

Creatively Becoming Whole

by Dominique Hurley



Pénombre: Acrylics on superimposed deep-edged canvases (16" x 39.5")

“You need to do something Dominique, anything – cut paper dolls even!” That’s what a whole-being intuitive healer told me a few years back, reporting on the state of my right brain. Indeed, I had been so busy with work that I had completely left my creative pursuits behind, and was feeling the effects on all levels. I hadn’t painted in over a decade and hadn’t even picked up my camera in a year – not since I’d graduated from a professional photography program in British Columbia. It’s not that my life wasn’t fulfilling – it was! I was living in a new province, working with an artist that I had admired for years, and had found a like-minded community of friends; nevertheless, I had neglected my own artistic side. So I heeded the healer’s warning and headed off to Michaels Arts & Craft Store, a rather overwhelming experience for someone who doesn’t shop much. After three hours, I came out with arms full of supplies, ready to play. And play I did, as my friends and family can attest after that first fruitful Christmas, when every gift was handmade. I have since discovered that art provides fulfillment on many levels. Delving into one’s own creativity, no matter the form, can lead to all sorts of discoveries. For me, art has provided a medium for aesthetic exploration, an outlet for emotional catharsis and a platform for personal and spiritual growth.

First, it’s been fun to explore what beauty means to me. They say that “beauty is in eye of the beholder”, but I believe it is also in the heart of the creator – no matter if it’s the creator of a work of art or of one’s own living environment. For instance, there is great creative fulfillment in finding the perfect decorative light switch plate to fit with the aquatic theme of one’s washroom, or finding a laundry basket that actually looks great in the bedroom. I’ve found it even more exhilarating, however, to create my own decorative accents. “Cattail”, for example, is one of the first paintings I created during this new artistic wave and it perfectly matches my Lazy-Boy recliner, lampshade and cushions. I love to behold that corner of the room!



Cattail: Acrylics on superimposed deep-edged canvases (24" x 36")

At other times, however, the canvas becomes my therapist. I pour my heart and paint out to process the landscapes of my emotional world, not caring one bit about creating something beautiful to look at. Instead, it's all about release. I



Tempest: Acrylics on deep-edged stretched canvas (24" x 24")

remember one time, after a rather tumultuous weekend, when the weather's intense mood reflected my own inner state of affairs, the only way I could process my feelings was to slap layer upon layer of paint onto canvas with no other goal than to purge. By the end of the day, "Tempest" had undergone several transformations ... and so had I. Its sole purpose had been one of catharsis, even if the final painting happens to please some people. I'm never sure whether those drawn to it resonate with the emotional starting point, the process, the resolution or simply its visual qualities. I'm not concerned about that – I am only grateful to have found a medium that allows me to vent.

More importantly, I have recently discovered that my art can propel me forward on my spiritual journey. Sometimes, pieces are created as the answer to a question and serve as daily reminders of the deeper meanings of life. They serve me both in the making and day-to-day witnessing. Some may come to me as visions that I translate onto canvas. To illustrate, "Of Source" was shown to me in a daydream in which I visualized myself as the tree of life, living in a dualistic world, feeling separated at times, yet constantly connected to Mother Earth, Father Sky and to my own Higher Self through God and the power of love. Every day when I come home, it greets me in my entrance hall and reminds me of the energy coursing through my being. On the other hand, some paintings slowly reveal themselves while I'm elbow deep in colour and movement. I set an intent and have absolutely no idea where it will lead me. One such example, "Sunburst" came to life while focusing on joy and gratitude. Every morning, as I wake up and witness the sun catching its mica chip sunbeams, I remember my intent, my focus, and my daily choices. These are the paintings that speak the most through me, to me and of me. They are the ones that connect me to a deeper sense of purpose.



Sunburst: Acrylics and mixed media on deep-edged canvas (18" x 36")

Of Source: Acrylics on deep-edged canvases (36" x 25.5")



Once in a while, I have to remind myself that becoming whole-brained does not mean imposing my goal-oriented left-brained ways to my artistic expressions. My pent-up creative energy may have resulted in over 30 canvases in the last year alone, not to mention all the crafts and photographic projects on top of that. And so I constantly remind myself that it's not about *doing* art – it's about *being* both the artist and the artform, without pressure or expectations. This is my practice. I believe that everyone can find a reason for tapping into their creativity. Whether it's for sheer enjoyment, letting go, or to deepen your relationship to your divine source, it's absolutely worthwhile. Even more so, it's essential. So why not cut paper dolls, swish paint on a canvas, or dabble in any creative field that calls you? You're worth it!



Being Here: Acrylics on deep-edged canvasses (12" x 49")



Dominique Hurley is an enthusiastically creative soul whose life purpose is to explore and express her love of beauty and the beauty of love. She does this through painting, photography, writing, teaching, travel and living. Having worked in Europe, Asia and across Canada, she is now happy to call Saskatoon Home. Please visit her website at www.DominiqueHurley.com to see more of her work.

This article was written in October 2009.
Portrait by Cathy Chicoine