

JENN BRAKE

Artist

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Cherry Pit Collective

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Intersection of 31 St & Cherry St

HI!

I'm Jenn Brake. I am an artist and I teach classes at the Cherry Pit Collective.

I practice different approaches to HCT (Healing Creative Trauma), such as neurographic inspired techniques and abstract interpretation, to help others build and recover their own unique artistic matrix.

The three pieces below were all made by myself. 2018-Pre Trauma, 2021-Post Trauma and 2023-Recovery.



As you can see, the impact trauma has had on my artistic ability is significant. However, such damage can be healed through how we approach HCT (Healing Creative Trauma). Practicing Neurographic inspired techniques, abstract interpretation and other HCT methods can help to connect the unconscious and conscious mind. In doing so, you will experience a deeper appreciation and enhanced perception of your artistic capabilities.

In class, you will learn this restorative and meditative practice (HCT) by creating neural lines that reveal organic shapes and abstract forms. We will use mixed media materials and you will leave feeling relaxed and pleased with the results.

SEE YOU IN CLASS!!!

* Scan QR code to register



PART ONE:

A. Introduction

- 1.) My whole life I have been creating art for my own self healing and as a source for self soothing. It has become a daily practice for me and is an integral part of my self care.
- 2.) As a child, I hid pieces of myself in my art work, my poetry and other forms of self expression. It was my only source of safety and it sustained me and kept me going.
- 3.) As an adult, I have had several mental health traumas. After a manic/psychotic episode, I am lost. Sometimes for several years at a time.

PART TWO:

B. Impact on Neurobiology

C. Struggle work

B. IMPACT ON NEUROBIOLOGY:

- 4.) Mania and psychosis interfere with our neurobiology and my cognitive functioning fails me after an episode.
- 5.) At that point, I have no access to my memories of how to do the most simple things.
- 6.) Learning how to write my name again is always the first hurdle. It is stressful and frustrating because I know I can do it...but I can't make myself do it. The same is true for my art making.

C. STRUGGLE WORK:

- 7.) Even considering efforts to rekindle my connection to my creativity and artistic abilities feels impossible.
- 8.) But through the Art making, itself, we can nourish our neuroplasticity and begin to heal our neural networks.
- 9.) Practicing HCT (Healing Creative Trauma) helps me to develop my creative problem solving abilities because I am using other parts of my brain that have not been affected by the trauma.

PART THREE:

D. Finding myself again

E. Benefits of HCT

D. FINDING MYSELF AGAIN:

10.) By developing an abstract perspective and appreciation for my own art making, I can remember how to learn again but in a more natural and exciting way.

11.) When I practice HCT (Healing Creative Trauma) methods, I begin to experience my life force again. I start to remember all of those hidden parts of myself staring back at me through my artwork.

12.) With that recognition, I begin to feel safe and I am able to take healthy risks in my art making and in my own life as well.

E. BENEFITS OF HCT:

13.) I feel a deep sense of accomplishment and satisfaction when I am creating something from nothing. It makes me feel powerful and strong.

14.) It boosts my confidence when I can see my process evolve and progress.

15.) It inspires joy in me when I notice the expressive qualities in my work that reflect my own experience.

16.) Beautiful colors collide and billowing shapes unfold before me. And I am happy with my work.

PART FOUR:

F. How HCT works

G. Personal status

H. Conclusion

F. HOW HCT WORKS:

16.) In addition, studies show that art making releases endorphins and produces dopamine to fortify our neural networks. Therefore, lifting our spirits naturally.

17.) No matter if it is simple mark making, splattering media on the paper, or journaling about what I'm observing in my work, it is all of equal importance.

18.) I follow the cues from the organic shapes that are revealed through the spontaneous neural lines I make. In doing so, am establishing my own unique artistic matrix, linking my unconscious mind and my conscious mind.

G. PERSONAL STATUS:

19.) Currently I am in the recovery phase of my own healing process. I am stable and functioning fairly well these days.

20.) I am also teaching classes for others who are interested in how to heal creative trauma through art making.

H. CONCLUSION:

21.) Through this meditative, stress free approach to art making, we can express our inner world safely and feel proud of our work and ourselves.

22.) I appreciate having this opportunity to talk to you about what HCT means to me and to share my work with you today.

Thank you!

Parts = 4

Headings = 8

Verses = 22

My whole life I've been making art in a variety of forms. 2D art, sculpture, multiple styles of dance, singing and acting, writing prose and poetry.

These expressive activities enabled me to hide my core self and stay safe in an extremely abusive and violent environment that I was born into. And from as early as I can remember I've wanted to help other people like me.

I started working at an In Patient psychiatric hospital when I was 19. My second job in the helping profession was at age 20. I worked at another In Patient psychiatric hospital, mainly with schizophrenic patients and adolescent kids for three years after that. We did expressive therapy groups and made a lot of free art.

During that time, I also went to school to take my foundations in art and psychology classes and really learned nothing. It seemed to be a soul crushing approach to "doing" art and the psych teachings were very archaic and not at all progressive in any way.

After two years of school, I moved on to working in a residential group home for pre adolescents, doing craft and expressive groups with the kids, and then to the infant toddler unit at the same center.

After the Family Reunification act, kids we're getting sent back to the same abusive people who they were taken away from. It was heartbreaking and eventually I suffered from burn out because it was a very hopeless situation. I quit after working there for 3 years. I was also pregnant with my first daughter and it was not safe. So I quit for my own well-being.

When my second daughter was 4 months old, I started practicing meditative sculpture, with clay. We also did Raku firing and I was hooked.

I apprenticed with Regina Compennolle (Sacred Earth Arts) in meditative sculpture and Raku firing for 5 years and became a studio mate there at her SEA studio.

I stayed home to raise my kids and started teaching art immersion at an alternative elementary school where my daughters both went. I loved teaching and it was an incredible experience. I worked there for 5 years.

At the end of my teaching time, I had started Gestalt therapy and suffered my first big psychosis. That was 23 years ago, after my mother died.

It took me years to recover from it. I couldn't even remember how to use my stove. Let alone do any type of art.

I had several more manic/psychotic episodes that were triggered by intense trauma. More than a dozen in the past 23 years. All triggered by intense stress or trauma.

At one point in my mid 40's I had stabilized enough to study Art Therapy for a year but again it was very disappointing and didn't jive with my more progressive ideas about healing through art making. And I also had another mental health crisis.

Due to my health circumstances and personal beliefs about my HCT (Healing Creative Trauma), style of teaching art making from a place of abstract perception, I decided to let go of that pursuit.

I practiced Gestalt therapy for about 6 years and have been practicing DBT (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy) for the past 6 years and currently still am.

I've had a very difficult time with my trauma-rehab-development-recovery cycle. I'm in the recovery phase right now after my 2020 psychotic episode, and stable enough to risk thinking about what I'd like to do with my time again. Unfortunately I feel cautious and superstitious that a mental health episode is right around the corner. But I am not afraid to begin again...and again... and heal as much as I can through my HCT (Healing Creative Trauma) practice.

Thank you for taking your time to read my Bio.

Have a great day!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenn Brabe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.