

Creating

March 2024



Unity Church-Unitarian Spiritual Practice Packet



Creating

If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. —Gospel of Thomas

The blank page. The empty canvas. The lines on a page awaiting notes. At some point, even the most creative person will face that empty space, wondering, “What do I want to say?” It’s the artists/writer/musicians dilemma, and the challenge facing all of our attempts to be creative. How to bring forth what is within us?

Creating is the theme for March. Why “creating” instead of “creative?” We tend to think of “creative” people as an assignation of a positive attribute. To call someone creative is then to say that someone else is not creative. Not everyone is a professional writer, artist or musician, but all of us have the ability to create and the ability to be “creating” and re-creating ourselves every day. All of us are creators. But where does that impulse to create come from?

Rick Rubin is an American record producer who wrote *The Creative Act: A Way of Being*. His small book is a treasure trove of reflections on not only the ways in which we create, but the ways in which we access our internal selves to find that creative spark. Rubin writes: “We begin with everything: everything seen, everything done, everything thought, everything felt, everything imagined, everything forgotten, and everything that rests unspoken and unthought within us.”

So, the substance of our own lives is the creative material from which our response to the world emerges. Consider the variety of art that has graced the church over the past couple of years. Art made by people who are incarcerated. Abstract paintings that convey a deep sense of light and color. Fanciful paintings of children and fairies, of *bokuseki*—the Zen Buddhist pen work bold and black gestures across a white canvas—and so many more. Some of the art may intrigue you, some may touch you less, but all of them represent an artist’s attempt to bring forth what is within them. The same is true for the astonishing diversity of musical styles that is now embedded in Unity’s musical baseline. Every week your ears may hear a Gregorian chant, a Peruvian text set to a complicated rhythm, a beloved choral piece, a folk tune, a spiritual. Some music or art may speak to our condition, and others may not. Yet, each creative offering reflects the impulse to express the inexpressible, or as Buddhist teacher John Daido Loori wrote: “to make visible the invisible.”

Of course, creating is not only about producing something tangible. It is, as Rubin acknowledges, a way of being. Parenting requires an incredible amount of adaptability and creativity. Learning how to age, acknowledging one’s limitations, and adapting to them, all ask us to imagine ourselves into a different way of being. Again, referring to Rubin’s book, he writes: “To create is to bring something into existence that wasn’t there before. It could be a conversation, the solution to a problem, a note to a friend, the rearrangement of furniture in a room, or a new route home to avoid a traffic jam. What you make doesn’t have to be witnessed, recorded, sold, or encased in glass for it to be a work of art. Through the ordinary state of being, we’re already creators in the most profound way, creating our experience of reality and composing the world we perceived.”

Look around you. Consider the astonishing creations that we may spend money to visit, or that are as ordinary as a tool in a toolbox: the Golden Gate Bridge, the White Album, Guernica, Hagia Sophia, the Sphinx, the space shuttle, Autobahn, “Clair de Lune,” the Colosseum in Rome, the Phillips screwdriver, the iPad, the Grateful Dead, Philadelphia cheesesteak. Look around you. Then notice what comes to you—and what creative and creating impulse you can bring to the world. Remember the words from the Gospel of Thomas: “If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth, will save you.”

Rev. Kathleen Rolenz with this month’s theme team: Ahmed Anzaldúa, Rev. Tom Duke, Rev. Andrea LaSonde Anastos, Rev. KP Hong, Drew Danielson

Spiritual Practices

Option A

Claiming Creating as Spiritual Practice

Unitarian Universalists have recognized quilting and other handwork, gardening, and cooking as spiritual practices. If you create in any of these ways, do you consider them part of your spiritual practice? Is there an art that you would like to try as a spiritual practice?

As you cook, garden, knit, or make in another way this month, try naming it as a spiritual practice. Engage it with intentionality, regularity, and depth. Consider these testimonies about quilting and needlepoint:

“For me, quilting as a spiritual discipline gives shape and color, and texture to my inner life. It is about making beauty from what is at hand.”

“Pattern is the background against which we can see Revelation, with which we can balance constancy with change. Spiritual discipline is knowing and recognizing the patterns in one’s self, changing them if necessary and possible, tuning oneself to the larger cosmic patterns, and gracefully resting in this beauty.”

“The cadence of the needle entering and exiting the canvas is a soothing heartbeat, releasing me from my own body. The wool yarn is a tactile reflection, rough and strong, tying me to the physical world.... The discipline of needlepointing, like the practice of staring at a candle or counting breaths, focuses the mind, making it more perceptive, and less scattered.”

“I hurled fabric and threads about in a frenzy of activity that allowed no negative thoughts to break through while I worked, no despair, no doubts, no judgments.”

“On the day I held up the completed garment, I felt a familiar sense of peace.... You can make order out of chaos!”

“Slowly I have learned the wisdom of letting these things happen when the time is right. When inspiration comes, it sometimes comes with such dazzling, simple clarity that I can only say a quiet ‘Thank you’ for this amazing grace.”

“The most recent gift of my spiritual discipline is discovering that it can also be a gift for others.”

“It is my path to comfort, clearer understanding, and renewed compassion for the world.”

In preparation for your Chalice Circle, explore what you learned by claiming your creating as spiritual practice.

Adapted from *Everyday Spiritual Practice* edited by Scott W. Alexander, Skinner House, 1999. Quotations are from “Quilting” by Laurie Bushbaum, pp. 231-236., and “Meditation by Hand” by L Annie Foerster, pp. 237-240. In the Anderson Library: 248.4 A.

Option B

Basic Tools for Creating

In her well-known *The Artist's Way* series, Julia Cameron commends three spiritual practices for creative living.

1. Morning pages are three pages of stream-of-consciousness writing. With this morning practice, we learn to detach from our inner critic, our logical brain, and our negativity. We remove obstacles to our creativity. We learn that our moods don't matter. We stop judging. We find our quiet center. For Cameron, morning pages are a form of meditation that connect us with an inner wisdom, give us insight, and help us make change in our lives.
2. An artist's date is a block of time, perhaps two hours weekly, set aside for solo play: nurturing creativity by exploring something interesting and fun. These dates fill us with a sense of wonder and enchantment. We see that we are not caught by the narrow confines of life as we have known it.
3. We discover solace and direction in a daily or weekly twenty-minute (at least) walk. When we walk, we wake up our creative consciousness and enliven our senses.

You may be familiar with one or more of these practices. If so, have you found them helpful as ways to nurture your creativity? Perhaps they are new to you as tools for creative practice. In any case, try one or more of them this month. Share your experience with your Chalice Circle.

Option C

What Is Your Practice?

Reflect on your primary spiritual practice, whether it is meditation, time in nature, gratitude, parenting, caretaking, justice work, or something else. How does creativity intersect with your practice? Has this month's theme changed or enriched your practice? Bring your insights to your Chalice Circle.

Questions to Ponder

Read through the questions below and notice which ones resonate with you. One or more of the questions might seem particularly compelling – or some might stir resistance in you. Either of these reactions might make the question fruitful to consider. Choose just one and take time to consider it, over several days if possible. Write it down on a piece of paper you carry in your pocket. Or take a picture of that paper with your phone. Or record it in your journal – and spend some time, each day if you can, reflecting on it in writing or otherwise, noticing where it leads you, what you learn from it, and your response to it.

Questions

1. How does your faith inspire creativity, or inspire you to live more creatively?
2. What does it mean to live creatively?
3. Is creating important to you? Why?
4. Do you see yourself as a creative person? Why or why not?
5. Is creating a spiritual practice for you?
6. What is it like when you are creating? Do you experience flow? Fear? Joy?
7. What do you do to nurture creativity?
8. What blocks you or holds you back from creating? How do you overcome these obstacles?
9. Who has modeled creative living for you? Who has collaborated with you in creating?
10. For you, what has creating to do with the Holy?
11. Have you experienced creative expression as healing? as transformative?
12. How does creating intersect with choosing? with courage? with compassion?

What is your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't name what life is asking of you now, spend the month listening to your heart to hear what your question is.

Inspiration

Recommended Resources For Personal Exploration & Reflection

Here you will find a variety of resources to help you take a deeper dive into the worship theme. These offer you several ways to engage with the theme that invite you to consider it thoughtfully, inspire thinking, and open you to new insights. They are optional. As you browse the packet, consider trying out several that hold meaning for you and, possibly, one or two that may feel challenging.

Word Definitions

Create (cre·ate krē- 'āt ' krē- , āt)

verb

created; creating

1: to bring into existence

... God created the heaven and the earth.

—Genesis 1:1 (King James Version)

2 a: to invest with a new form, office, or rank

She was created a lieutenant.

2 b: to produce or bring about by a course of action or behavior

- Her arrival created a terrible fuss.
- create new jobs

From Merriam Webster:

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/create>

Wise Words

“Creativity requires the courage to let go of certainties.” —Erich Fromm

“Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in creating out of void, but out of chaos.”

—Mary Shelley

“When we consider creativity, we are considering the most elemental and innermost and deeply spiritual aspects of our beings.... To speak of creativity is to speak of profound intimacy. It is also to speak of our connecting to the Divine in us and of our bringing the Divine back to the community....

“Creativity is not a noun or even a verb—it is a place, a space, a gathering, a union, a where—wherein the

Divine powers of creativity and the human power of imagination join forces.... I do not see any way out of humankind’s multiple dilemmas except that one route that got us here in the first place: our powerful creativity. But how to apply our creativity at the service of justice and compassion is the lesson taught by all spiritual traditions, and it is a lesson of survival for our times.”

—Matthew Fox, *Creativity: Where the Divine and Human Meet*

“Creativity is the language we use to communicate the urgency of our dreams for a better future.”

—Audre Lorde

“I believe that, like energy, creativity moves between us, and comes into play every time we interact. Creativity most certainly drives the rare occasion I write a poem—but it’s also very present in my cooking, coloring, garden, and Sunday services—everything I ever come up with as a possibility and then make happen. And none of those things are created by me alone; they’re co-created with people who share their words, recipes, sketches, seeds, and ideas, whether they know it or not. So creativity isn’t just about imagination and self-expression, it’s also about how we bring those things into collaboration.”

—Rev. Karen Armina, “The Path to Creativity,” James Reeb UU Congregation, May 3, 2023

“Creativity is not just for self-defined ‘creative’ types like artists or writers or musicians.... creativity is part of everyone’s life, not just the artists among us.

It can show up in day-to-day tasks like cooking or gardening. It's there in the ways we think about the world, approach our challenges, manage our relationships. So while I might frame a conversation about creativity primarily through the process of writing, for example, for you it could be something very different, from planting a garden to designing a new process for your job to rethinking a conflict in your family. We can bring the power of creative thought to everything we do. Give yourself permission to hear this in very broad terms.... So in this month of creativity, when we see and feel the creative power in the world of spring all around us, may we find it also in ourselves and in one another, and pay attention to the balance that best allows it to flourish."

—Rev. Libby Smith, from "Nurturing Our Creativity," UU Church of Delaware County
<https://uucdc.org/services/nurturing-our-creativity/>

"Sometimes the greatest challenge is to actually begin; there is something deep in us that conspires with what wants to remain within safe boundaries and stay the same.... Sometimes a period of preparation is necessary, where the idea of the beginning can gestate and refine itself; yet quite often we unnecessarily postpone and equivocate when we should simply take the risk and leap into a new beginning."

—John O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space Between Us*

"Art making provides a process for us to explore our life experiences—including the experiences of prejudice, racism, and homophobia—and make them public. It follows that art is now perceived differently than before—it is seen as a vehicle for change, as a force that can break down boundaries and expose inequalities. So, people of color and the poor are denied access to art for fear that if they get their hands on it, they'll write their own stories and understand the value of their lives."

—bell hooks

"Taking its inspiration from a popular African American expression, 'Making a Way Out of No Way' explores themes of agency, creativity, and resilience through personal stories of African Americans who challenged racial oppression and discrimination and created ways out of 'no way.'

"In making their own 'way out of no way,' individuals have drawn inspiration, strength, and support from various sources—from their families and communities, from a higher power, from the world of ideas, from the past, from other people and places, and from within themselves."

—from The National Museum of African American History & Culture

"Of all the ways we've learned to occupy ourselves, art requires a distinct mystical courage. A sacred arrogance that says not only do I have a right to be here, but I believe my existence will add to the fabric of the universe. I will make. I will craft into existence. This is unbridled power. Undeterred agency in a world that suppresses ours.... The creative dwells in you. I only hope it is given enough voice to cause disruption. This sacred arrogance is a revolution in its own right."

—Cole Arthur Riley, *Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Staying Human*

"There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open. You do not even have to believe in yourself or your work. You have to keep yourself open and aware to the urges that motivate you. Keep the channel open."

—Martha Graham

“Why should we all use our creative power...?
Because there is nothing that makes people so
generous, joyful, lively, bold and compassionate, so
indifferent to fighting and the accumulation of
objects and money.”

—Brenda Ueland

“(A)n idea or product that deserves the label
'creative' arises from a synergy of many sources, and
not only from the mind of a single person. It is easier
to enhance creativity by changing conditions in the
environment than by trying to make people think
more creatively. And a genuine creative
accomplishment is almost never the result of a
sudden insight, or a light bulb flashing on in the
dark, but comes through years of hard work.... when
we are involved in it, we feel that we are living more
fully than during the rest of life.” —Mihaly
Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology
of Discovery and Invention*

“Whatever else art may be, it is primarily a work of
the soul.... Art is very much a sacrament, an outward
and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace. Art is
not so much what we make, but how we relate to the
world.... This is one of the benefits of spiritual
discipline—to be immersed in Holy Time, dissolved
in Sacred Space. When I fully enter the work, I return
refreshed, invigorated, as if I had traveled to a new
land. I can return to my daily tasks with greater joy
and deeper presence.”

—Laurie Bushbaum, from *Everyday Spiritual Practice*

“In absorbed play and concentrated creativity
self-consciousness can be forgotten and the disguise
of the false self is left behind.” —Fiona Gardner, *The
Only Mind Worth Having: Thomas Merton and the
Child Mind*

Poetry

A Paper Moon

Annette Wynne

A paper moon, I'll hang it high
Up in a dark blue paper sky;
Some pretty silvery stars I'll make—
All for the little lone moon's sake;
My bed shall be the evening grass,
Where only fairy people pass;
Where no one sees
But the breeze
That hurries lightly through the trees;
The sky I'll hang above my head,
When I'm undressed to go to bed;
And so, a gypsy child I'll play
That has no real home to stay.

<https://pickmeuppoetry.org/a-paper-moon-by-annette-wynne/>

Poetry (excerpt)

Pablo Neruda

And it was at that age ... Poetry arrived
in search of me. I don't know, I don't know where
it came from, from winter or a river.
I don't know how or when,
no they were not voices, they were not
words, nor silence,
but from a street I was summoned,
from the branches of night,
abruptly from the others,
among violent fires
or returning alone,
there I was without a face
and it touched me.

Read the entire poem here:

<https://wordsoftheyear.com/2017/08/06/poetry-by-pablo-neruda/>

The Creation (excerpt)

James Weldon Johnson

And God stepped out on space,
And he looked around and said:
I'm lonely—
I'll make me a world.

And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
And God said: That's good!...

Then God sat down—
On the side of a hill where he could think;
By a deep, wide river he sat down;
With his head in his hands,
God thought and thought,
Till he thought: I'll make me a man!

Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He kneeled him down;
And there the great God Almighty
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the
 night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle of his hand;
This great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust
Toiling over a lump of clay
Till he shaped it in his own image;
Then into it he blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul.
Amen. Amen.

Read the entire poem here:

<https://poets.org/poem/creation>

Articles

“Creativity vs Creation: How Are These Words Connected?”

by Shawn Manaher, The Content Authority

When it comes to the world of art and innovation, there is often confusion between the terms “creativity” and “creation.” While they are related, they are not interchangeable.

Creativity refers to the ability to come up with original and imaginative ideas. It is the process of generating something new and unique. On the other hand, creation is the act of bringing those ideas to life. It is the physical manifestation of creativity.

Throughout this article, we will explore the differences between creativity and creation, and how they work together to produce meaningful and impactful work.

<https://thecontentauthority.com/blog/creativity-vs-creation>

“Biomimetic Design: 10 Examples of Nature Inspiring Technology”

by Gertie Goddard, BBC Science Focus

Scientists and inventors looked for and found creative solutions in nature.

<https://www.sciencefocus.com/future-technology/biomimetic-design-10-examples-of-nature-inspiring-technology>

“Art in Protest: Supporting Dissident Artists”

A program of the Human Rights Foundation

“Art in Protest” is the response of the Human Rights Foundation to the authoritarian repression of creative dissent. Art is a powerful tool for dissent in closed societies, provoking constructive dialogue and creating space for debate beyond mainstream bodies of political discourse. Authoritarian

governments around the world recognize the power of art as a conduit of change and systematically persecute, repress, or censor artists to silence political dissent. “Art in Protest” seeks to elevate artists whose work is connected to their struggle for democracy and human rights.

<https://hrf.org/programs/art-in-protest/>

“Art and Anti-Racism: An Interview with Jen Bloomer”

by Ariana Bayer

Jen Bloomer is a community arts educator in San Francisco who works with all ages. “To me, the arts are a beautiful entry point for addressing a complex topic such as anti-racism. They hold the power to shift the back and forth intensity of a typical conversation and create more spaciousness for people to process and take in information.”

<https://www.famsf.org/stories/art-and-anti-racism-an-interview-with-jen-bloomer>

Books

The Creative Act: A Way of Being

Rick Rubin. Penguin Random House, 2023.

Many famed music producers are known for a particular sound that has its day. Rick Rubin is known for something else: creating a space where artists of all different genres and traditions can home in on who they really are and what they really offer. He has made a practice of helping people transcend their self-imposed expectations in order to reconnect with a state of innocence from which the surprising becomes inevitable. Over the years, as he has thought deeply about where creativity comes from and where it doesn't, he has learned that being an artist isn't about your specific output, it's about your relationship to the world. Creativity has a place in everyone's life, and everyone can make that place larger. In fact, there are few more important responsibilities.

The Creative Act is a beautiful and generous course of study that illuminates the path of the artist as a road we all can follow. It distills the wisdom gleaned from a lifetime's work into a luminous reading experience that puts the power to create moments—and lifetimes—of exhilaration and transcendence within closer reach for all of us.

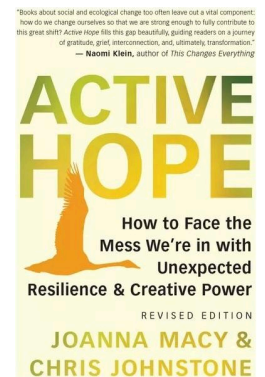
<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/717356/the-creative-act-by-rick-rubin/>

Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in with Unexpected Resilience and Creative Power, Revised Edition

Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone. New World Library, 2022.

The challenges we face can be difficult even to think about. Climate change, war, political polarization, economic upheaval, and the dying back of nature together create a planetary emergency of overwhelming proportions. This revised, tenth anniversary edition of *Active Hope* shows us how to strengthen our capacity to face these crises so that we can respond with unexpected resilience and creative power. An Act for the Earth book read; in the Unity Bookstall and Anderson Library.

<https://www.activehope.info/>



Art & Fear: Observations on the Perils (and Rewards) of Artmaking

David Bayles and Ted Orland. Imagine Continuum Press, 2001.

Although *Art & Fear* is written by artists for artists, its wisdom translates into any arena of life that involves creativity (about 99.8% of life): gardening, arranging a room, sewing, crafting, cooking, exploring, writing, preaching, raising a child, nurturing a friendship, choosing music, composing. It invites us to consider how we risk living our

'realest' life, being vulnerable and exposed in our relationships and in our work.

<https://www.raincoastgroup.com/item/9780961454739?q=a86242d4-efc6-8788-bd14-7d1c684652c6&seq=0>

Creativity, Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. HarperCollins, 1996

Famous for his "flow" theory, Professor Csikszentmihalyi examines the creative process and shows how creativity can enrich us all.

<https://www.harpercollins.com/products/creativity-mihaly-csikszentmihalyi?variant=32205941211170>

Syllabus, Notes from an Accidental Professor

Lynda Barry. Drawn & Quarterly, 2014

An illustrated journal the author kept as asst. professor of interdisciplinary creativity at UW Madison. Overflowing with drawings, cartoons, writing fragments, ideas, and observations.

<https://drawnandquarterly.com/books/syllabus/>

Point Zero - Creativity Without Limits

Michele Cassou. Tarcher/Putnam, 2001

This is a practical guide for everyone and anyone. Uses a self-questioning approach to each "Point Zero" where creativity can begin with a non-judgmental, non-goal approach.

<https://www.michelecassou.com/store/pointzero>

Loot

by Tania James. Alfred A Knopf, 2023.

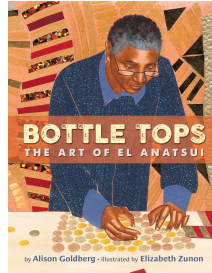
Abbas is a poor boy charged with creating an extraordinary automaton for an Indian sultan. Lauren Groff writes, "it is a wild, dazzling eighteenth-century romp across continents with profound things to say about invention and self-reinvention, class and fate."

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/715724/loot-by-tania-james/>

Children's Books

Bottle Tops: The Art of El Anatsui

Allison Goldberg; illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon. Lee & Low, 2022.



El Anatsui is a Ghanaian sculptor who has spent his life telling the stories of his people in media that reflect their history and culture. He is drawn to recycled items which contain their own stories, especially bottle caps which he 'sews' into huge cloth sculptures.

<https://alisongoldberg.com/books/bottle-tops-the-art-of-el-anatsui/>

Ish (Creatology Series)

Peter Reynolds. Candlewick, 2004.

A young creative spirit learns that thinking "ish-ly" is far more wonderful than "getting it right."



Combining the spareness of fable with the potency of parable, Peter Reynolds shines a bright beam of light on the need to kindle and tend our creative flames with care.

<https://www.candlewick.com/cat.asp?browse=series&mode=book&isbn=0763667870&bkview=p&pix=y>

Just Jerry: How Drawing Shaped my Life

Jerry Pinkney

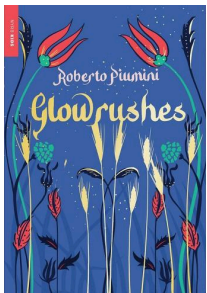
This is a memoir written and illustrated by award winning Caldicot Medalist Jerry Pinkney. He talks openly about his learning disability (dyslexia) which was undiagnosed in his childhood and his struggles in school, about living in a lower middle-class Black community both pre- and post Civil Rights, and the way drawing made his world 'limitless.' Pinkney speaks matter-of-factly about the challenges that faced him and also celebrates the opportunities that opened doors.

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/9780316383851>

Glowrushes

by Roberto Piumini. Translated by Leah Janeczko.
NYRB Kids, 2023.

Long, long ago, a boy lies confined by sickness to his windowless bedchambers. He can never experience the outside world, never breathe fresh air or feel the warmth of the sun on his skin, so his doting father summons a painter to embellish his rooms with beautiful murals.



The artist sets to work, and soon there is a fabulous world on the walls, a colorful, shifting landscape peopled by shepherds and lovers, criss-crossed by armies and pirate ships. As the boy's health fades, the artist paints on, turning the simple commission

into a generous labor of love. Can he show this child the richness and beauty of the world—and of life itself—with nothing but paints and brushes?

Glowrushes is a heartbreakingly beautiful classic of Italian children's literature.

<https://www.nyrb.com/products/glowrushes>

What Do You Do With an Idea?

by Kobi Yamada, illustrated by Mae Besom.
Compendium, 2014.

This is the story of one brilliant idea and the child who helps to bring it into the world. As the child's confidence grows, so does the idea itself. And then, one day, something amazing happens. This is a story for anyone, at any age, who's ever had an idea that seemed a little too big, too odd, too difficult. It's a story to inspire you to welcome that idea, to give it some space to grow, and to see what happens next.

<https://www.thechildrensbookreview.com/what-do-you-do-with-an-idea-by-kobi-yamada-book-review/>

Movies

Babette's Feast

Directed by Gabriel Axel, 1987.

Babette, a French refugee, creates a lavish banquet and transforms lives.

<https://www.criterion.com/films/27894-babettes-feast>

Jiro Dreams of Sushi

Directed by David Gelb, 2011.

Follows the creative genius of then 85-year old, Jiro, a sushi master.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiro_Dreams_of_Sushi

Exit Through the Gift Shop

Directed by Banksy, 2010.

The story of Thierry Guetta, a French immigrant in Los Angeles who, over the course of several years, filmed a host of street artists at work, including Shepard Fairey and Banksy, but failed to do anything with the footage. Eventually, Banksy decided to use the footage to make a documentary, which includes new footage depicting Guetta's rise to fame as the artist "Mr. Brainwash." In addition to narration read by Rhys Ifans, the story is largely related by Banksy himself, whose face is obscured and voice altered to preserve his anonymity.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exit_Through_the_Gift_Shop

Showing Up

Directed by Kelly Reichardt, 2022.

Lizzy, a talented sculptor and arts administrator, finds herself entangled in a complex relationship with Jo, a rival artist and her enigmatic landlord. A fourth collaboration between the director and actor, Michelle Williams.

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13923216/>

Videos

“Racism and Minnesota’s Progressive Illusion”
Minnesota Historical Society; Black History, Black
Voices series. May 19, 2021.

A panel reflects on racial dynamics in the Twin Cities
and the intersection of the wonderful and wretched
sides of that existence, as written about in Sparked.
One question asked during the discussion was,
“What are ways you either see currently, or imagine
for the future that will help address the traumascap
of racism in Minnesota?” Imagining is the
foundation of creative thinking.

<https://nrhp.mnhs.org/blackhistory-blackvoices/racism>

“Your Brain on Art”

Susan Magsamen and Ivy Ross

In this short talk, the authors of *Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us* discuss the physiology of creative expression. Emphasizing curiosity, playful exploration, and sensory engagement, they invite us to embrace active participation in the arts as essential elements for well-being, personal growth, and societal change.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrQrwO7HNYw>

The 2021 Annual Torrance Lecture, “Ordinary Creativity in Everyday Life”

Paul Silva

Although the famous ideas and creators get most of the attention, nearly all human creativity is mundane: the countless hobbies, projects, and passions that allow people to spend time doing something creative in everyday life, be it knitting scarves, writing poems, making jewelry, or decorating cupcakes. This talk peeks into the surprising world of ordinary creativity. Using experience-sampling methods that measure people's creative ideas and actions where and when they happen, we find that creative activity in daily life is utterly pervasive, a source of positive emotion, and a way to build satisfying skills and relationships.

All told, ordinary creativity reveals something special about our motivation to be creative.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oosua6f19n0>

Podcasts

“Creativity and Leadership with Patrisse Cullors,” Season 1, Episode 4, *Finding Our Way*

Host Prentis Hemphill talks with Black Lives Matter founder Patrice Cullors and discusses the role of creativity and imagination in future building, the origins of a movement that has changed the world, and the call to and costs of stepping into your own leadership.

<https://www.findingourwaypodcast.com/individual-episodes/s1e4>

CIIS Public Programs Podcast, “N. Scott Momaday: On Keeping the Earth”

This is an interview from November 12, 2020 with the great literary figure N. Scott Momaday, who recently passed, a member of the Kiowa tribe.

“I think if you’re a creative person, you rely heavily upon the imagination. I think of the imagination as that which enables us to see beyond reality. You see the mountain, but you imagine the valley on the other side, it is a way of seeing beyond the ordinary and that is of crucial importance to writers, to people who write, to storytellers, to artists of different kinds. So, the imagination I think cannot be overestimated. It’s crucial to our experience as human beings.”

<https://www.ciispod.com/n-scott-momaday>

Music

“Creating” Spotify Playlist

<https://spoti.fi/49wsRnh>

“All My Shades of Blue” —Ruen Brothers

“Pange Lingua Gloriosi, Sing of Glory” —Harry Hagan OSB

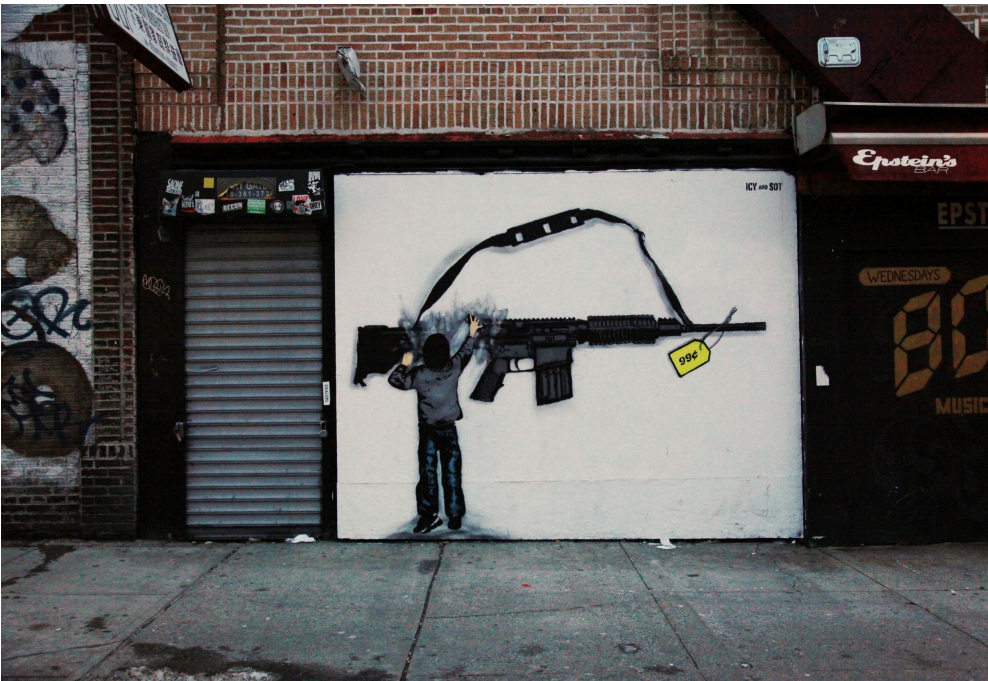
“Where Have All the Flowers Gone” —The Kingston Trio

“El Condor Pasa” —Imma Sumack
“Fire on the Mountain” —Grateful Dead
“Wild Flower” —The Cult
“Hips Don’t Lie (feat. Wyclef Jean) —Shakira,
Wyclef Jean
“See Me, Feel Me” —The Who
“Blue Jeans” —Lana Del Rey
“Suite Bergamasque, L. 75: III. Clair de Lune”
—Claude Debussy
“While My Guitar Gently Weeps” —The Beatles
“Cold Chillin in the Spot” —Russell Rush, Jazzy
Jay
“Requem: II. Dies Irae” —Giuseppe Verdi
“The Day That Never Comes” —Metallica

Photos



Matt Adnate created this 20-story work of art depicting the faces of people who live within a public housing block in Melbourne. No longer a drab place of nameless, faceless people, the mural shows a vibrant community.



Street art from Iranian anti-violence artists Icy & Sot, depicting a boy erasing a gun into dust—creativity in service of social justice. Lower east side, New York City.

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