

The Castle Voice

May - August, 2025 WomanKraft Art Center's Newsletter Volume 76



Photo of Gerrie Young by Nicole Young

388 S. Stone Ave. Tucson, Arizona 85701 520-256-7455
www.womankraft.org

Castle Voice

Mysteries of the WomanKraft Castle Center for Art, Education and Culture, Revealed!

WomanKraft is a Non-Profit Arts Organization founded in 1974 to claim, validate, and empower women artists and other under-represented groups.

Directors and Coordinators at WomanKraft

Directors of Exhibits

Tony Russo
Gayle Swanbeck

Directors of School of the Arts and General WomanKraft Business

Gayle Swanbeck
520-256-7455

Membership Services

Barbara Achord - Coordinator

Official WomanKraft Website

<https://womankraft.org>
Geno Davis

**For more information, please call 520-256-7455
Thursday-Saturday, 1-5pm**

Castle Voice

Organizing, Keystroking, Proofreading, Editing:
Traci Kelly, Albert Kelly and Gayle Swanbeck
Design and Photography by Jonathan DuHamel

Thank You!

WomanKraft thanks Long Realty, our generous members, our gallery docents, investors, clients, customers, and all our volunteers.



In 1991, WomanKraft purchased the 1918 Queen Anne Victorian that is now the WomanKraft Castle Art Center. It houses our gallery, The School of the Arts, The Sanctuary, an all-natural

beauty salon, and the art studio of Gayle Swanbeck Studio #103 and Lauralee Simon #102. WomanKraft is located at 388 S. Stone Avenue, Tucson, AZ, 85701.

OFFICERS

Lydia Phillips, President
Darlene Kirk, Vice-President
Gayle Swanbeck, Treasurer
Nancy Martin, Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS

Ana Maria Yañez
Darlene Kirk
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Gerrie Young
Gwen Moore
Jordana Silvestri
Nicole Young
Terri McGuire
Tony Russo
Caroline Latron
Traci Kelly

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Gallery Schedule

Gallery hours: Thursday -Saturday: 1:00-5:00pm

APRIL 5 - MAY 31 DRAWING DOWN THE MUSE

RECEPTION SAT, APRIL 5, 7-9PM

It's the 35th annual women's exhibit. No theme, all mediums. Show strong and proud in this decades long tradition celebrating women in the arts. Deadline for submissions: March 22, 2025.

JUNE 7-JULY 26, 2025: BLACK AND WHITE AND SHADES OF GRAY

RECEPTION SAT, JUNE 7, 7-9PM

This exhibit is artwork on any topic. All mediums, any style, but must be only in black, white and shades of gray (Silver included). This includes mats, frames and edges of wrap around canvas. No exceptions. Deadline for submissions: May 24, 2025.

Gallery ONLY is closed August 2025

SEPTEMBER 6- OCTOBER 25, 2025: ANYTHING GOES

RECEPTION: SAT, SEPTEMBER 6, 7-9PM

That's right, Anything Goes is any subject matter, any medium, any style. Deadline for submissions: August 23, 2025.

NOVEMBER 1- DECEMBER 20, 2025: HOLIDAY BAZAAR

RECEPTION: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 7-9PM

This 39th annual Holiday Bazaar provides revenue for local artists, a wide choice of fine arts and crafts all retailing between \$1 and \$100. We seek art that reflects the holiday season from Kwanza to Christmas; all mediums, all styles considered. Deadline for submissions: October 18, 2025.

Gallery ONLY is closed in January 2026

Are you an artist interested in exhibiting with WomanKraft? Call 520-256-7455 for an appointment with Tony Russo or Gayle Swanbeck, Directors of Exhibits. Artists, please note: Shows are filled from first to respond. Deadlines indicate the last day works will be viewed, not the first. Hence, make contact ASAP. Call Thursday to Saturday from 1-5pm to speak to the docent on duty.

Womankraft School of the Arts



CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

Welcome to the Womankraft School of the Arts

Please note: Pre-registration is required for all students. All workshops are free to low income people 50 years and older. This is made possible by the generous support of individuals, board members, and those who pay workshop fees. Thank you. All workshops are open to adults of all ages for listed fees. Your class fees help us offer more classes and pay instructors. Fee students must pre-pay before you will be registered. Please call 520-256-7455 to sign up for workshops.

MAY

FLAT STAINED GLASS MOSAIC: 2 PARTS

Create an 8"x10" mosaic with an abstract or realistic design while learning to use the tools and tricks of the medium. It's great fun, and stained glass is always beautiful.

Part 1: Saturday, May 3, 9:30AM- 12:30 PM

Part 2: Saturday, May 10, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Facilitator: Traci Kelly

Fee: \$25, supplies included

MOSAIC ROOF TILES 2 PARTS

Using clay roof tiles and glass half-rounds, glass squares, and stained glass, you'll mosaic your own design creation. We use the tiles to edge our walks and plant beds.

Part 1: Saturday, May 3, 1:30-4:30 PM

Part 2: Saturday, May 10, 1:30-3:30 PM

Facilitator: Linda K.

Fee: \$25, Supplies included

DRUMMING FROM THE HEART

Journey into the sacred and moving experience of drumming. Instruction in basic hand patterns and rhythms will allow you to continue on your drum adventure. Loaner drum available.

Thursday, May 8, 1:30-3:00 PM

Facilitator: Susan Danos

Fee: \$10, drum loaner by donation payable to instructor.

PHOTOGRAPH THE BARRIO 2 PARTS

Let's take a walk through the Barrio Viejo and photograph architecture, people and beauty of the neighborhood using your own camera or phone. The second class we will share, critique and learn to exhibit your photos.

Part 1: Thursday, May 15th, 1:30-3:30 PM

Part 2: Thursday, May 22, 1:30-3:30 PM

Facilitator: Steve Renzi

Fee: \$20- Be sure your batteries are charged!

DRAWING TREES

Using charcoal and pencils you explore the fun of successfully drawing trees in their many phases.

Friday, May 16, 1:30-3:30

Facilitator: Gerrie Younc

Fee: \$20, Supplies included

TREAT YOURSELF: THE FACIAL

In the all-natural hair and body salon housed in "The Castle," the Sanctuary is offering a workshop to learn professional techniques and secrets for facials, skincare, aromatherapy, and more.

Wednesday, May 21, 10:00 AM-12:00 NOON

Facilitator: Jordana Silvestri

Fee: \$20, supplies included.

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

WRITING WITH RUMI

After listening to selected poems by Rumi, participants will imagine and write creative responses to them. They will discover that these poems are pulling them out of their habitual ways of thinking and discover their deeper concerns and joy.

Thursday, May 29 1:30-3:30 PM

Facilitator: Dr. Annik Safken

Fee: \$20. Supplies included

WISE WOMAN WRITING WORKSHOP

Learn to tap your infinite wisdom and playfully connect with your inner writer. We will journal with writing exercises, topics, and creative surprises.

Friday, May 30, 10:00 AM-12:00 NOON additional classes on June 27, July 25 & August 29

Facilitator: Ingrid Aspromatis

Fee: \$20. All four for \$40

JUNE

LEARNING TO DRAW: THE GRID 4 PARTS

You'll create your own grid sheet, select an image from our samples, learn to enlarge or reduce an image by using this grid method. Supplies will be provided during the first workshop but you'll be given a list to acquire for your continued use.

Part 1-4, Wednesday, June 4, 11, 18, 25, 2:30-4:00 PM

Facilitator: Tony Russo

Fee: \$40

DRUMMING FROM THE HEART

Journey into the sacred and moving experience of drumming. Instruction in basic hand patterns and rhythms will allow you to continue on your drum adventure. Loaner drum available.

Thursday, June 12, 1:30-3:00 PM

Facilitator: Susan Danos

Fee: \$10, loaner drum by donation payable to instructor.

DANGLERS AND WINDCHIMES

In this workshop, you will use an abundant selection of repurposed treasures, learn to use copper wire to create durable suspensions for all-weather displays and have a lot of fun while acquiring new skills.

Saturday, June 14, 9:30AM - 12:30 PM

Facilitator: Traci Kelly

Fee: \$20, supplies included.

MAKING HANDMADE PAPER

It's easy, it's fun. You'll use 100% recycled paper to create new art paper using simple tools and methods for quick, successful results.

Saturday, June 14, 1:30-3:30 PM

Facilitator: Caroline Latron

Fee: \$20, supplies included

WRITING WITH RUMI

After listening to selected poems by Rumi, participants will imagine and write creative responses to them. They will discover that these poems are pulling them out of their habitual ways of thinking and discover their deeper concerns and joy.

Thursday, June 19 1:30-3:30 PM

Facilitator: Dr. Annik Safken

Fee: \$20. Supplies included

GARDEN STEPPING STONES 2 PARTS

Learn techniques to make your very own garden stones. Add color and whimsy to your yard or garden. Learn to use glass and tile while having creative fun.

Part 1: Friday June 20, 1:30-4:30 PM

Part 2: Friday June 27, 1:30-3:30 PM

Facilitator: Linda K.

Fee: \$25, supplies included.

PHOTOGRAPH THE BARRIO 2 PARTS

Let's take a walk through the Barrio Viejo and photograph architecture, people and beauty of the neighborhood using your own camera or phone. The second class we will share, critique and learn to exhibit your photos.

Part 1: Saturday June 21, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Part 2: Saturday June 28, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Facilitator: Steve Renzi

Fee: \$20- Be sure your batteries are charged!

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

CREATE YOUR OWN PENDULUM

We'll use a natural cut crystal for the pendulum and decorate with glass beads. Create your own personal divination tool!

Saturday June 21, 1:30-3:30PM

Facilitator: Traci Kelly

Fee: \$20. Supplies included.

TREAT YOURSELF: THE MANI-PEDI

In the all-natural hair and body salon housed in "The Castle," the Sanctuary is offering a workshop to learn professional techniques and secrets for manicures, pedicures and more.

Wednesday, June 25, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Facilitator: Jordana Sylvestri

Fee: \$20, supplies included.

DRAWING WITH BLACK AND WHITE

Using black ink pens participants will select one or more images and learn the techniques to reproduce the image. It's unique and fun for all skill levels!

Thursday, June 26, 1:30 PM- 3:30 PM

Facilitator: Gerrie Young

Fee: \$20. Supplies included.

WISE WOMAN WRITING WORKSHOP

Learn to tap your infinite wisdom and playfully connect with your inner writer. We will journal with writing exercises, topics, and creative surprises.

Friday, June 27, 10:00 AM-12:00 NOON additional classes on July 25 & August 29

Facilitator: Ingrid Aspromatis

Fee: \$20. All four for \$40

JULY

CREATIVE GIFT BAGS

Using paper bags with handles, you'll collage designs, realistic to abstract, on both sides. You'll use a variety of paper and specialty scissors to create your design.

Saturday, July 12, 1:30-3:30 PM

Facilitator: Caroline Latron

Fee: \$20. Supply includes 2 bags. Extra bags \$1 each payable to instructor

PARTS R PARTS

Using pencil and or charcoal this workshop focuses on learning to draw our individual body parts. These will be selected by student input. Take the mystery out of drawing.

Thursday, July 17, 1:30-3:30

Facilitator: Gerrie Young

Fee: \$20. Supplies included

STAINED GLASS MOSAIC VOTIVES 2 PARTS

You'll create your own beautiful votives while learning the tools and techniques of mosaicing with stained glass.

Part 1: Saturday, July 19, 9:30 AM- 12:30 PM

Part 2: Saturday, July 26, 10:00 AM- 11:30 AM

Facilitator: Traci Kelly

Fee: \$20. Supplies included

GARDEN STEPPING STONES 2 PARTS

Learn techniques to make your very own garden stones. Add color and whimsy to your yard or garden. Learn to use glass and tile while having creative fun.

Part 1: Saturday, July 19, 1:30-4:30 PM

Part 2: Saturday, July 26, 1:30-3:30 PM

Facilitator: Linda K.

Fee: \$25, supplies included.

TREAT YOURSELF: THE FACIAL

In the all-natural hair and body salon housed in "The Castle," the Sanctuary is offering a workshop to learn professional techniques and secrets for facials, skincare, aromatherapy, and more.

Wednesday, July 23, 10:00 AM-12:00 NOON

Facilitator: Jordana Silvestri

Fee: \$20, supplies included.

WRITING WITH RUMI

After listening to selected poems by Rumi, participants will imagine and write creative responses to them. They will discover that these poems are pulling them out of their habitual ways of thinking and discover their deeper concerns and joy.

Thursday, July 24, 1:30-3:30 PM

Facilitator: Dr. Annik Safken

Fee: \$20. Supplies included

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

WISE WOMAN WRITING WORKSHOP

Learn to tap your infinite wisdom and playfully connect with your inner writer. We will journal with writing exercises, topics, and creative surprises.

Friday, July 25, 10:00 AM-12:00 NOON additional class on August 29

Facilitator: Ingrid Aspromatis

Fee: \$20. All four for \$40

DRUMMING FROM THE HEART

Journey into the sacred and moving experience of drumming. Instruction in basic hand patterns and rhythms will allow you to continue on your drum adventure. Loaner drum available.

Thursday, July 31, 1:30-3:00 PM

Facilitator: Susan Danos

Fee: \$10, loaner drum by donation payable to instructor.

AUGUST

DRUMMING FROM THE HEART

Journey into the sacred and moving experience of drumming. Instruction in basic hand patterns and rhythms will allow you to continue on your drum adventure. Loaner drum available.

Thursday, August 7, 1:30-3:00 PM

Facilitator: Susan Danos

Fee: \$10, loner drum by donation payable to instructor.

DANGLERS AND WINDCHIMES

In this workshop, you will use an abundant selection of repurposed treasures, learn to use copper wire to create durable suspensions for all-weather displays and have a lot of fun while acquiring new skills.

Saturday, August 16, 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Facilitator: Traci Kelly

Fee: \$20, supplies included.

TREAT YOURSELF: THE MANI-PEDI

In the all-natural hair and body salon housed in "The Castle," the Sanctuary is offering a workshop to learn professional techniques and secrets for manicures, pedicures and more.

Wednesday, August 20, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Facilitator: Jordana Sylverstri

Fee: \$20, supplies included.

MOSAIC ROOF TILES 2 PARTS

Using clay roof tiles and glass half-rounds, glass squares, and stained glass, you'll mosaic your own design creation. We use the tiles to edge our walks and plant beds.

Part 1: Friday, August 22, 1:30-4:30 PM

Part 2: Friday, August 29, 1:30-3:30 PM

Facilitator: Linda K.

Fee: \$25, Supplies included

WRITING WITH RUMI

After listening to selected poems by Rumi, participants will imagine and write creative responses to them. They will discover that these poems are pulling them out of their habitual ways of thinking and discover their deeper concerns and joy.

Thursday, August 28, 1:30 PM- 3:30 PM

Facilitator: Dr. Annik Safken

Fee: \$20. Supplies included

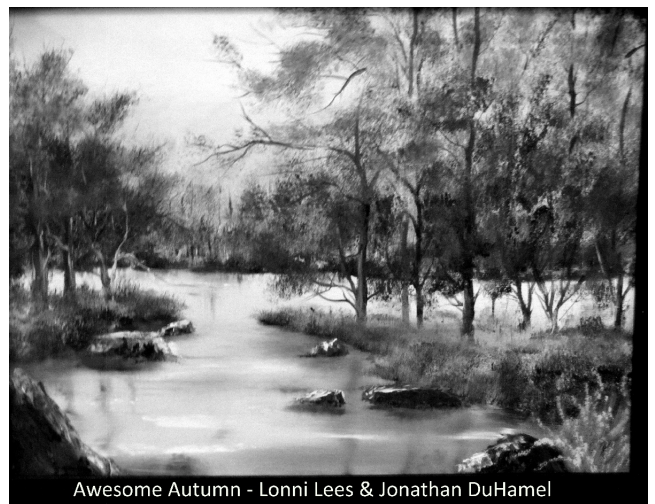
WISE WOMAN WRITING WORKSHOP

Learn to tap your infinite wisdom and playfully connect with your inner writer. We will journal with writing exercises, topics, and creative surprises.

Friday, August 29, 10:00 AM-12:00 NOON

Facilitator: Ingrid Aspromatis

Fee: \$20.



Awesome Autumn - Lonni Lees & Jonathan DuHamel

Updates and Thanks

Well, the January rummage fair has come and gone and there has been agreement that it needs to change. It just consumes too much time and energy as a two weekend event so we are adapting to a one-day Saturday 10:00 to 6:00 p.m. and limiting donations. Please read the article about this year's fair for more details. It still remains a fun event that allows us to generate money, connect with old and new people, and creates a win-win situation for many. Let me thank this year's volunteers whose time and labor made it all happen: Tony Russo, Richard Earl, Lydia Phillips, Caroline Latron, Barbara Kasper, David Craig, Traci Kelly, Albert Kelly, Hunter Kelly, Ingrid Aspromatis, Annik Safken, Brenda Gilbert, and Gerrie Young. You are all so very appreciated.

Tony Russo took on the job of redoing our metal folding signs that sits in front of the building during our open hours. He sanded down to the metal base, coated it, did the lettering and sealed it. This signage catches the eye of pedestrians and passing vehicles with amazing success and it took a heck of a lot of time and work to redo both sides. Thank you Tony! You have become such a valuable working member, artist, new board member and new teacher with our School of the Arts. (Please read the article on the school under comments for details.)

You are there for all our extra needs; opening for workshops, repairs, yard work, vetting artists, bringing me paperwork from WomanKraft, and so much more. Bless you. There just doesn't seem to be enough thank yous to cover all that you do.

Thanks to Mary Lou Griggs for your continued help with getting the labels done for our exhibits. Your skills and time are so very valuable. James and Ingrid Aspromatis and Tony Russo continue to install our exhibits with skill and beauty. What a team!

Jordana Silverstri, Lauralee Simon and Tony Russo are maintaining the grounds. Keeping on top of Tamarisk needles, weeds, and litter is no small task.

Traci Kelly, you are another gift to WomanKraft. Thank you for joining our board, taking on the Castle Voice, continuing to teach terrific workshops and adding your beautiful art to many of our exhibits. Traci also took time from her busy schedule to wash the walls, floors and ceilings of our porch. Yes there was pretty yellow and plum paint beneath all that dust and cobwebs. Traci has also brought four young men from Desert View High School where she teaches art to do volunteer work. They emptied the art storage room that connects the gallery to the School of Arts sorting, tossing and relocating tools and supplies and cleaning. It looks so good. On their second and third visit they did the same work on two upstairs rooms including some deep cleaning that they haven't been seen in years. Many more projects are scheduled as they continue adding up their volunteer hours. Thank you Daniel Paredes, Enrique Enriquez, Giovanni Mendez-Moreno and Eric Paredes. You accomplish wonders and so deserve our kudos many times over. Traci's School connections have also led to the possibility of having some of the Desert View's orchestra students play at some of our receptions and even a possible concert in October. That's grassroots interconnectivity at work again!

The December book launch for WomanKraft Community Arts and Womankraft's birthday party was a huge success bringing together many old friends from our local community with our current and new friends. Judy Jennings set up a book table from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and gave a lovely public reading from parts of the book. The official time for the birthday party was 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. which continued the steady flow of attendees including some street traffic. Art work was purchased, Castle Voices were distributed, new members signed up, some workshops were registered for, and 28 of the 30 books brought were sold. Thank you Judy and Nancy Martin for this lovely commemorative book, your participation in the event, and your continued work to sell and distribute the book are appreciated beyond words. A gentle note: should you purchase the book online at Amazon.com WomanKraft makes no money on the sale. So please look at local stores or WomanKraft. WomanKraft Community Arts retails at

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\$20 and celebrates the five decades of bringing art to Tucson.

This year has also found WomanKraft in the happy position of being included in several end of the year monetary distributions and a foundation; The Ellen Melamed Tikkun Olan Justice Foundation for a Feminist Future from New York (for \$1,500). Thank you Susan Meyer for seeking us out and working to see we received this donation. Hopefully we will continue to meet your consideration. Many people donate anonymously, but here we shout out our thanks in print and hope you take it to heart. We hope that all of you folks who donate time and money from the smallest to the grandest, who purchase art, take workshops and attend events all hear our thanks one heart to the other.

In love and gratitude, Gayle Swanbeck

Rummage Fair 2025

The fair saw less people than the past years. We had lousy weather, competing events and road construction hampering us. It was also clear that our sale items were less in variety, mainly lacking in high-end ticket items such as furniture and tools. We did bring in \$1,701.85 and saw many returning and new people. We had lots of help and wish to thank our volunteers: Tony Russo, Richard Earl, Lydia Phillips, Barbara (Jasper) Kasper, Carolina Latron, David Craig, Annik Safken, Traci Kelly, Albert Kelly, Hunter Kelly, Brenda Gilbert, Ingrid Aspromatis, and Gerrie Young. Thank you all so much. It's hard to appreciate all the time and labor that goes into such an event unless you've been an active part of it. I'd like to give an extra big thanks to board president Lydia Phillips who came in each day to anchor the fair, a job I used to do, so I truly understand and bless your work. Unsold items were boxed up and delivered to St Vincent de Paul's, Friends of the Library and WomanKraft volunteers. Next year is going to see a radical change in the fair. It will be a one-day event on the second Saturday of January from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. We will be accepting only clean, working, and mid end to higher end ticket items: Only these donations fit our plan. There are several reasons for

the change beginning with the huge amount of time and labor it takes to have the fair run two weekends. Secondly, it creates a scheduling problem between our annual January board meeting and the time needed to clean up, make repairs to the building, and load in our next exhibit. Lastly, will be limiting our donated items to one upstairs room rather than spreading out over several. Once again thank you all for your work, time, donations, purchases, and clean up. You are all so very wonderful.

Board Meeting

Our annual board meeting was held Saturday January 4th 2025. Current members were re-elected and new board members: Tony Russo, Traci Kelly and Carolina Latron were unanimously elected to serve. Welcome! A committee was formed to investigate website updates, publicity, grant writing, to formalize membership signups and to clearly outline the work required of docents. We look forward to reporting on the outcome. A financial report was given by Gayle Swanbeck, treasurer, a report was given on the successful launch of our book, WomanKraft Community Arts, celebrating our 50 years in Tucson by Nancy Martin. Thank you one and all.

Bingo Night

Second Friday bingo night will be offered on Friday June 13th, 6:00 p.m. only this trimester. Bring a friend for a guaranteed great time, free munchies, and unique prizes. Thank you Caroline Latron, Tony Russo, Barbara (Jasper) Kasper for your work and time. Spread the word!

School of the Arts

Attendance at workshops is slowly climbing back to our normal numbers. We are seeing longtime supporters and new. We're still struggling through unpredictable weather patterns and a host of events that strangle access and parking. Our newly added workshops, Writing with Rumi, facilitated by Dr Annik Safken and Wire Wrapped Pendants, facilitated by Rene Stone, have proven very popular

by attendees. We have now added Tony Russo's drawing workshop to our listing. The workshop uses the grid method to help artists reproduce their designed image, including how to enlarge or reduce that image. It's a four-part series offered June 4th - June 25th. Look at the School of the Arts calendar for details..

Also new to the workshop lineup: Photography in the Barrio facilitated by Steve Renzi. Steve is a photographer and magazine writer with over 20 years experience and was an adjunct instructor with Pima College. Look to the May and June School of the Arts schedule for this trimester offering. Welcome Steve! We look forward to you joining our WomanKraft family!

Good Luck and Good Wishes

Our dear Terry Maguire is still struggling with daily physical therapy and limited travel ability. So she has asked to put her workshops on hold until her life returns to normal. Everyone who has met or knows Terry believes in her indomitable and positive spirit and each of us sends you good health, love and understanding.

Additionally, many people know the art and workshops of Mary Theresa Dietz here at WomanKraft and throughout Tucson. She is planning a move to Bisbee, Arizona, seeking a quieter life with a good art scene. We cannot help but be sad to lose her but we also wish her the very best future. After all, Bisbee isn't that far away, right Terry? We hope home sale, home purchase and the move go smoothly.

Artist Interview: Gerrie Young- Artist, Mother, Teacher

I am excited to announce our decision to revisit WomanKraft artist interviews in the Castle Voice. Looking for a little inspiration to help me generate some interesting questions I prompted Chat-GPT and it did not disappoint. Fingers crossed, here goes.

It's my distinct honor to have the chance to sit down

and talk with Gerrie Young the day after National Women's day. This esteemed board member has been involved with WomanKraft since 1993 when she and her children came to help renovate the Castle before WomanKraft could even move into the building! Nikki, also a board member, and Jason were just 16 and 13 when Gerrie felt the pull to get them involved in the community.

You might know Gerrie as a ceramic artist but she is so much more. Her immeasurable involvement in our community reaches well beyond her role at WomanKraft. Gerrie currently has work in two shows at other galleries, teaches at Parks and Rec., serves on the board of WomanKraft and works with the Drawing Studio where she serves on that board and practices the art of printmaking. Go Gerrie! Gerrie's perspective about how and why she creates art is refreshing:

“Originally, I started making my large pots because I wanted blind people to feel them... I wanted them to feel that there were faces/people in the clay... I want them to see that the faces weren't exactly angular, that there was little bit of me in those faces and all the people I know from home which is Philadelphia, and people that I've met [in my life] and also my art school background was also in those pots... that [they were] mostly sculptural pots instead of a utility pot.”

While many people spend a lifetime trying to find their purpose in life, Gerrie knew from the age of 9 that she wanted to be an artist. Though art classes weren't always available to her in her teens, Gerrie explains, “all I could think about was when I go to college I will be an artist because this is where my head was.” From her very first college art class in her first week she felt that she had finally realized her dream, found her place, “and I remain in that field until present day”.

After graduating from Little Flower Catholic High School in Philadelphia, Gerri attended Temple University and earned a degree in Art Education. Later in life she added a masters in Art Education degree from Prescott College because she wanted to be a “well rounded” teacher. “I'm not limited to

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ceramics even though I am a potter. I do all areas because I teach all areas. I teach drawing and watercolor but I do most of my drawing through printmaking.”

Another AI prompted question told me to ask: Ceramics have a long history across many cultures. How do your own cultural roots influence the way that you work? Gerrie: “I feel like I come from lots of cultures and so I’m not really stuck in my own culture and I’m not stuck in the cultures where I have been... because my husband was in the Air Force and I would live all over the place. So it seems like every place I go I kind of mold myself to the activities of the culture that’s there and it has accumulated... there ‘s certain things I like about each culture that I’m in and I just kind of gravitate towards those things... when I go to different countries or cities I think you pick up things,” she continues, “ things that I buy, clothes that we buy it all comes from the cultures that we were in at the present and... when I go home to Philadelphia with my family, I go back to the culture that I was in... I start wearing big earrings, and speak the language [of that area] and wear the clothing that we wore,” she warmly reflected.

I wanted to dig deeper into her methods so I asked: Have you ever intentionally broken or altered one of your pieces to transform its meaning? Gerrie: “ I actually did that recently. I made a piece and it was supposedly a portrait and I thought it was one portrait but then when it was hanging in the show... I noticed that the picture had two people in it. One was a profile {and one was] a straightforward portrait and it just floored me because all these years I had not even thought of that. I hadn't known that it was two people and now it's like, I got to change the name of this piece now ... and I was trying to think back because it was made a while ago. What was I thinking then? Why did it split now? That's the magic of the arts.”

As a mom of two and wife of an Air Force officer, Gerrie remained true to her inner artist while balancing the duties of family life: “I think my experience is of being more worldly, more cultural. It

kind of came from my husband being in the Air Force because I had to fend for myself, even though we were married (and we’ll be married for 50 years) and having two children [in tow]. But, I had to pick up the fort and I had to hold up while he was traveling all over the place.” When it comes down to it, Gerrie stays true to her life’s purpose even in the face of adversity and the pressures which surround married women and mothers. She tells me, “I also had to be myself and I always felt like I had to fight for the little piece that belongs to me, myself which was the artistic part of me and... I was not going to give up that part of me that I know I was born with.”

Finally, I asked her: If your ceramic work could speak, what would it say about the world today and the place of women of color within it? “Well, it probably would say that Gerrie Young was here... I have put my stamp on the world. This is me and either accept me or not!”

Make sure to check out Gerri’s three workshops at WomanKraft this trimester: Drawing Trees, Drawing with Black and White and Parts R Parts!

While you’re at WomanKraft, please make sure to look into “The Natural Sanctuary” our very favorite all natural salon! Jordana, who teaches the DIY mani-pedi and facial classes, operates this magical space and has just the beauty service or the perfect natural remedy you need! Call 520-882-6280 for an appointment today!



Flower Girl - Gerrie Young

WomanKraft
388 S. Stone Ave.
Tucson, AZ 85701
(520) 256-7455
www.womankraft.org



Photo by Jonathan DuHamel

