

Statement

The maternal aspect of nurturing has been traditionally acknowledged by the use of the phrase “mother nature”. Mother holds a preeminent position in our consideration of goodness. We would not exist without the mother, the giver and sustaining power of life. From the cycle of youthful feminine beauty to the cragginess of the etched flesh of the crone, the female figure is an emblem of an experience, comprehensible to all, through our relationship with mother and nature.

We are beings who revel in landscape. The sunny days influence our state of mind. The smell of earth pulls at our memories. These drawings are narratives about the linking spirit between the mother and the sustaining environment, the acknowledgement of the preciousness and vulnerability that is integrated with the quality of our existence. This existence is rooted in the cyclic aspect of regeneration, birth and death, and the transitions of time and the seasons.

Nature is infinite and powerful, yet its smallest beings, like infants, are exposed to human whims. The bees disappear, the birds a less and we fear the tsunami of our carelessness. In the end through the recognition of our blessings, sacred Mother Nature, we redeem our quality of life; comprehend the reciprocal intrinsic thread that binds us to our time, environment and potential.

Cynthia Hellyer Heinz

Biography:

The combination of Art and teaching are intrinsic to what is produced in the drawing studio of Cynthia Hellyer Heinz. The work is intended to create a thoughtful exploration of our connection to everything around us. We are open systems. At the core of this connection is a life experience influenced by a father who lived through birds and nature, and a traditional, mother who took charge of her life, and evolved into a psychotherapist with a rich spiritual aspect that becomes an emblem for integration in Cynthia's drawings. "I have always made art and am fortunate to have had parents who recognized and encouraged my work." At age seven, she began taking classes at the Art Institute of Chicago." Born in 1950, Evanston, Illinois, with a litter of brothers, Cynthia found identity in the woods. These wonderful brothers became her first students and continue to be a system of support. "They never knew what I was doing and the play of trying to surprise them was the beginning of my visual journey." The endurance of family relationships set the basis for the courageous possibilities in art making.

Cynthia earned a B.F.A. from Pratt Institute in Drawing, and Art Education and an M.F.A. in Drawing from N.I.U. Upon completion of this degree she was awarded a Teaching Fellowship and has been an instructor at N.I.U. since 1998. Cynthia has worked as the Foundations Drawing Administrator and the Graduate Teaching Assistant Mentor, in Drawing, for the last three years. Beginning in the fall of 2006, Cynthia became the acting Foundations Coordinator at Northern Illinois University. "My mission as a teacher is to inspire my students into thoughtful communication and empower them with the skill and techniques to accomplish their goals."

Compassion, caring for others and the strong value in art as action led to exploring a variety of opportunities. Cynthia volunteered on a parental stress hotline for five years, was a Girl Scout leader for seven years, ran local art programs, and while raising a family, consistently used the compelling capacity of art processes to connect with community. During the years between undergraduate and graduate work Cynthia became involved with the health field, teaching Health and Wellness at North Central College and Edward Health Corporation. Through this accumulation of knowledge, the platform for a holistic approach toward art became the basis for her work, as well as the methods used in teaching and mentoring. "All my accumulated life experiences have reinforced the capacity to identify joy and thus construct an environment of positive learning through both my drawings and educational relationships."

Cynthia and her husband Earl Heinz, a potter, are both actively involved in making art. Theirs is a house of creative dust. Earl is a constant presence, challenging the content of Cynthia's work, questioning the relevance and communication. "Earl is at the core of my everyday creativity. Our most awesome production is our two children and grandchildren. They have pushed us into the most phenomenal growth". This includes exploration of new family connections in Slovakia which has promoted greater appreciation in experiencing other cultures. Family and the nature encircling the studio have become the resource for Cynthia's visual vocabulary. She is inspired by continuous changes observed through inner-connectedness felt by engaging time and the positive metamorphosis of the body and spirit. It is possible to see the full potential of life in nature and she finds it imperative to offer this image to the viewer through drawing.

Cindy Hellyer Heinz is the Foundations Coordinator at Northern Illinois University. She is an active artist and illustrator. Her drawings have been exhibited in museums and galleries, and featured in books and journals. Her imagery describes the human aging process, paralleling nature's cycles of regeneration. Cindy is a committed and passionate art educator, working with both Foundations students and faculty to offer the optimal learning experience in the first year. She has developed a series of drawing workshops which are targeted toward teaching idea generation and skill development. The emphasis is keeping students engaged, acknowledging the potency of visual communication and identity. A video of the first workshop has been produced and will be distributed by the creators of Prisma Color Pencils.