



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Richard D Beebe
October 25, 2025 10:59 AM

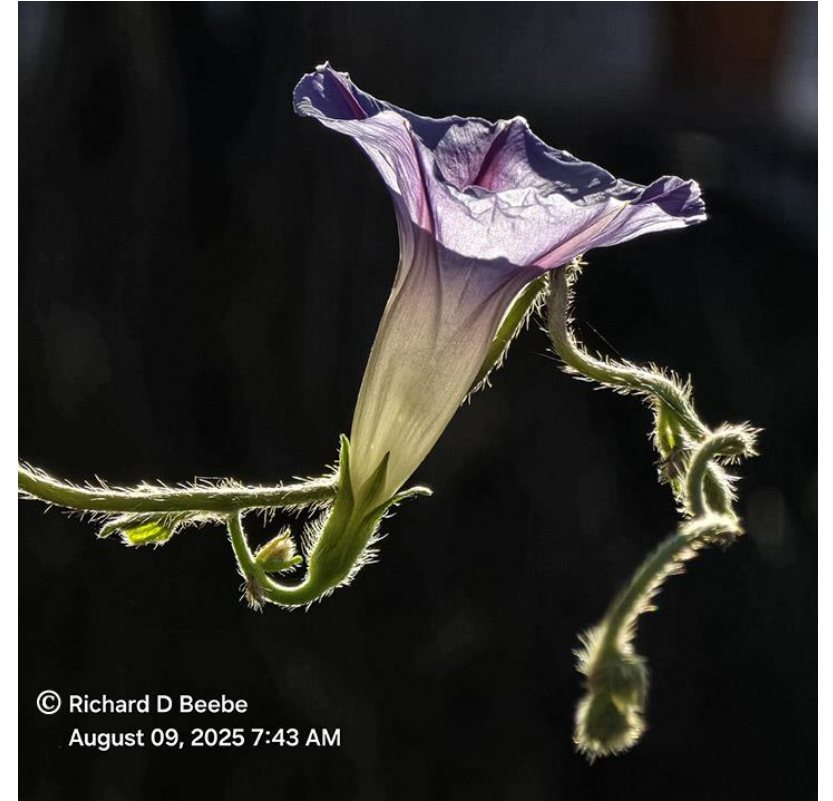


Richard D Beebe
October 25, 2025 1:44 PM

What is “Art?”

Or...

What ***IS*** Art!?



What is “Art?”

Do we limit “an expression or artistic creation” to those traditional and classic pursuits only? (...painting, drawing, ceramics, sculpture, etc.)

What about photography?

...or poetry and prose, or a stage?

...dance,

...music and songwriting,

...dramatic voice...

All can tell a story in very different ways and means.

What is “Art?”

The several artists who answered my questionnaire of their thoughts and experiences, range from painters, sculptors, photographers, writers, musicians, and more. Many have found multiple avenues of expression. Patrick Michael Karnahan, for example, is a multi-instrument musician, a wonderful songwriter, a lover of history and stories, and an oil painter, with a garden railroad running sit-on-top steam engines!

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- Some artists feel that “expressiveness” *DOES* exist in each of us, whether brought to life or kept quietly tucked away because someone told them “art” wasn’t a worthwhile pursuit in life. ☹️

What is "art"? (and what are you actively involved with?)

- Madiha Ahmed Khan (Madiha), Textile Artist, Educator, Conservator, Researcher –
"Art is a form of creative expression that combines aesthetics with meaning, often conveying messages or emotions through various mediums. For me, art is about transforming materials into visually appealing pieces that tell a story or spark conversation."
- *"As a textile artist, I work with mixed media, incorporating recycled materials, natural dyes, and various stitching techniques. I'm actively involved with sustainable art practices, upcycling, and eco-friendly crafts."*
- Mark Knize (Mark), Sculptor, Woodworker -
"There are lots of definitions, I like the idea art is the artists' thoughts made visible."
- *Currently actively involved in sculpture, but I've done drawing and painting that I thinks helps my sculpture."*

What is "art"? (and what are you actively involved with?)

- Casey Goodall (Casey), Photographer, Writer–
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What is "art"? (and what are you actively involved with?)

- Patrick Michael Karnahan (Patrick), oil painter, musician/songwriter, storyteller –

"Art is a creative expression that comes from the very soul and heart. It lives in everybody, but some never realize that they have inner gift. Arts come of course in many, for me it is songwriting and oil painting."

- Richard Beebe, photographer, visual artist, writer (prose, poetry –

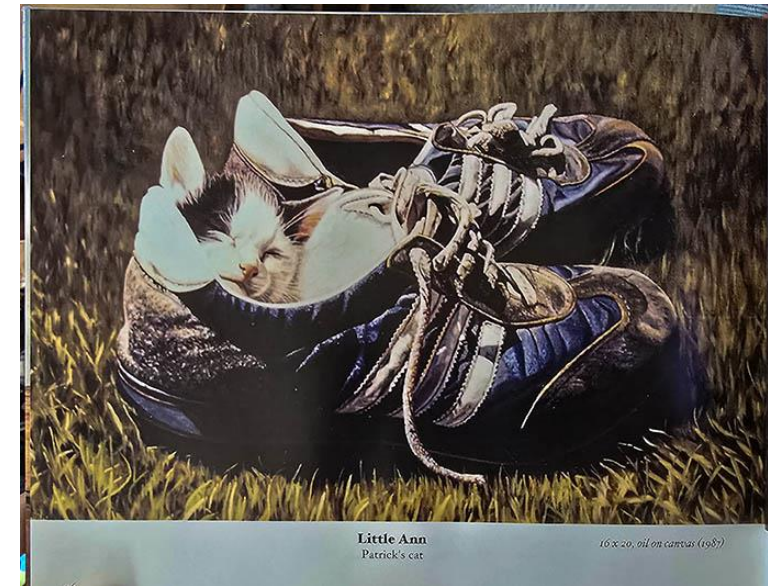
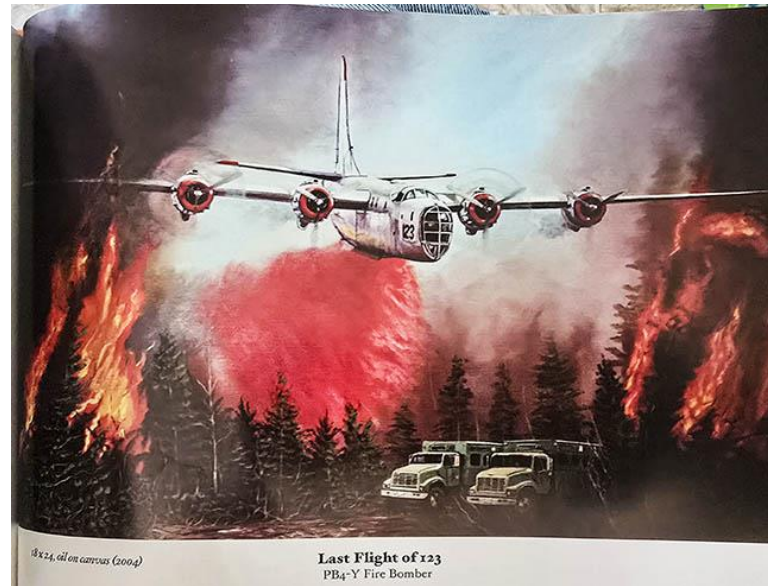
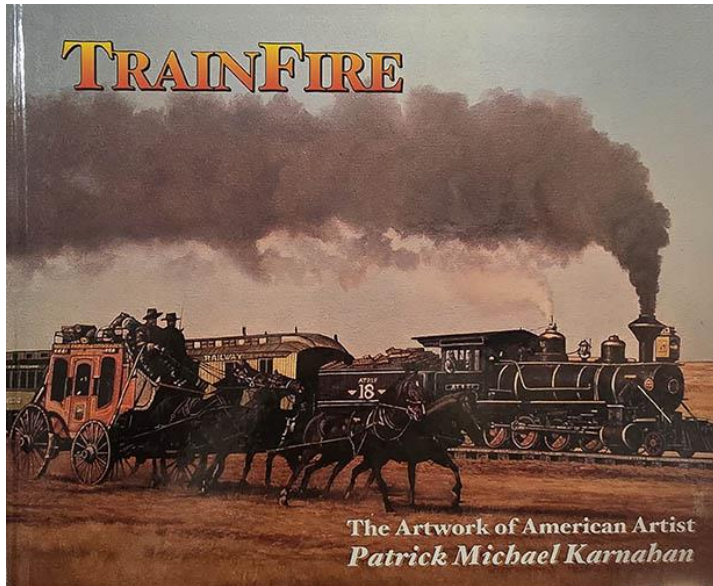
"It's my way of storytelling my reaction to it, in whatever medium is available in the moment."

"I have three: photography, prose (short stories or essay length) and poetry, visual arts (usually derived from but often away from the camera). They can play together nicely at times, or they can be dysfunctional siblings in constant conflict that I can find no way to manage effectively for a while."

What is "art"?

- Patrick Michael Karnahan (Patrick), oil painter, musician/songwriter, USFS firefighter & Interpreter, storyteller –

“Art is a creative expression that comes from the very sole and heart. It lives in everybody, but some never realize that they have inner gift. Arts comes of course in many, for me it is songwriting and oil painting.”



- Casey –

“My initial impulse was to say that “Art is what we do when we attempt to express ourselves without the use of words, but that can’t be right—poetry and song are art, and they use words. So it is something else.

I could add that “artists create art” by directing the attention of others to notice what they believe is interesting, but also to what they think is good, true, or beautiful. Lines carry the eye and suggest motion. Balance suggests stability or instability. Clustering, separating, aligning elements of art imply order, disorder, unity or multiplicity, harmony, conflict, cohesion or disintegration. Contrast or the accentuation of differences create emphasis or drama. Rhythm/repetition and repeated patterns suggest unity or diversity, energy or stability.

With all this said, art is not just expression, it is translation. It translates the inarticulable into something we see, hear, touch, taste, or smell. Even baking, where scent, texture, presentation, and timing converge, can be considered an art—a translation of care into crust. Art is an invitation by an artist to others to inhabit or share their perspective, not by argument, but by atmosphere. It doesn’t demand agreement, it offers experience.”

- Mark Knize (Mark), Sculptor, Woodworker, -

“There are lots of definitions, I like the idea (that) art is the artists’ thoughts made visible.”

- Richard Beebe (Richard), Photographer, Visual Artist, Writer (prose, poetry), Instructor of Photography, Grand Theatre Tracy Art League President, 2024-present –

“It’s my way of seeing what catches my attention, or my imagination. How I choose to interpret the world around me, or an emotional reaction to an event, without or within. I look for a way I can relate to a “found something,” whether it’s just the way morning sun finds a flower, backlights a leaf, the mist on still water, or something more “industrial.” It’s my way of storytelling my reaction to it, in whatever medium is available in the moment.”



“Sheer Luck, Bus”
When I opened the shutter, it was a quiet, simple, empty street night scene along 7th Street, January 2010. Ten seconds in, here comes a bus, pulls to the curb but continues. My quiet mantra, while holding my breath with fingers crossed... “stay open, stay open” to the camera shutter. And, it did. P.S... I had NO knowledge of the bus coming.

What is "art"?

How do we “see” (or “hear”) the things we create?

- Constance Glende, former NPR reporter, musician – *“We were producing a segment of ‘Folk Festival USA’ for NPR (in the mid-1970s). And had the honor to interview Dick Barrett, Texas fiddle champion. We asked his approach to becoming such a great fiddler: ‘Play the Melody Note every 5th note.’ ‘Is that all there is to it?!” we asked. ‘Well, that's not all,’ said with a hearty laugh, “It's knowing what other 4 notes to play.”*
- *(And I would add... ‘having the courage to explore variations of the other 4 notes that you play.’ However, I like his simple way of saying it.)”*

What IS Art?



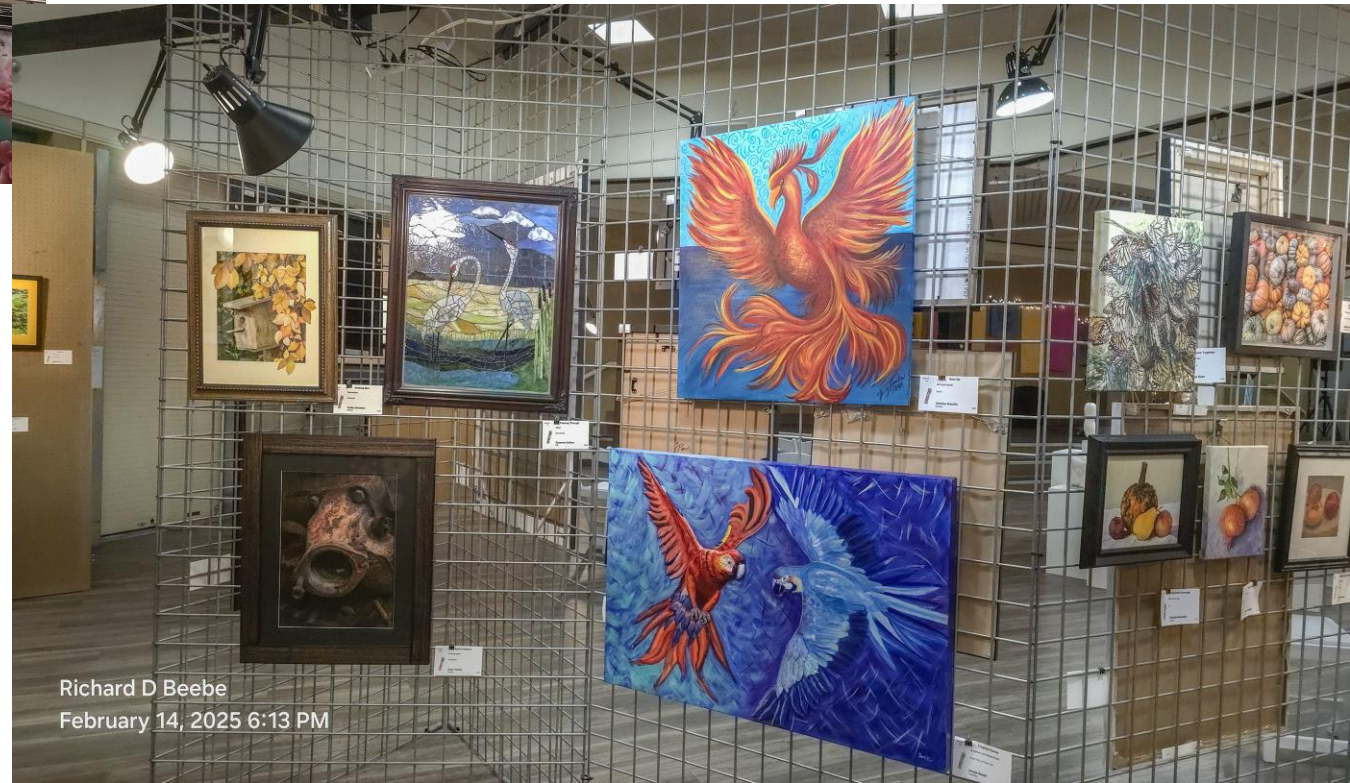
Richard D Beebe
February 14, 2025 6:13 PM

What does it mean to be an 'artist'?



Expressions 2025 art show, Tracy Community Center, Feb. 2025.

Tracy residents had access to a free art exhibit of mostly “local” artists. The variety of media were far ranging. The days before as well as after, members of the Tracy Art League, plus many High School student docents, led school tours, from elementary through middle, and high school ages. Some were seeing this “art” for the first time. What would they “see?” What would they “think?”



"What does it mean to be an 'artist'?"

(I started this on Feb 6, 2025, in preparing for the school student tours through the Tracy Art League's "Expressions 2025" gallery show. It was my "note to self" for engaging with the students.

This was my second year leading students through the gallery.

What are THEY seeing?
What catches THEIR eyes, their interest?

Can they put words to what they are seeing or thinking or feeling of some of the pieces in the show?)

*Are these students being introduced to "art" for the first time? **NO!***

Every song they listen to is someone's art, just in another medium.

Every CD/DVD cover is someone's visual art.

Every magazine, paper or online, has art. Most book covers, too.

(to ask the students...)

Of "Art," Some you see, you like.

Some, upon seeing, you LOVE!

*Some... **not** so much...*

Why?

Or Why not?

Can you clarify it or understand the 'why?'

What "works" and what doesn't?

What do you see?

What do you feel?

“Where does each story begin?
What is your “inspiration” or “motivation?”

- Madiha – *“Each story begins with a concept or theme related to sustainability, environmental awareness, or social responsibility. I might be inspired by nature, personal experiences, or current events, and then experiment with different materials and techniques to convey my message.”*
- Casey – *“I want to begin my answer to this question by stating that art need not be story-related. I believe, for example, that art can simply exist at the art of "feeling." For example, drum circles explore rhythm, texture, movement, contrast, and other "principles of design" (i.e. rhythm, contrast, repetition) without ever evolving toward story. Dance may begin, not with words, but with gesture, movement, ritual, or a visual cue...”*
- Mark – *“Hmmm... For me in begins with “Would this idea be “anything” if I made it?” I don’t think I start with a story...”*

“Where does each story begin? What is your “inspiration” or “motivation?”

- Madiha – *“Each story begins with a concept or theme related to sustainability, environmental awareness, or social responsibility. I might be inspired by nature, personal experiences, or current events, and then experiment with different materials and techniques to convey my message.”*
- Mark – *“Hmmm For me in begins with “Would this idea be “anything” if I made it?” I don’t think I start with a story.*
- *I like making things, and have a lifetime of experience, so I am “somehow motivated” to “try some stuff” with the tools and techniques I have.”*

“Where does each story begin? What is your “inspiration” or “motivation?”

- Casey - *“I want to begin my answer to this question by stating that art need not be story-related. I believe, for example, that art can simply exist at the art of "feeling." For example, drum circles explore rhythm, texture, movement, contrast, and other "principles of design" (i.e. rhythm, contrast, repetition) without ever evolving toward story. Dance may begin, not with words, but with gesture, movement, ritual, or a visual cue.*
- *However, I want to add that each story begins when a feeling or emotion becomes urgent enough to seek form. On the other hand, a story might begin when the mind starts to play with possibility. This could be sparked by a question, a contradiction, a memory, or a sensory impression. Then again, stories often begin with disruption—something unsettles the status quo. Or stories begin with desire: a character wants something, and the pursuit of that desire creates conflict and narrative motion...*

“Where does each story begin? What is your “inspiration” or “motivation?”

- Casey - *“So, while not all art is story-driven, every story, when it does emerge, begins with a rupture in stillness. Sometimes that rupture is a feeling, sometimes a question, sometimes a gesture. It may begin in the body before it finds words, in rhythm before it finds plot. The beginning is not always linear—it might be a scent (as with the narrator in Proust’s In Search of Lost Time, who, after tasting a madeleine, unfolds 4,000 pages of memory), a shadow, a memory, or a need. And sometimes, the story doesn’t begin at all—it simply unfolds.*
- *With all that said, let me say that I learned in college there are only seven stories we can really tell:*

“Where does each story begin? What is your “inspiration” or “motivation?”

- Casey –

- a. A hero must defeat an evil force that threatens the community;*
- b. An underdog with hidden talent rises from obscurity to gain fortune and success, only to lose it all before earning it back and growing as a person;*
- c. A hero embarks on a long journey to find an important object or reach a specific location, and encounters many challenges and companions;*
- d. A protagonist travels to a strange or new land and overcomes its challenges before returning home with new experience and knowledge;*
- e. A protagonist falls under the influence of a dark, often immature or unfulfilled, state. They are released from this darkness by a transformative event and become a better person;*
- f. Comedy, in which the plot is driven by confusion, misunderstanding, or deception, but ends with a happy resolution that brings people together;*
- g. Tragedy, in which a protagonist with a fatal flaw becomes obsessed with an ambition or dark desire. This leads to their downfall and eventual ruin.*

“Where does each story begin? What is your “inspiration” or “motivation?”

- Casey - *“I’m inspired by what I see in nature, in the art of others, and in the literature I’ve created art based on what I’ve read from classical texts to sacred scripture. But I’m also moved by the sensory elements that shape emotion and perception. I’m motivated by questions of meaning and by the desire to translate feeling into form. Sometimes, my inspiration comes from joy or anger; other times, from silence, memory, or the stories handed down through culture and kin—for example, most of my poems have turned out to be biographical or autobiographical. Above all, I’m drawn to the possibility that art and atmosphere can bridge differences that argument cannot.”*

“What can one form of "art" gain from another?”

- Madiha – *“Textile art can gain from other forms like painting, sculpture, or photography by incorporating new techniques, textures, or perspectives. For example, I might use natural dyes inspired by watercolor painting or incorporate found objects like recycled plastics.”*
- Casey - *“As with the poem I (wrote), poetry can take from drumming, drumming from painting, etc.”*
- Mark – *“For the work I do, I use the seeing” skills I learned from drawing, and color theory, composition, and even tools like photography to ‘get what I want’.”*

“What can one form of "art" gain from another?”

- Patrick – *“From the interest of a certain subject, a passion of bringing something forward that might be invisible to the light. I create music and art about subjects I've enjoyed since childhood. I like to tell stories that have not been told.”*
- Richard – *“It’s very much situational. I want to enjoy what I have to “say” about something found, sometimes on a grander scale, or something smaller and just “personal.” I create for me. Some creations will NEVER see the light of day through someone else’s eyes or ears; some imagery is for ME alone, many words written are very much for ME alone. With other things, it’s a strong “maybe,” but it has to get past me first.”*

Do you find ways to merge different genres?

- Casey – *“As with the poem I wrote (right), poetry can take from drumming, drumming from painting, etc.”*

“Composition”

When he heard it said
that art is part story
or story part art,
he imagined long-haired men in a line
curved one by one round a crackling fire,
while shadow shapes danced on trees far in the distance,
the rhythm of rain drummed on thatched grass huts,
the suckling sound of infants at nipples,
the value of hot against cold in the night,
the rough texture of bark on their thighs as they sat—
he tapped his toes lightly,
a slow, steady beat, his mind somewhere else,
drumming his thumbs on the thin plastic lid
of a yellow tub of butter."

“How do we “see” the things we create?”

- Patrick – *“Like when I paint a song, the chords bring out the color, light and dark, it also creates a feel and mood. Without ever singing one word of intent, you create a story with a note, a chord. While painting from life, I am always hearing music melodies that help create my original art.”*
- Richard - *“Personally, I have captured images, simple or grand, that have later inspired something literary within. I can find the reverse working, as well. I have created combined pieces where the imagery and words compliment - or contrast - but live together. Of finding a spark through external sources? Absolutely! Many friends will simply believe that I derive best from other photographs or other visual art.*

Truth be told... I hold music and song lyrics far more deeply and dearly.” (and a walk in a forest or wood, at a seashore or mountains, too.)

How do we “see” the things we create?

- Constance - *“I remember watching the schooner edge toward the lighthouse. And did get shots of the schooner when it was farther away. I moved where I was positioned as it got closer to the lighthouse. And I think it was just one shot after I repositioned myself further up on the hill. In my image gallery I'm not seeing a bunch of shots as it edged closer...”*

(...about the strongest label she'd brush off is “photographer.”)



...Composing...

(This slide is borrowed from my photography class PowerPoint a decade and a half old...)

- What makes an eye-catching portrait, or landscape, or nature photo?
- Why is one image “better” or “worse” than another?
- Are there “rules” to creating a well-composed photograph?
- The bottom-line with composing... ...capture the “something” that caught your eye to the original scene.
- By its nature, this is a subjective area, different with everyone, and even with each possible scene, moment, and situation. (Put five photographers – or artists - before the same scene, and you’ll get some very different “impressions” captured.)
 - *Allow your viewers’ eyes to have more than one bit of “visual eye candy.”*
 - *Look for “visual relationships” with possible subjects – near vs. far, tall vs. short, one vs. many, etc.*



Becca Carr
Grand Theatre
© Richard Beebe 2010

“How do you know what to “leave in” vs. “leave out?”

- Madiha – *“I know what to leave in or out by trusting my instincts and stepping back to evaluate the piece as a whole. If it feels balanced and visually appealing, I might leave it as is. If not, I might simplify or add more elements to enhance the composition.”*
- Casey – *“In photography, I plan out in detail where I am going to stand, where the lights will be, what angle of shadow the light will create, etc. However, I never know in advance what will work well and what won’t. The secret is to keep trying until I get it right.”*
- Mark – *“I don’t always, but with experience I think about trying to edit. Thinking about editing is part of the lifelong learning curve.”*

“How do you know what to “leave in” vs. “leave out?”

- Patrick – *“At first, in my growing years, that was always hard, when to leave it alone. Oil painting is a very creative artform, and in doing the process, it is always subject to change, just like the final stroke. At my older age, I now know when it is done because I feel that the subject needs to breathe, let it be what it is - more of a Zen type of acknowledgement these days. In my early years, some paintings would get overworked, and become less of a creative artform, and become a big mess and a Big waste of creative time. I think that might just be the fine-line also between an illustrator and a creative artist who allows a flow without boundaries.”*
- Richard – *“Sometimes, you don’t. Not until you “just keep playing” with it and realize it was better three moves back. Other times, you pretty much have that feeling of what to do and how to do it, even when you’re still just standing in the scene with a camera (or painter’s easel, or sketchpad). In writing, it’s when I stop “playing” with the words. Maybe within minutes, maybe a day, a week, or a year later.”*

How does this "magic" of composing work with you?

- Madiha – *“For me, composing is a process of experimentation and discovery. I might start with a vague idea or theme and then let the materials guide me as I work. I enjoy the freedom of not knowing exactly where a piece will go, as it allows for unexpected surprises and discoveries.”*
- Casey – *“As we learned from Chief Dan George in the movie Little Big Man, “Sometimes the magic works. Sometimes it doesn’t. That is exactly how it works with me in art.”*
- Mark – *“I know a pleasing composition when I see one. It might just be magic.”*
- Patrick – *“I wake up with an idea, and think through it a little, just enough to gain a concept of what will be created, and then the instrument comes to hand like a piano or guitar, or a paint brush. Much is left however during the process for change. I like to allow change in the process, to have the freedom to change my mind, depending on my mood at that moment.*

I must admit, like many artists in history, I have been at times forced to create artwork to put food on the table, or in the case of the United States Forest Service, was hired to create some art subjects that were not creative to me, but it was a job that supported me. Not everyone has a brother, like ‘Van Gough’, to support their art ambitions.”

How does this "magic" of composing work with you?

- Richard – *“It’s usually subliminal within. I’m simply NOT aware of the process (– there, I suppose, is a good old-school “cop out” answer of avoidance!) I’ve had times when the moment of “seeing” is the moment of “creating,” or the moment my eyes saw the empty page and a pen was picked up, was the moment the writing started and continued until I ran out of page to write on... I “wrote to fill the page,” as it were. There wasn’t a lot of “pre-thought” involved.*

I’ve heard of songwriters that have a song “just come to them” and they scramble to write it down. Some songs were written down as fast as it was eventually sung (“El Paso,” by Marty Robbins, was one of these, I once read, as he was flying cross-country above western Texas and the words just found him, in about 4 and a half minutes)!”

Other times, Yes, there is a latent impression sitting inside my head and it takes a bit of forethought then actual work and follow-through to bring it to fruition.



Captured 50 ft and 12 years apart...

Left – tripod-mounted, 30 seconds, planned except for the bus.

Right – realized in about one second, turned and just shot the image.



What are you aware of?

Is everything always all planned out?

(What do you do with accidents and/or mistakes?)

- *Famed French photographer, Henri Cartier Bresson, coined the phrase “Decisive Moment,” back in the 1930s, implying that being attentive enough to be aware that "something might happen." and being prepared enough for that moment if and when it occurs. I have noted that with all things being otherwise equal - experience, skill, tools, background, etc. - I'll bet on what some may call "sheer luck" in being there as that moment is before me to behold.*

Richard – *“There’s the idea in some circles that however you get to the end of the task or road is however you were meant to take to get there. Detours? You never know if that was the way you needed to find to go all along to reach that moment or goal. Not taking it would have led you elsewhere, to a different outcome.”*

...Like Robert Frost’s “The Road Not Taken.”



(“Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare,” Henri Cartier-Bresson, 1932)

Is everything always all planned out?

- Madiha – *“Planned or spontaneous; Sometimes I have a clear plan, and other times I let the process unfold organically. I enjoy the flexibility of working with different materials and techniques, which allows me to adapt and change direction as needed.”*
- Casey – *“My compositional practice is really in two parts.
Part 1: plan, plan, plan.
Part 2: Improve, Adapt, and Overcome...”*
- Mark – *“Everything, always and all” doesn’t leave much room. There’s planning, but the surprises make it art. I think “everything, always, and all” is more like production work, not artwork.”*
- Richard – *“Sometimes, yes! I have been known to see a latent impression inside the viewfinder just before the moment of capture, knowing it will need to be “edited out of the camera original” to fit the mental picture. It might be a heavy cropping from reality to fit my mind’s eye. Or a more-involved edit to move from that viewfinder reality to a very strong impressionistic image. In writing, I start with the first word and (usually) end with the last in a linear fashion. Other – many - times, not at all! (read the next question)”*

My own “magical timing” - I have noted that with all things being otherwise equal - experience, skill, tools, background, etc. - I'll bet on what some may call "sheer luck" in getting the timing as perfect as possible in that moment, when we might not have any overt control on life and events.



© Richard Beebe 2010, 2021

“Sheer Luck Bus”

(January, 2010)

When I opened the shutter, it was a quiet, simple, empty street night scene along 7th Street, January 2010. ~10 seconds in, here comes a bus, it turns, pulls to the curb, but continues on passed.

My quiet mantra, while holding my breath with fingers crossed... “please, please, please, stay open, stay open, stay open” to the camera shutter.

And, it did.

AND, I had NO knowledge in the bus coming north on Central, let alone turning.

Is the art of composing truly teachable?

- Madiha – “While some technical skills can be taught, I believe that creativity and artistic vision are innate. Anyone can learn techniques and principles, but the spark of creativity is unique to each individual.”
- Patrick – *“Basic form maybe, some techniques, but the inspiration and creating drive, must be in the person upon birth I believe. You can teach this stuff, but the person must connect it to their own creative drive, or nothing takes shape. It’s nice these days in the World of A-I, to think machines can take over this creative ability, but it can’t. I know right away when someone used their computer A-I to create a song, or a painting. Art is not the perfect look of the painting, or the perfect voice, or guitar lead, or the cord pattern or even melody, it is much more than that. It goes beyond all of that back to the one that created it- what was in the mind of the artist when they created the art, what kind of day was it, what was the weather like, what happened that morning or evening that made the artist want to create that work? Or better yet, what were all the one-million thoughts of that artists lifetime work, that brought that new artwork to form that you are now listening to as a song, or viewing as an original painting.*

Best example I can give you is from the late artist- Picasso...

A women came up to the famous artist at a café in Paris, she asked the artist, “could you do me a little something of art”, the artist said yes- Picasso did a little drawing, and presented to the women. She said, “How much do I owe you?” He said “a thousand” ... She said, “But it only took you one minute!” Picasso said, “No, it took a lifetime...”

- Casey – “I don’t think it is “teachable,” but it is “learnable,” and learning often requires a teacher. Practice, practice, practice, fail, fail, fail, until you succeed.”
- Richard – *“On some level, yes. (But is there a latent pre-existing spark in someone? Very possibly, yes, as well.) I think sometimes the technical side of art might be easier to convey than the aesthetic... teaching the “numbers” stuff with photography, for example. I’ve watched students in class try interesting angles for a different point of view on a found subject. And the idea was self-generated, nothing to do with anything I said. They had a curious spark of creativity and was willing to follow... whether looking silly doing it or not. Can I teach someone to do that? Part of my role as instructor is to encourage and enlighten, to offer a glimmer of willingness to be creative. It’s up to them to follow-through. I can only hope and inspire, not rewrite their minds to actually do something.”*
- Mark – *“Yes, I think there are principles but admit there are exceptions that might be good. I’ve seen things in museums that I think are bad composition, but it’s rare!”*

* How important are "rules" for composing (any genre)?

* Do you always follow some rules or guidelines?

- Madiha – *“Rules can provide a foundation, but I think they're meant to be broken or bent. The most interesting art often pushes boundaries and challenges conventions. I like to experiment and find my own way, rather than following strict guidelines.”*
- Casey – *“In my mind, they are important, but a third tier of importance behind more fundamental compositional concepts...”*
- Mark - *"I think very important. I have heard even Jazz music has “rules”. Yes, my rule is to “try and make some museum-quality thing.”*

- * How important are "rules" for composing (any genre)?
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- Patrick – *“There are no rules, you just feel it and create it. Sometimes it might take months, days, or sometime minutes, but you will create if it exists inside your soul, it just has to come out.*

With oil painting I always like a quick free form drawing with paint to start, but not always. With original songs: sometimes a melody I will hear in my head, or wake up to it. Or I will see or read something that makes me interested in the subject enough to capture it in a song. Some songs I create never have words, because I can paint it all with the melody and chords to create the feel.”

- * How important are "rules" for composing (any genre)?
- * Do you always follow some rules or guidelines?

- Richard – *“The long-standing thing I remember of learning an artistic craft is:
1. Do whatever the hell you want, before you know there’s “rules.”
2. Go to a university and learn the basics and the “rules,” and follow them.
3. When you get your MFA, revert to whatever you want, slap it in a gallery with a \$1,000 price tag and simply call it “art” at that point.*
- *I remember the old TV series “Young Indiana Jones,” with one particular episode standing out (“Young Indiana Jones and the Mystery of the Blues”), where he was with a jazz musician and wanting to learn the saxophone (I think... maybe trumpet). He first needed to learn how the thing works, where to find the notes, how to play a series or progression of notes together... then, once he was comfortable with that basic process, could play a tune or two or three, to learn how to improvise around those notes he had learned to play. Whether learning a musical instrument (or how to paint, how to deal with glass, to write, to dance, and more) ... before you can get creative and be more “expressive,” you need to understand the basics of creating on it.”*

How important are "rules" for composing (any genre)?

Do you always follow some rules or guidelines?

- Constance Glende, former NPR reporter, musician – *“We were producing a segment of ‘Folk Festival USA’ for NPR, in the mid-1970s. And had the honor to interview Dick Barrett, Texas fiddle champion. We asked his approach to becoming such a great fiddler:
‘Play the Melody Note every 5th note.’
‘Is that all there is to it?!’ we asked.
‘Well, that’s not all,’ said with a hearty laugh, “It’s knowing what other 4 notes to play.”*
- *(And I would add... ‘having the courage to explore variations of the other 4 notes that you play.’ ...However, I like his simple way of saying it.)”*

How important are the “tools” of your creative process?

- Madiha – *“The tools I use are essential to my process. Whether it's the feel of fabric, the texture of recycled materials, or the flow of natural dyes, each tool allows me to express myself in a unique way.”*
- Casey – *“Fundamental.”*
- Mark – *“My hands are my important tools and I need them.”*
- Patrick – *“Like with music, the piano as a tool is an advantage over the guitar, because I can see it, looking down at my hands, and putting the chords to the melody. With oil painting, there are some brushes I prefer in style over others.”*
- Richard – *“There's the 'tools' aspect I hadn't thought of... like most photographers, my thought was on the physical things: cameras and lenses, etc., not in other aspects of a broader sense of tools. I remembered my 1980s 'homework' in probably learning the equivalent of an AA in the understanding of light-sensitive materials (specifically b&w film, paper) and how the chemistry worked and could be manipulated to fine tune in physical form what I saw in my mind's eye - I learned well how to finesse them. Some of this was college-class driven, most self-directed in my own darkroom.”*

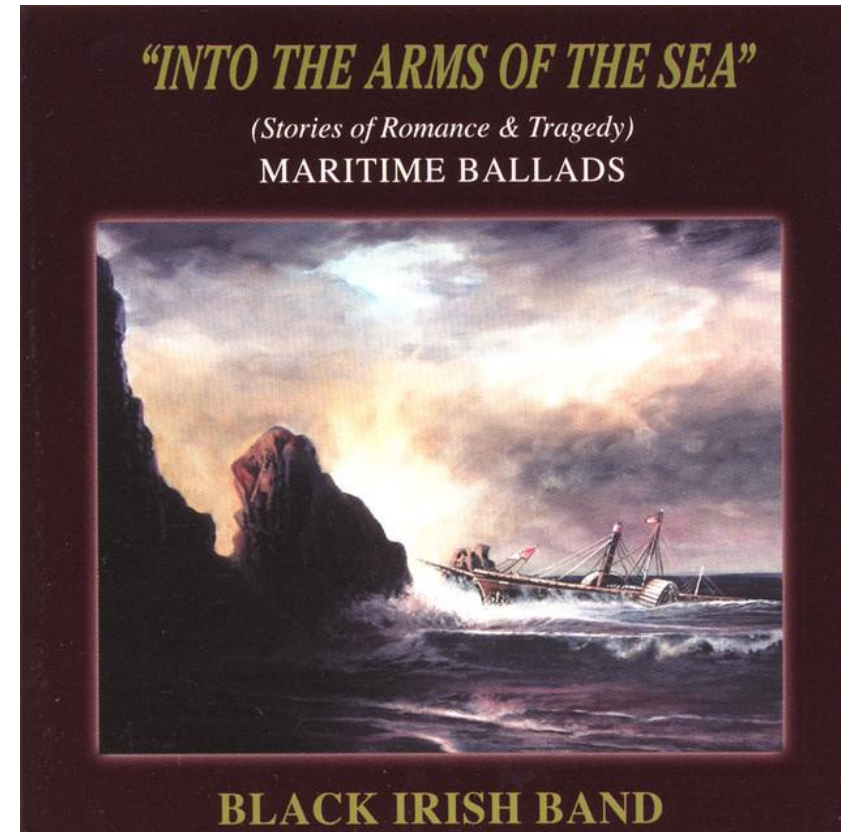
Do you find ways to merge different genres?

- Madiha – *“Textile art can gain from other forms like painting, sculpture, or photography by incorporating new techniques, textures, or perspectives. For example, I might use natural dyes inspired by watercolor painting or incorporate found objects like recycled plastics.”*
- Casey – *“As with the poem I (wrote), poetry can take from drumming, drumming from painting, etc.”*
- Mark – *“For the work I do, I use the seeing” skills I learned from drawing, and color theory, composition, and even tools like photography to “get what I want.”*

Do you find ways to merge different genres?

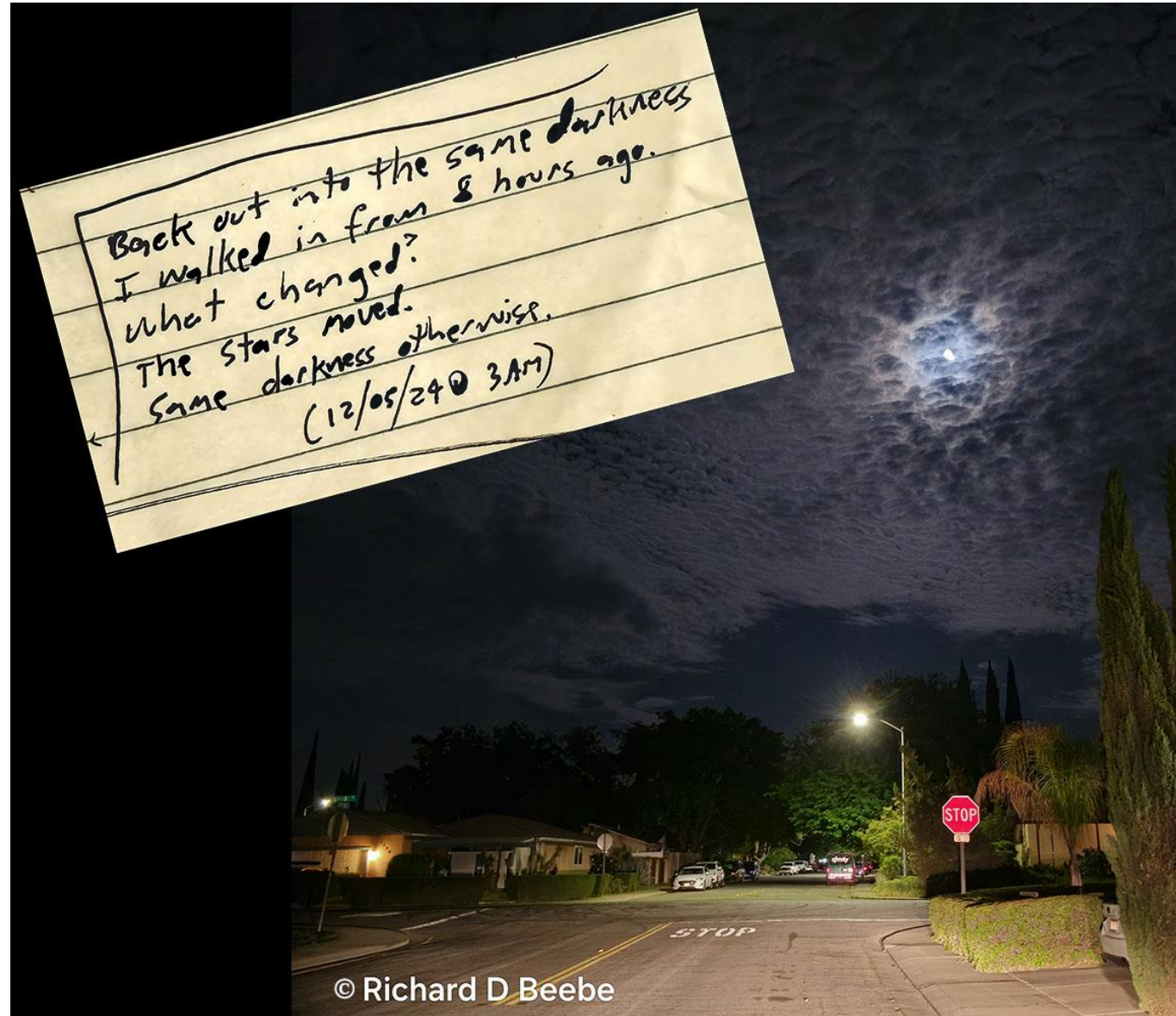
Patrick – “Like when I paint a song, the chords bring out the color, light and dark, it also creates a feel and mood. Without every singing one word of intent, you create a story with a note, a chord. While painting from life, I am always hearing music melodies that help create my original art.”

(For the cover of Black Irish Band’s 2003 “Into the Arms of the Sea” CD, founded by Patrick Michael Karnahan, he painted this scene of the paddle-wheeler “Northerner” which was the shipwrecked near Eureka, in “Fate of Miss Gregg,” the last song on the CD.)



Do you find ways to merge different genres?

- Richard – *“For a long time, the avenues were separate. (Much like my “working (commercial electrician) world” and my personal, creative side stayed well apart.) At some point, they learned to play off each other. (Are they “different but equal?” Maybe... maybe not.)*
- *(A friend who read my poetry at an open mic event a month ago that I wasn’t able to attend told me later that “we decided you compose images really well in your work.”) I have created one from the other several times. I have also looked for ways to combine the two – imagery with text written on or into it.”*



© Richard D Beebe

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Does everything you start to create pan out into some degree of success?

- Madiha – *“Success is not just about creating a visually appealing piece; it's about conveying a message, promoting sustainability, and inspiring others to think differently about waste and consumption. If a piece resonates with others or sparks conversation, I consider it a success.”*
- Casey – *“No. I fail more often than I succeed, but I succeed more frequently now than I did even two years ago.”*
- Mark – *“No, certainly not everything. To be a success, I need to like the product and think I couldn't further improve it. Somebody else liking it is also good and selling it, putting it in a show, or winning an award is big success.”*

Does everything you start to create pan out into some degree of success?

- Patrick – *“Yes, I think it all works out in the end, more of the Zen thoughts- “everything is meant to be, or Bob Ross, “just Happy mistake’s make great art sometimes.” ...Don’t worry about the perfect world of A-I, just say to yourself—“it’s all good”, or art should be left for everyone’s interpretation, so how could it be bad!”*
- Richard – *“Good Heavens, NO! The vast majority of photographic images I capture would simply be thrown away... if, I threw them away. If I’m “working on getting the view right” in the scene and moment, I may keep changing my viewpoint and changing other aspects of the camera controls, and shoot a bunch of frames until I think I got it... or at least have enough ideas to find the best impression to work with, maybe 10-15 frames back.*
- *Of the writing I do, less than 10% ever has any sort of audience... maybe far less. I have projects, writing and visual arts, that have been in the works for years. Only recently have I “gotten around” to dealing with them... or even wanting to deal with them.”*

If I – we – had collective advice for someone still understanding – still working at trying to understand – how to hold a brush, where a camera's controls are, which way the grain in the wood should go, what glaze works at what kiln temperature and creates what color on which clay, what Strathmore art papers works best for painting or drawing vs. printmaking, where to add the words to make the poem say what you want it to, OR where to use which chords to make your song work?

It's all a "process" – a process to find ways to learn – not just the tools and the craft, but within your own mind, spirit and heart – AND knowing it may be a lifelong "work in progress" journey. (Sean Beebe, my late son, had a quote we can adapt... *"Recovery is a process you may need to do over and over."* ...maybe starting with *"the art of creating, or the creating of art"*?)

It's personal, regardless of the classes you take, the workshops you enroll in, the number of YouTube videos you watch, the number of books you buy, and the number of miles of paper you go through... Make it yours... and try not to screw it up in the process, or at least learn *something* from the process.

"It is a universal fact there are as many ways to complete a photographic assignment (...or an art project...) as there are ways to screw it up."

...Jon Falk, "Adventures in Location Lighting," 1990

“I have long considered the creative impulse to be a visit – a thing of grace, perhaps, not commanded or owned so much as awaited, prepared for. A thing, also, of mystery.”

... Loreenna McKennitt

Liner note for “The Visit” CD, 1991