

Belmont Art Association Meeting: May 25, 2022

Location: Our 17th Zoom meeting was brought to order by Co-Chairs Naomi Ellenberg-Dukas and Dari Paquette, who welcomed 14 new members who have joined the BAA in the last few months. There were 16 people present.

Attendees: Sheila Benedis, Christine Chang, Jennifer Dubost, Naomi Ellenberg-Dukas (Co-Chair), Irene Fairley, Bert Halstead (Treasurer and Membership Coordinator), Richard Hill, Kirstin Ilse, Anne Katzeff, Peggy Kornegger, Jessica Lomeli, Helen Morse, Dari Paquette (Co-Chair), Minna Rothman, Janet Smith, and Jane Wentzell (Recording Secretary).

Business Meeting

1. “Transforming Belmont” Update: The BAA received a grant from the Belmont Cultural Council to design and paint two more utility boxes this year. Dari approached the Belmont Center Business Association to see if they would be interested in contributing to our public art program so that more boxes could be painted. After two attempts, she received no response from them, nor from Cityside Subaru, so she contacted Anne Mahon, local realtor and philanthropist, who sponsored Nayda Cuevas’s box last year. After discussing, Anne and Dari decided to repurpose funds that Anne had donated last year for another community art endeavor that had fallen through, and Anne donated additional funds to allow us to paint two more boxes. The Call For Entries is now being finalized and will be publicized by the end of the week. Thank you, Anne!

- The box that Rocky Cotard painted last year has lost the outlines around the doves due to weather conditions. He has been asked to repair it; he says he will, but there are no guarantees.

2. Member News:

- Ian Todreas is continuing to fundraise for Ukraine by selling his watercolors. He also has a connection with an organization that is working with Rwandan genocide survivors and their families(<https://www.rwandayouth.org/>). He is collecting art supplies to donate to this group such as pens, pencils, pastels, brushes, paper, paints, fibers, and related supplies, and anything else that is easily transportable by volunteers, who are conducting a visit in mid-June. Deadline for accepting donations is Saturday, June 4th. If you have anything you would like to donate by dropping off at Ian’s house, email him at ian@todreas.com.

- Bert and Louise Halstead have a photography show at the Beech Street Center, “Views of Iceland,” from June 1-30. There will be a reception on June 8th at 1pm. The show displays some of the beautiful photos they took on their trip to Iceland this past September.

3. BGA News:

- BGA’s birdhouses painting public art project “Nesting” is being coordinated by BAA member Kirstin Ilse. They are looking for artists to paint the birdhouses and volunteers to help hang them in suitable locations. If you want to paint a birdhouse, contact Rebecca Richards or Kirstin Ilse.

- “Flora & Fauna” is the new show, up from May 21- June 30. The virtual reception is tomorrow evening from 7-8:30 pm. There are several special events planned during June.

6. June Meeting: Next month at our members’ meeting we will be hearing from another group of our new members, who will introduce themselves and discuss their work.

Presentations

Tonight’s program is the discussion of two recently published books written, illustrated, and designed by members. We are delighted to learn about the latest collaborative effort of long time BAA member (and webmaster) Anne Katzeff and her partner, Peggy Kornegger (featuring Peggy as writer and Anne as artist and graphic designer): a book titled, “Inside the Rainbow: Soul Connection in Nature;” along with Helen Morse’s recently completed memoir, “The Difficult Girl.” Also a long time BAA member, Helen used her photographs and graphic design skills to self-publish her book. The unifying themes of this joint presentation are using language as a medium to communicate, and using art and photos to better communicate the intention of the written word.

Anne and Peggy spoke first. Peggy is the author of two previous books: *Living with Spirit* and *Lose Your Mind, Open Your Heart*, which Anne also designed. Peggy also writes a biweekly blog. Peggy's creative inspiration is the natural world, and she writes about finding soul, God, and spirit and meaning in the universe. Anne's artwork and strong design throughout the book strengthen the connection between Peggy's words and the beauty of nature. Each chapter in the book presents thoughts on themes such as "All Things Revealed," "Silent Presence," "Darkness and Light," "Wonders of the Night," etc. There is a meditation at the end of each chapter. Thoughtful notes from this conversation included: the population of earth is 7.8 billion, so there are 7.8 billion ways to see the rainbow! Dawn and dusk provide a powerful connection to the beyond. The language of clouds is considered, and birds are seen as an invitation to oneness with God and nature. The book is available on Amazon.

Helen Morse's recently released book, *The Difficult Girl*, is a memoir spanning 50 years and details her challenging childhood, life with her wealthy parents, their homes, household help, and her two sisters. Her photographs as well as old family photos help bring the story to life. Helen told us that all three sisters were "difficult girls," but her sister Debbie eventually committed suicide. This memoir vividly illustrates that even great wealth cannot necessarily solve mental health problems – it can even contribute to them – and that a confluence of events and parental abuse and disinterest can outweigh everything else. Helen spoke of how the interplay of words and photos strengthen each other, that in writing the memoir she was both observer and filter. She quoted Diane Arbus: "A photograph is a secret about a secret. The more it tells you, the less you know." She also paraphrased Theodore Seuss Geisel (aka Dr. Seuss), who said that "words and pictures are yin and yang. Married, they produce a progeny more interesting than either parent."

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Edits and additional notes by Dari Paquette