

# art & thought

FROM READERS

A forum for you to share about your creative process, and how it functions as part of your spiritual life.

## Virginia Seitz Mahone



The function of a painting is to intoxicate reason... Art is learning to see, hear and feel suddenly, before thinking has a chance to

turn everything into logic... The artist's task is to reveal something to us that is unique, never before seen, a private vision of the world... Within two square feet of wherever you find yourself, there is enough subject matter to fill three lifetimes... Unless there is an element of surprise in the painting, it is merely reproducing something that already exists. Unless there is emotion, unless there is passion instead of cold observation, you have nothing to say... Keeping your sense of wonder afloat all the time is essential. ... How much longer will you go on letting your energy sleep? How much longer are you going to stay oblivious to the immensity of yourself? Stir up the gift within you.

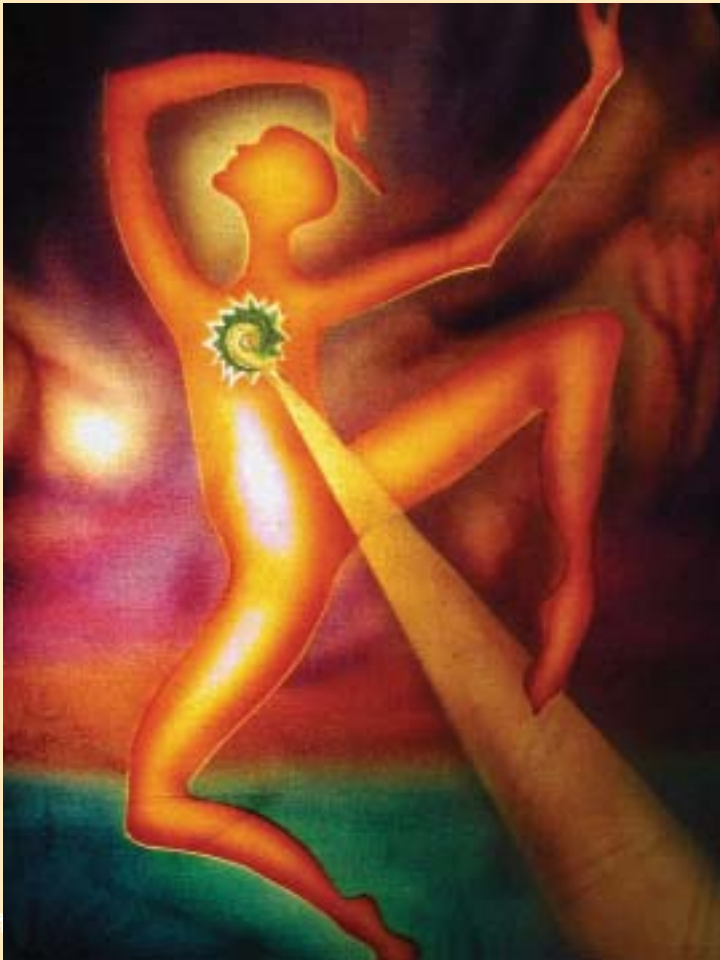
*Virginia Seitz Mahone, 85, is an artist living in Charlottesville, Virginia. Over her long and varied career, she has also been an art teacher, interior designer and jewelry maker. In the 1960s, Virginia directed the Creative Arts Room at Central Michigan University, and also owned the nearby Village Art Market. Her work has appeared in over 30 exhibitions around the U.S., and is part of over 100 private collections, museums and corporations. You can contact Virginia c/o the Wild Heart Journal, PO Box 146, Batesville, VA 22924.*



Above: And You Shall Have Jewels To Walk Upon

Right: If Supported by Observation, a Theory is Only Temporarily True





## Noris Binet

Ocean Rhythm: Cosmic Dance

Art is not my profession. I'm not a producer of Art. It's not my hobby either. Art for me is an impulse at the core of my being that strives for manifestation, for materialization. It's not meant to make a living. Because a living is already being made by the Self itself. It's a natural impulse to play, to make love, to dance, to be silent, to vibrate!

It's an impulse that sometimes is there, sometimes is not, sometimes wants to create things, sometimes wants to imagine things. I don't force it, or pursue it. It calls me, it pursues me, it seduces me. And if I'm ready, or if I'm not, it doesn't matter. It will take me anyway.

Now and then, I choose to surrender to its dance. And the surrender only happens when it is meant to be. I'm free.

*Noris Binet is an artist and student of international cultures, living in Nashville, Tennessee. Originally from the Dominican Republic, her immersion in native culture, movement and dance therapy, meditation, pranayama and expressive arts are the foundation of the work which she teaches both in the U.S. and internationally. Learn more at [www.norisbinet.org](http://www.norisbinet.org) and contact her at [nbinet@aol.com](mailto:nbinet@aol.com).*



## Valerie Skonie

In the Prosopon School of Iconography the process of creating an icon is described as a template for the unfolding of the soul. In this school beginners all work with the figure of Archangel Michael who is said to be our guide in our struggle with the ego. It is said that a signature of one's soul is left behind on the linen-covered wooden canvas where the icon is created. Painting an icon is a sacred process that can be undertaken by anyone, regardless of artistic background. I am not a professional artist, nor have I had any art training in this life. However, much of my life has been directed toward the conscious regard for my soul. The icon retreat where I created this was a milestone for me on that journey.

*Valerie Skonie is a retired entrepreneur. She presently pursues her passion for writing as a spiritual practice, living part time in Hailey, Idaho and part time in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. She can be reached via email at [valerie@svidaho.net](mailto:valerie@svidaho.net).*

**Doreen Schweizer**

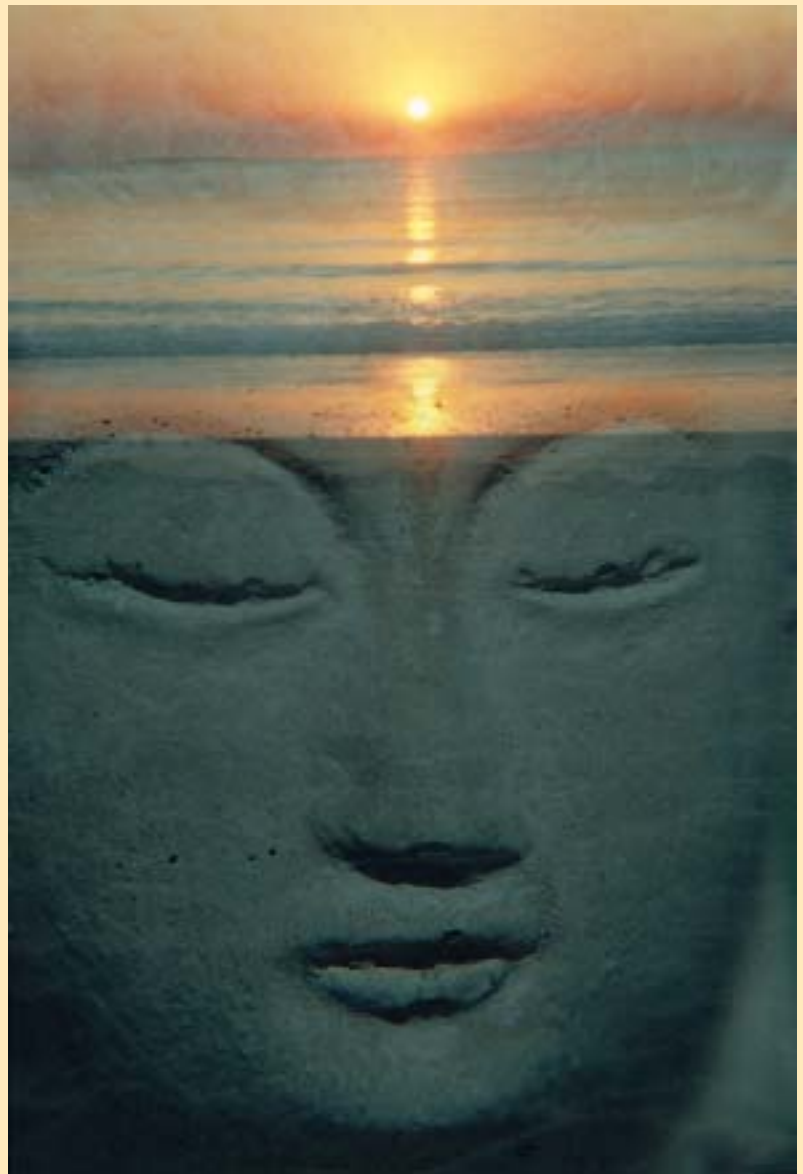
Sunrise

*"Who is Buddha, who is Buddha, wherever I go,  
wherever I go? Buddha is a raindrop, Buddha is the sea,  
Buddha is everything and Buddha is me."*

– song; Rochester Zen Center

Several years ago I began to experiment with multiple exposure photographs done directly in the camera—not in the darkroom, not in a computer. I would shoot an entire roll of film, purposely underexposed, then reload it and re-shoot. There is an enormous element of chance in this process. I chose as the central subject a small Buddha statue in my garden. I returned over and over to that face and came to experience great pleasure simply seeing the image in the viewfinder. As I surrendered to the process, I realized the *Dhamma* was being revealed—both in my own seeing and in the resulting images. It was a tremendous opening for me personally, and the photographs also seemed to have a calming and steadying effect on the viewers.

*Doreen Schweizer is an artist as well as a meditation and Dhamma teacher. She lives in Northern New England, where she also teaches yoga and has a small mindfulness-based psychotherapy practice. Her Buddha images are available as both prints and notecards at [www.greenstreetpress.org](http://www.greenstreetpress.org). Reach her at [Doreen.Schweizer@valley.net](mailto:Doreen.Schweizer@valley.net).*



**Harold Brammer**

Balance

From the Life Journey Metaphors Series: "Given our gender and sexuality scripts, balancing the femaleness and maleness of Self is an essential internal and external homework on the journey toward well-being, wholeness, and harmony."

*Harold Brammer of Raleigh, North Carolina is a nationally and internationally recognized portrait, mural, and visionary artist. Contact Harold at [hlbrammer@yahoo.com](mailto:hlbrammer@yahoo.com)*



## Monika Steinhoff

### End Game

There was a time when entertainment was the primary impetus for my art making, but there has been a shift. Well before 9/11, I decided that I needed to confront political and social realities more directly, moving from merely personal expression towards a bigger concern about the world we are leaving our children. While Bush & Co. were preparing to take over, I began a painting about the militarization of the USA. Egg tempera paintings take a long time and can get tedious, so I often put them aside for a while. This painting disappeared for several months. While grappling with 9/11, I brought it back out; to my surprise, it seemed to be very much about that event. While struggling with my horror over our bombing Afghanistan, this painting took shape as "End Game."

*Monika Steinhoff was born during World War II, experienced bombing, spent a long time in academia and has been a practicing professional artist in Santa Fe for over 30 years. She can be reached at [monikasteinhoff@earthlink.net](mailto:monikasteinhoff@earthlink.net).*



## Jerry Wellman

### Slippery Drifters

In 7th grade I came to the realization that there are deeper and perhaps unknowable aspects to what is seen and experienced in this life. My curiosity about this has held steady for over 30 years and lead me to study physics, cognitive research, cosmology, eco-psychology and other scientific fields. All along in this search I have been making images. The key for me as an artist is to establish and maintain a sense of wonder. This piece is from a series of watercolor images of plants entitled "Supersensible Landscapes & Fairy Traces," that convey a visual immediacy corresponding to the fleeting lucid moments one experiences when the observed reveals hints of something greater than what is visible.

*Jerry Wellman resides in Santa Fe, New Mexico. His work has been exhibited at the Smithsonian, the Brooklyn Art Museum, and the Pierogi Gallery in New York among others. Earlier this year his digital animation "If a Stone Could Talk" was shown at the Santa Fe Film festival. Jerry can be reached at [art@laluz-studio.com](mailto:art@laluz-studio.com), and more of his work appears at [www.jerrywellman.com](http://www.jerrywellman.com).*



**Tony Schanuel**  
Nirvana

My work is an exploration into the unseen world of consciousness. The goal of my art is to inspire the viewer to the possibilities of this unseen world to which we all belong. I offer my art as a conduit to that last amazing frontier—Inner Space, one's own consciousness. In essence, I see my life and my art as a sacred gift. My hope is that the nearly endless images embedded within my art can transport the viewer to a place of his or her own sacredness.

*Tony Schanuel is a photographer and digital artist living in O'Fallon, Illinois. He will be representing the United States in the Digital Art category at the 2003 Florence Biennale Art Exhibit held in Florence, Italy this December. You can see more of his work at [www.schanuelart.com](http://www.schanuelart.com).*

**Iryne Cummins**

The "Happiness Mandala"  
From the Chrysalis Project

The mandalas in the Chrysalis Project are an invitation for the viewer to contemplate the beauty in the world and to realize that all of us exist in a chrysalis of conditioning and belief, and that in any holy second we can choose to break out of that chrysalis and exist in a space of glory and peace. Despite classical training in all the traditional mediums, I basically consider the computer my palette and pixels my medium. I want to make wonderful things that jar people into realizing that when technology is used for truth and beauty, it can take art to a whole new level.

*Iryne Cummins is an award-winning fine artist, web designer, graphic artist, and crafts person, and leads workshops in Sacred Art. Her current projects include making digital prints and collages, polymer clay wearable sculpture and hand-painted clothing. She can be contacted at [artsyto@artsyiryne.net](mailto:artsyto@artsyiryne.net), and the Chrysalis project can be viewed at [www.artsyiryne.net/chrysalis/index.html](http://www.artsyiryne.net/chrysalis/index.html)*

