

The Castle Voice

September-December, 2026, WomanKraft Art Center's Newsletter Volume 80



Emerging to the Stars, Art by Gayle Swanbeck

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 and Gayle Swanbeck

General WomanKraft Business

Be sure to follow us on social media

WomanKraft Art Center
on Instagram



Castle Voice
on facebook



Executive Directors: Gayle Swanbeck, Tony Russo,
Traci Kelly

Online Class Booking

<https://WomanKraft.scadler.com>
Traci Kelly



Official WomanKraft Website

<https://womankraft.org>
Geno Davis

**For more information, please call 520-256-7455
Friday-Sunday, 1-5pm**

Castle Voice

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



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 Tony Russo Building Studio. WomanKraft is located at 388 S. Stone Avenue, Tucson, AZ, 85701

OFFICERS

Lydia Phillips, President
Darlene Kirk, Vice-President
Gayle Swanbeck, Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS

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

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Thank You!

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



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PLEASE READ

NEW BUSINESS HOURS: GALLERY NOW TO BE OPEN FRIDAYS-SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS!

You've asked and We've listened! WomanKraft is excited to announce that starting in September 2026, our gallery hours will be changing. WomanKraft will now be open from FRIDAY through SUNDAY and no longer open on Thursdays. Our hours will remain 1-5 PM. On reception nights we will be open from 6-9PM, starting an hour earlier. We will also be open from 6-8 PM on the first Saturday of each month as part of the Barrio Viejo First Saturday events. The growing downtown area has inspired us to adjust our hours to meet the needs of hardworking Tucsonans. With our new hours, we expect to attract more foot traffic amongst all of the new motels, apartment complexes and restaurants. More traffic means more sales to support our artists and more people to spread the word about all of the amazing things WomanKraft has to offer!

STUDIO 102 AVAILABLE FOR RENTAL

Starting in September, studio 102 will be available for rent. LauraLee Simon is moving back East to be near her family. This is not a live in studio, though as a renter you will have access to the studio at all times to work. Call 520-256-7455 and leave your name and phone number. Gayle Swanbeck is the contact person with all the needed information

Gallery Schedule

Gallery hours: Friday-Sunday: 1:00-5:00pm

Gallery ONLY is closed August 2026

SEPTEMBER 5-OCTOBER 31, 2026- AUTUMN SPIRIT

RECEPTION SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 6-9pm

From coast to coast USA what does September- October trigger in you? The end of monsoon rains? Fall Colors? Early winter snow? Indian summer? Halloween? Day of the Dead? It's wide open both in mediums and subjects. Deadline for jurying: August 22, 2026, Art delivered on August 29, 2026

NOVEMBER 7- DECEMBER 19, 2026: HOLIDAY BAZAAR

RECEPTION: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 6-9pm

It's the 40th annual Holiday Bazaar! This unique show celebrates the work of local artists with a wide range of fine arts and crafts all retailing between \$1 and \$100. We seek art that reflects the holiday season from Winter Solstice to Christmas, from Kwanzaa to Hanukkah; all mediums, all styles considered. Deadline for jurying: October 24, 2026. Art delivered October 31, 2026

Gallery ONLY is closed in January 2027

FEBRUARY 6- MARCH 27, 2027- DESERTS

RECEPTION: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 6-9 pm

Deserts exist around the world, so bring us your images in all mediums and styles: Abstract, photography, Impressionism, Realism, it's as open as the Sahara to the saguaro. Deadline for jurying January 23, 2027. Art delivered January 30, 2027

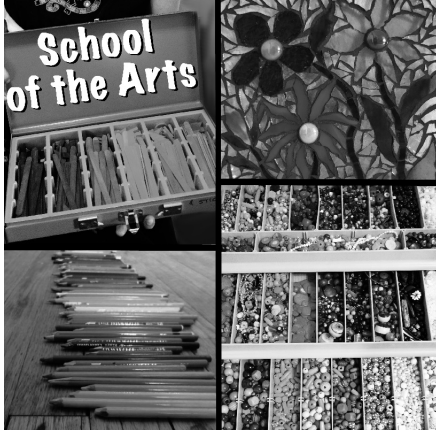
APRIL 3- MAY 29, 2027 DRAWING DOWN THE MUSE

RECEPTION: SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 6-9pm

It's our 38th annual women artists only exhibit. You're a woman? Then this show is for you! All mediums and styles included in this decades long WomanKraft tradition. Become a part of our rich and proud history. Deadline for jury in March 20, 2027

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 juried for approval, not the first. Hence, make contact ASAP. Art delivered is the date you will drop off your piece/s ready to hang. Call Friday through Sunday 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 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 visit www.WomanKraft.scadlr.com or scan the QR Code (on page 2). Hurry while spaces last! Class registration can also be made in person. Limited scholarships for low income people 50 years and older will be available. Call during business hours, Friday through Sunday 1-5 p.m. to see if you qualify. 520-256-7455.

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

SEPTEMBER

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, September 11, 1:30-4:30 pm

Part 2: Friday, September 18, 1:30-3:00 pm

Facilitator: Linda K

Fee: \$35 Supplies included

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, September 12, 9:30 am-12:30 pm

Facilitator: Traci Kelly

Fee: \$30, Supplies included

WATERCOLOR BUTTERFLIES

Have fun creating stunning butterflies in flight while also learning the basic principles of watercolor.

Saturday, September 19, 9:30 am -12:30 pm

Facilitator: Tracy Dunbar

Fee: \$30, Supplies included

POETRY

With their fellow writers, participants will read poems and respond to writing prompts. Participants will experiment with different forms and techniques in their work, and explore their poetic voice. Individuals at all experience levels are welcome!

Thursday, September 24, 1:30-3:30 pm

Facilitator: Andromeda Huntington

Fee \$20

WISE WOMAN'S 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, September 25, 10:00 am-Noon

Facilitator: Ingrid Aspromatis

Fee: \$20.

OCTOBER

PHOTOGRAPH THE BARRIO 2 PARTS

Let's take a walk through Barrio Viejo and photograph the architecture, people and beauty of the neighborhood using your camera or phone. In the second class we will share, critique and discuss the photos taken.

Part 1: Thursday, October 1, 10:00 am- Noon

Part 2: Thursday, October 8, 10:00 am- Noon

Facilitator: Steve Renzi

Fee: \$30- Be sure your batteries are charged

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

STAINED GLASS MOSAIC VOTIVES: 2 PARTS

Learn how to create a beautiful stained glass mosaic candle votive. You learn how to cut glass as well as how to glue and grout in this fun colorful class.

Part 1: Friday, October 2, 1:30-3:30 pm

Part 2: Friday, October 9, 1:30-2:30 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, October 7, 10:00 am- Noon

Facilitator: Jordana Silvestri

Fee: \$20, Supplies included.

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, October 10, 9:30 am-12:30 pm

Part 2: Saturday, October 17, 11:00 am-12:30 pm

Facilitator: Traci Kelly

Fee: \$35, Supplies included

IN LOVE WITH HUE: 2 PARTS *NEW CLASS*

Tap into your intuition, connect with the colors and symbols that are signs from the universe! In this therapeutic class students will explore a meditative process (clearing your field) in context with color and symbols to help them connect with their intuitions. Then they will make art to better understand their chakra systems.

Part 1 Saturday, October 10, 1:30-3:30 pm

Part 2 Saturday, October 17, 1:30-3:30 pm

Facilitator: Bridget Pilloud

Fee: \$30, Supplies included

LEARNING TO DRAW: THE GRID: 2 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: Thursday, October 22, 10:30 am- 12:30 pm

Part 2: Thursday, October 29, 10:30 am- 12:30 pm

Facilitator: Tony Russo

Fee \$40, Supplies included

MONO-PRINTING FLOWERS *NEW CLASS*

Learn the beautiful art of trace printing as well as subtractive and additive mono-printing using flowers as inspiration. Once you try it at WomanKraft, you'll want to do it again and again!

Sunday, October 18, 1:30-4:30 pm

Facilitator: Tracy Dunbar

Fee: \$30, Supplies included

POETRY

With their fellow writers, participants will read poems and respond to writing prompts. Participants will experiment with different forms and techniques in their work, and explore their poetic voice. Individuals at all experience levels are welcome!

Thursday, October 29, 1:30-3:30 pm

Facilitator: Andromeda Huntington

Fee \$20

WISE WOMAN'S 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, October 30, 10:00 am-Noon

Facilitator: Ingrid Aspromatis

Fee: \$20.

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

NOVEMBER

PHOTOGRAPH THE BARRIO 2 PARTS

Let's take a walk through Barrio Viejo and photograph the architecture, people and beauty of the neighborhood using your camera or phone. During the second class we will share, critique and discuss the photos taken.

Part 1: Saturday November 7, 10:00 am- NOON

Part 2: Saturday November 14, 10:00 am- NOON

Facilitator: Steve Renzi

Fee: \$30- Be sure your batteries/phones are charged

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, November 13, 1:30-4:30 pm

Part 2: Friday, November 20, 1:30-3:00 pm

Facilitator: Linda K

Fee: \$35 Supplies included

CREATIVE CANVAS TOTES *LIMITED TIME CLASS*

Using Acrylic paint on a premade tote bag, you'll design and execute your own personal mini tote!

Bring a theme in mind and make it a date, perfect for family, friends or partners.

Saturday, November 14, 1:30-4:30pm

Facilitator: Traci Kelly

Fee \$30 Supplies included

WRITING WITH RUMI 2 PARTS

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.

Part 1: Wednesday, November 18, 5:00-6:30pm

Part 2: Wednesday, December 9, 5:00-6:30pm

Facilitator: Annick Safken

Fee: \$30, Supplies included

POETRY

With their fellow writers, participants will read poems and respond to writing prompts. Participants will experiment with different forms and techniques in their work, and explore their poetic voice. Individuals at all experience levels are welcome!

Thursday, November 19, 1:30-3:30 pm

Facilitator: Andromeda Huntington

Fee \$20

WISE WOMAN'S 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, November 20, 10:00 am-Noon

Facilitator: Ingrid Aspromatis

Fee: \$20

CONCRETE SCULPTURE CLASS *NEW CLASS* 2 PARTS

Have you ever wanted to learn how to make your own sculpture making concrete? Learn how in this class using regular household objects (one will be your mold). There will also be an option to add color to your concrete! Dress appropriately, this will be messy. We'll meet in the garden to the right of our porch. Return for part 2 to break your sculpture out of its mold.

Part 1: Saturday, November 21, 9:30am-12:30pm

Part 2: Saturday December 5, 1:30-2:30 pm

Facilitator: Mark Hamilton

Fee: \$30, Supplies included

PAINT YOUR OWN FIGURINE *NEW CLASS*

Enjoy a new way to embrace your self expression. There is no limit to your creativity. Use a surprise toy form as a blank canvas. Have fun with paintmarkers, acrylics and learn the tricks to this fun art form. Adult Level Class.

Saturday, November 21, 1:00-4:00 pm

Facilitator: Inktuce

Fee: \$30, supplies included

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

CONFIDENT ACRYLICS

In 2.5 hours you'll complete a beautiful painting—even if you've never painted before. 'Talent' is overrated... all it takes is desire! Experienced painter already? Mernie has taught unique techniques to hundreds of students at every level. Everyone walks out amazed.

Friday, November 27, 1:30-4:00 pm

Facilitator: Mernie Buchanan

Fee: \$30, supplies included

DECEMBER

FELTING FLOWERS *NEW CLASS*

Learn some tricks and tips to create a felted flower using colorful wool. You can turn your flower into a magnet, pin or hair accessory when you finish. No experience needed. Great class to bring a friend!

Saturday, December 5, 3:00-6:00pm

Facilitator: Traci Kelly

Fee: \$20 Supplies included

JUICY: MAKE COLLAGE ART WITHOUT YOUR INNER CRITIC 2 PARTS *NEW CLASS*

Get unstuck on creating perfection and break that pattern! Give yourself permission to make, destroy, reform and embrace play in your art and life again! This therapeutic collage class will break you away from your inner critic so you can express your true self! You'll leave feeling better and with beautiful art to show!

Part 1: Sunday, December 6, 1:30-3:30 pm

Part 2: Sunday, December 13, 1:30-3:30 pm

Facilitator: Bridget Pilloud

Fee: \$30, Supplies included

LEARNING TO DRAW: THE GRID: 2 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: Thursday, December 10, 10:30 am- 12:30 pm

Part 2: Thursday, December 17, 10:30 am -12:30 pm

Facilitator: Tony Russo

Fee \$40

MAKE YOUR OWN STICKERS

Be part of this street art movement! Embrace this modern twist on a nostalgic fad. Learn different techniques for creating your own handmade stickers using easily accessible and affordable materials! Adult level class.

Saturday, December 12, 1:30-3:30 pm

Facilitator: Inktuce

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, December 16, 10:00 am- Noon

Facilitator: Jordana Silvestri

Fee \$20

POETRY

With their fellow writers, participants will read poems and respond to writing prompts. Participants will experiment with different forms and techniques in their work, and explore their poetic voice. Individuals at all experience levels are welcome!

Thursday, December 17, 1:30-3:30 pm

Facilitator: Andromeda Huntington

Fee \$20

WISE WOMAN'S 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, December 18, 10:00 am-Noon

Facilitator: Ingrid Aspromatis

Fee: \$20.

CONFIDENT ACRYLICS

In 2.5 hours you'll complete a beautiful painting—even if you've never painted before. 'Talent' is overrated... all it takes is desire! Experienced painter already? Mernie has taught unique techniques to hundreds of students at every level. Everyone walks out amazed.

Friday, December 18, 1:30-4:00 pm

Facilitator: Mernie Buchanan

Fee: \$30, supplies included

NEWS AND COMMENTS

UPDATES AND THANKS

Hello Dear Readers. It seems another trimester is winding down and September through December 2026 is upon us. I am a confirmed member of the Tucson Weather Whiners club, and I must say our weather here in the Old Pueblo has not been helping to get people through our gallery doors. Triple digit temps, storm tracker alerts and those pesky events which close the city center down has caused us to see only a little traffic (be sure to read the blurb on page 2 for changes to our Gallery's open days). The upside is that our receptions and workshops have had good attendance. Thank you folks for showing up and enjoying lovely times face to face with real live people. Tony Russo has been working many weeks to acquire, install, replace, and aim cameras in a new security system. Each step has met with another problem/need, including a set of cameras and hard drives that weren't in store and need to be shipped from another site. Recently, an electrical storm managed to stop the cameras from working correctly. You'll have to ask Tony for the details because at some point cyber-speak is Greek to me. The point to this all? If you are old enough you'll remember a time when you went to a store, bought the product and if it didn't work you brought it back to the same store. The product was replaced by one on the shelf or the money was refunded. The store stood behind its product; you appreciated that and returned to the store for other purchases. Let's count. One trip to buy. One trip to return. The problem was solved. Tony has been trying online to solve our issues and product problems. Weeks have passed with frustration with no light at the end of the tunnel. How I long for the good old days. The upsides of the cyber world are many. Don't get me wrong. There are lots of wonderful services offered, and we can thank many people for their implementation at Womankraft; from posting on Craig's List to online class registrations with Scadlr. So, thanks go out to Tony for using technology to meet and jury artists into our exhibits, Terri McGuire for setting up Square so folks can use credit cards in the gallery, Steve Renzi for all his postings to alert people to our events, Nicole Young for all her posts, Gino Davis for our website virtual tours, Annick

Safken for reading and responding to text messages and voicemails and I need another page to thank Traci Kelly for the many ways she uses her cyberskills to advance Womankraft.

All our events, receptions, art walks, banking, shopping, pop ups, yard sales, and gatherings require many people to bring to fruition. So, from the bottom of our hearts, especially mine, thank you: Steve Renzi, Barbara Kasper, Terri McGuire, Tony Russo, Annick Safken, Jordana Silvestri, Nicole Young, Gerry Young, Traci Kelly, Darlene Kirk, Penelope Kelly, and Lydia Phillips.

Thank you Lydia Phillips for funding the major trimming of our trees and their removal. It looks great and safer. Thank you Traci Kelly, Albert Kelly, Gayle Swanbeck, and Johnathan Duhamel for all the work it takes to create the Castle Voice. Wow, volume 80! And many thanks to all the wonderful workshop teachers new and old providing affordable exciting classes. They tap into people's creative centers and help students learn the techniques needed to produce a finished work of art, visual or written. Please take the time to read through our workshop listings. You might be pleasantly surprised at how many you find interesting.

Finally, we want to express our deeply felt gratitude for all of you who find ways to support Womankraft through the hard times and the good. Our non-profit mission depends on volunteer work, event attendance, memberships, purchases of art, workshop attendance, and financial aid. Please remember all donations from the small to the grand are so appreciated and needed. There are not enough words, but we hope you can feel it in your hearts and souls. Ours to yours. In love and gratitude, Gayle Swanbeck.

AUGUST BOARD MEETING:

By the time this issue arrives in your home our August 1st, 2026 meeting will have happened so we'll report on it in the next Castle Voice, Volume 81. Our board meeting will be held, Saturday, January 2, 2027, 10a.m.-12:00 p.m.

NEWS AND COMMENTS:

LAST SUNDAY YARD SALE:

Tony Russo, Annick Safken, Lydia Phillips, and Steve Renzi have been there to facilitate our monthly yard sale fundraiser. Yard sales run from 9a.m.-1:00 p.m. on the last Sunday of each month. Extreme heat has led to cancellations. When temperatures hit those triple digits and monsoon storms show up, you shouldn't. Common sense rules the day. The yard sale continues to move items into new homes and link us to our neighbors and new friends. Thank you folks for your work and time and the community for supporting us. Watch for our posts on social media.

VINTAGE AND ANTIQUE FAIR:

On Saturday, October 3rd, 2026, 6 pm-8pm, in conjunction with the Barrio Viejo's First Saturday event, WomanKraft will be hosting a sale of antique furniture, vintage kitchenware, art, and other unique items. It will be located in the Garden, north of the porch. Proceeds will benefit our non-profit mission of making the art experience accessible to underrepresented artists. Make sure you stop by before 7:45 to enter the drawing for the artist's sampler gift package featuring art made and donated by WomanKraft members. One ticket per guest, no purchase necessary.

POP-UP SHOP:

Our creative minds have turned the front entrance room into a pop-up shop! It is definitely worth checking out especially during opening nights! Each show you'll find a different theme presented by a single artist.

This September through October, during the Autumn Spirit exhibit, Penelope Kelly will be hosting a pop-up for Gayle Swanbeck. The sale will present a wide variety of goodies: electronic keyboard, native american flutes, drums, tools, kitchenware, artwork, collectibles and what nots. Fair prices, great options.

November through December during our Holiday Bazaar, the pop-up shop will feature artisan candles,

scented products and more by WomanKraft member and award winning artist, Beth Akridge

WOMANKRAFT BIRTHDAY PARTY 2026:

You are invited!! Saturday December 5th, 2026, 6-8 p.m. we celebrate our 52nd year! It is time to cheer on another year completed and another year beginning. There will be refreshments and cake, a fine Holiday Bazaar exhibit to peruse, affordable art for purchasing, and a chance to gift Womankraft as we continue to grow. While you are enjoying our event, please consider bringing a cash or check donation; so that Womankraft can continue serving our community for another 50 years. This event is open to members and the public alike and occurs during Barrio Viejo's First Saturday event.

SCHOOL OF ARTS

Welcome to our newest instructors. Tracy Dunbar, has been practicing art in Tucson for over 20 years and was highly recommended to us by Gerri Young. Tracy Dunbar also teaches classes at Tucson's Drawing Studio. She will be offering her gifts in a printmaking and watercolor class this fall. Bridget Poullard will be offering two amazing workshops that include some therapeutic elements using self expression and color. Just want what we have been looking for! And you may know Mark Hamilton from his unique sculpture work. This Fall he will be bringing his engineering expertise to teach us his mastered craft (one of many) of cement work. This may be a first ever at WomanKraft.

As always, we welcome back continuing teachers this fall: Lynda K, Inktuce, Tony Russo, Ingrid Aspromatis, Jordana Silvestri, Annick Safken, Mernie Buchanan, Andromeda Huntington, Steve Renzi and Traci Kelly

NEWS AND COMMENTS:

CYBERWORLD 2026

You can find the Castle Voice on our website: www.WomanKraft.org but you can still receive a hard copy through the mail by requesting it or by becoming a member. You can do this in person during our regular business hours Friday-Sunday 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. (or by calling during these hours) or email us at WomanKraftaz@gmail.com. To renew or pay your membership go to the Scadlr page or scan the QR code on the inside cover and once there look for "Memberships" which can be found in the dropdown menu at the top right (while on your phone). Now you have the choice to auto renew! So no need to go through the hassle each year! You may also use that same QR code to sign up, pay and register for classes. Memberships are only \$30 per year and support all of our programs.

BEING JURIED INTO EXHIBITS

On the page labeled "Gallery Schedule" you can find the exhibit titles, a brief blurb explaining the exhibit's theme and a deadline for being juried into the shows. It's best to call WomanKraft at 520-256-7455 on Saturdays between 1:15 and 5:00 p.m. to talk to Tony Russo, Director of Exhibits and get approval for your work. If your work is accepted he will explain to you what you will need to do when you bring your art into a show: inventory list, correct framing, pricing, and tagging your jewelry and non wall hanging art. You will also see the date listed for you to deliver your pieces ready to hang. At this time you will complete your contract.

SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to express our gratitude, to you dear readers. With your engagement, WomanKraft has continued to serve our community for over 50 years. Thank you to each patron who has purchased art, enjoyed one of our classes or attended a WomanKraft event. If it's been a while we encourage you to reconnect and bring a friend! When you are the first person to purchase a piece of art from an up and coming artist you become a benefactor of their future.

You might also consider volunteering if you have time to give, please email us at WomanKraftaz@gmail.com.

ARTIST INTERVIEW

It is not unusual to go about life hoping you've made a positive impact on those around you. Well, if you are reading this, chances are, you might have been lucky enough to have met the extraordinary artist in this interview, Gayle Swanbeck. If you know anything about Gayle, you know that she has, without a doubt, had a lasting impact on the Tucson art scene. I remember meeting her 21 years ago. It was the first time I walked into a gallery with my art and was received with genuine kindness. A welcoming vibe that encouraged me to take a chance and to participate in WomanKraft. There is nothing like seeing an artist celebrate their first show and selling their first pieces. The crew at WomanKraft, led by Gayle for decades, embraced that sense of, "you belong here" and rejected the cliché, pretentious attitude we have come to expect from many galleries. Perhaps that is the legacy Gayle has instilled in all of us at WomanKraft, the true sense of inclusiveness before the rest of the world even knew what that word meant. As a humble person, Gayle was a bit reluctant to be the artist interviewee for this issue of the Castle Voice. Ever since she became homebound, her presence is missed but hopefully through this interview you'll be reminded why she has held such an amazing leadership position within the Tucson art scene for so many years.

You have dedicated many years of your life to WomanKraft as an artist, educator, Executive Director, and Treasurer. What inspired you to commit yourself so deeply to WomanKraft, and what has kept you passionate about its mission for so many decades?

My first inspiration was Linn Lane who was one of the first supporters to create WomanKraft in 1974, though at first she wasn't able to be a founding mother because it was an organization for visual artists only. She exposed me to WomanKraft in October 1978 and I became a member. The

NEWS AND COMMENTS:

organization seemed to create a complete circle of wins. The members won because we were being mentored both as artists and business people. I've always said my university years gave me lessons in being a good student. WomanKraft taught me how to be an artist who could earn a living doing what I loved. The students won because they, too, were learning that same information; making art, keeping records, making contracts, documenting what they did, writing resumes and more. Finally, my community also won with a non-profit organization that served the needs of our community with workshops, art projects and schools, retirement communities, and city art installations.

WomanKraft has served as a gallery, school of the arts, and creative community for generations. Looking back, what are some of the most significant changes you have witnessed in Tucson's art scene, and what role do you believe WomanKraft has played in shaping it?

I'm heaving a huge sigh here because some of those changes have not been positive. Funding has almost dried up under recent political times, and both sides of the aisle, local, state and federal can share this sadness too. WomanKraft, however, has remained a haven for artists, students, teachers, visitors, members, clients, and supporters. Linn Lane was the driving force in ensuring WomanKraft found a way to purchase our own space here on South Stone Ave. Without ownership we would never have survived covid or the shutdown of the inner city as the electric tram system was being built. We weren't burdened with the impossible task of paying rent when no customers could get to our doors. We are a living and growing example to other art organizations. An organization may fail but it won't because of what others do to you. There is no shame in trying to succeed.

Over the years, you have helped countless emerging artists find their voices and share their work with the public. What has it meant to you to mentor and support so many creative individuals?

It has been and continues to be an incredible joy. I can't express in words how wonderful it feels to give an opportunity for an emerging or underexposed artist a chance to exhibit. The happiness I experience watching people teach art and fine crafts, some for the first time in their lives. Also seeing students discover that they can create beautiful art and learn how to use the tools and mediums connected to that art, and the same goes for the people who discover they can express themselves through the written word. I've seen too many people to enumerate individually who have had WomanKraft change their lives. I feel so blessed.

Your own artwork spans a remarkable range of mediums, including painting, drawing, collage, mosaic, beadwork, and more. How do you decide which medium to use for a particular idea, and do you have a favorite artistic process?

I can't say that I have a favorite medium. I'm not even sure how I've chosen mediums in the past. I guess sometimes it's what's available/ affordable. Sometimes it was curiosity to try something new. Now it has to do with what I can do in my home as I'm housebound. I no longer can be snipping and cutting stained glass and pouring resin, but I can collage, draw, use watercolors, create windchimes and dangles and make jewelry. So though more limited, I am not stoppable.

What inspires your artwork? Are there particular experiences, people, places, or ideas that consistently influence your creative vision?

Inspiration comes from a few places. Dreams have always been a part of my imaging. Also, while I could still travel about, my camera was always with me. From the photos I took my art emerges. I have catalogued photos of flora, fauna, landscapes and people, and I use these images to date.

Running a nonprofit arts organization for decades undoubtedly comes with challenges. What have been some of the biggest obstacles you've faced, and how have those experiences strengthened your commitment to supporting artists and the arts community?

Obstacles, hey? Well, no organization can last for decades without encountering issues and a simple answer is to face them and not repeat them if possible. A learning curve is really valuable, and I do believe one of the reasons we continue to survive and grow. Everyone makes mistakes, others and ourselves. We can do nothing about other people, but we can change ourselves and usually have. I guess that's why we're still here after 51 years. I believe the people who keep WomanKraft going understand this, using it here and in their personal lives.

When you think about your legacy, both as an artist and as a leader of WomanKraft, what do you hope future generations of artists and community members will remember about your life's work?

I hope they think of me with kindness and more smiles than not. I hope they continue to enjoy my art and that they continue to support WomanKraft, the place that has been the core of my life.

Bonus Question:

If you could give one piece of advice to young artists or people who dream of being involved in an arts organization like WomanKraft that serves the community, what would it be?

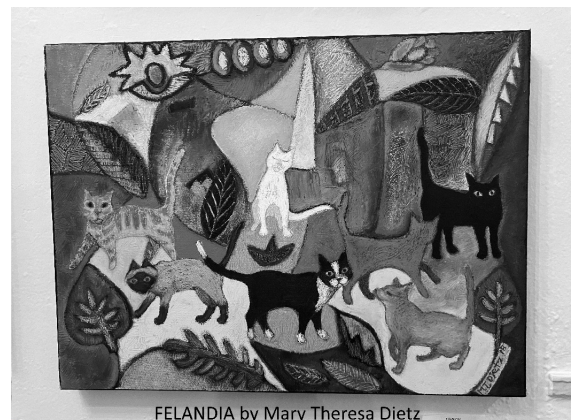
Don't talk about making art, make it. Don't talk about writing, write. Don't leave your art stored somewhere, find a place for it. Maybe here at WomanKraft. In love and gratitude.

Interview by: Traci Kelly

SEEN AT THE GALLERY



Winter Solstice - Lonni Lees



FELANDIA by Mary Theresa Dietz



Creating - Gayle Swanbeck



White Cat - Traci Kelly



Charles Bronson by Tony Russo

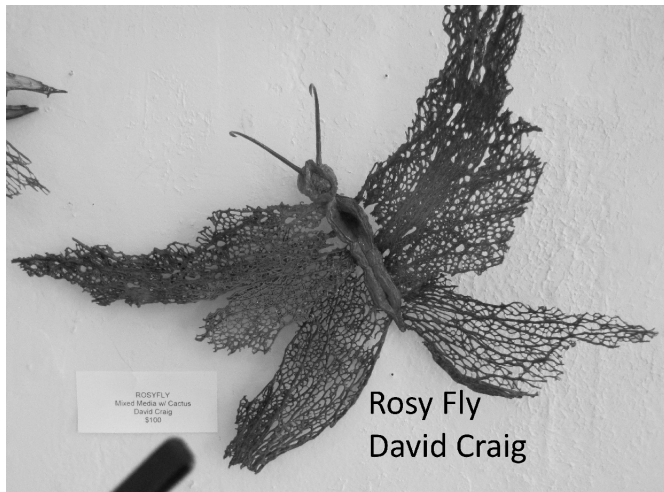
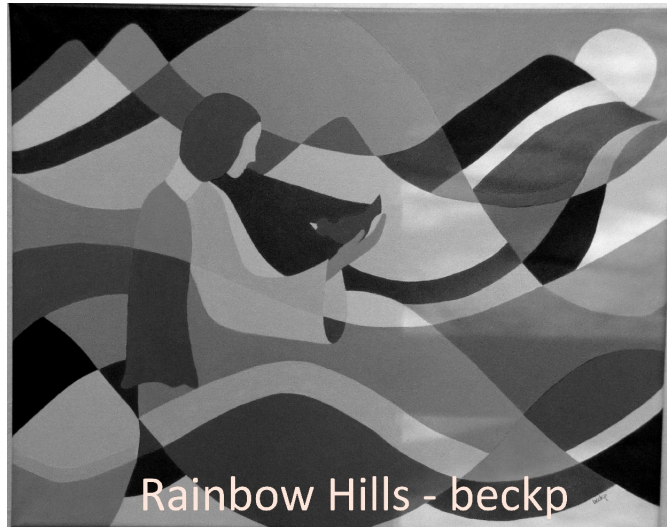


Purple Twilight - Lonni Lees & Jonathan DuHamel

Crystal Slowpoke - Evey Weissman



Rainbow Hills - beckp



Floral Beauty - Susan Chambers



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Photo by Jonathan DuHamel

WomanKraft Art Center

