

"Every child is an artist; the problem is staying an artist when you grow up." —Pablo Picasso



The Creative Process

by Chet Noll

I made my first butterfly when I was 12 years old. It was an idea that sprung from the need for a Mother's Day present mixed with an inspiration and a vision. From this followed problem solving and exercising technique in what I now call the "CreativeProcess."

An artist, young or old, first conceives of something that might be created. This can be as tangible as a sculpture or a painting or as intangible as a thought, a vision, a feeling. It might be as simple as a hummed tune, as complex as a symphonic score; for a dancer, a gesture; for a writer, words. It is an intangible burst of inspiration that comes deep from within the mind and heart of the artist. But to turn the idea into a work of art the artist must apply trained technique to the medium guided by the Creative Process.

At some point in the Creative Process the artist must let go. When the artist lets go the work is complete is free to take on a life of its own. It is an artifact of the relationship of the artist to the world. Hopefully, if the art is good and the viewer, listener or reader is truly engaged, they experience an enhanced view of their own world.

My work in my father's wood shop began as soon as I could sit up on his workbench. I began using power tools at age four. I loved thinking of new projects and the process of designing and drawing them. Formal music study began later, at age 7. It was in music

that I began to identify that part of me that was truly artistic. I found passages of music that moved me and played them over and over again. I found ways of moving with these sounds that gave the phrases meaning. Changing that inflection changed the meaning—I was fascinated by it.

Unbeknownst to me, I used the Creative Process that day I needed a Mother's day present. I rummaged through the large bin of scrap wood in my father's wood shop looking for something but without a specific idea in mind. Then, what I call a "relationship" struck me. I froze, leaning into the bin of dusty wood gazing at the colors below me—they were the same colors as the Cecropia moths in my insect collection. This was the insight, the connection between two very different mediums: the wood and the moth. The creative process continued in that moment as I envisioned the idea that I might be able to "paint" the colors of the moth with the colors of the woods below me.

But there was a problem. I wanted to capture the fragility of the moth and the symmetry of its design, handed to it by nature and the geometry of flight. The solution to this was stylizing the design: capturing the gestures and generalized shapes to capture not the actual moth but the essence of the moth, or more importantly, what I as the artist "sees". How would I do this with something as

hard and bulky as wood?

The next two or three weeks were spent building the butterfly. It was a wonderful time that I remember only by reviewing what I did then and comparing it to what I do now creating the butterflies in the Butterfly Collection. It was drawing and design, experimentation and problem solving; all part of the Creative Process.

I've returned to this work from my childhood. I love the smell of the exotic woods, the movement and resistance as I press the wood against saws and sanders—it's a dance. I love seeing the finished product and challenging myself to capture what I see in my mind's eye. I enjoy the whole Creative Process; from conception to sharing the final pieces with others. They capture some sense of how I see the world around me. It's my Creative Process and I thrive on it.

It is remarkable how much of what I solved at age 12 I still do today. It is a process I had no name for at the time but now call "free-standing marquetry."

The Creative Process takes on many forms and is expressed through a myriad of varied mediums. For me it is a way of life, an extremely satisfying way of expressing my relationship with all aspects of the world around me. I believe it is a life-long pursuit in which anyone can engage and find meaning.

For information on the art of Chet Noll, come to his arts how Nov. 29th and 30th (see events listings), or visit keyboardart.com/woodwork.



This Month's Events

NOVEMBER 3 (SUNDAY) 3:30 P.M. – 5:30 P.M.

Wrightwood Classical Concert Series

(Wrightwood Library, 6011 Pine St.)

The fall concert features the Belvedere Trio. For more information, and to purchase tickets, visit keyboardart.com.

NOVEMBER 6 (WEDNESDAY) 2:00 P.M. (START)

Wrightwood Book Club

(Wrightwood Library, 6011 Pine St.)

The book of the month will be *Our America* by Felipe Fernández-Armesto, presenting America's Hispanic past, presented with characteristic insight and wit by one of our greatest historians. Join in the discussion!

NOVEMBER 22 - 24 (ALL WEEKEND)

The Art of Subtle Body Movement

(1329 Highway 2, 2nd Floor)

Friday begins a full weekend of workshops led by Love Root's founder Chloe Copeland, visiting from New Mexico. On Sunday at 5 PM, Chloe will lead a group in Kirtan. Please join in to share songs and praise and then eat a yummy Indian vegetarian lentil stew. (Bring your bowl and spoon.) For more information on all of the weekend's events, visit loverootsyogashala.com.

NOVEMBER 28 (THURS.) 8:30 A.M. – 9:45 A.M.

The Art of Subtle Body Movement

(1329 Highway 2, 2nd Floor)

Thanksgiving brings a beautiful opportunity to share gratitude with a free workshop to help start the day with relaxation and peace.

NOVEMBER 29 (FRIDAY) 3:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.

Chet Noll's "The Creative Process"

(Wrightwood Arts Center, 6020 Park Drive, #5)

Award-winning artist and composer Chet Noll has a solo show, "The Creative Process," hosted by the Wrightwood Arts Center. Chet Noll is nationally known for his work in wood, be it butterfly sculptures or musical instruments, and for a repertoire of original music. His art has been offered at various outlets including The Huntington Library in Pasadena, the Denver Museum of Natural History and The Ahwahnee in Yosemite National Park. Chet Noll creates his work in Wrightwood, where he has lived for more than 25 years. Regarding this show Chet says, "There is no better artist than Mother Nature. I enjoy the challenge of turning wood into delicate art in motion. My goal is to capture the symmetry, graceful lines, and color found in Nature." With this in mind, Chet patterns much of his art after wild, living species. Using still and video images, as well as augmented reality, the exhibit features Chet's art, while making connections with the environment and nature. The show is being curated by Joan McCandless. For more information, visit keyboardart.com/woodwork.

NOVEMBER 30 (SATURDAY) 2:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Chet Noll's "The Creative Process"

(Wrightwood Arts Center, 6020 Park Drive, #5)

Chet Noll's "The Creative Process" continues at the Wrightwood Arts Center.



Poem of the Month

AUTUMN

by Bill Rector

Last night I kept pulling
gloves from the pockets of my coat.

O abyss of my winter coat's pockets!

As they fell
the gloves turned into leaves,
curled palms of maples,
stubby fingers from oaks,
gray fists of ash.

I woke up.
I thought of you.

But then I always do.
I considered the hours to come,
the first thing to be done,
and the next.

All day my hands were cold.

—from *Rattle.com*

Looking Ahead

DECEMBER 4 (WEDNESDAY) 2:00 P.M. (START)

Wrightwood Book Club

(Wrightwood Library, 6011 Pine St.)

The book of the month will be *The Stranger in the Woods* by Michael Finkel, the remarkable true story of a man who lived alone in the woods of Maine for twenty-seven years, making this dream of escaping the modern world a reality. Join in the discussion!

DECEMBER 7 (SATURDAY) 11:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Pine Needles Quilt Guild Meeting

(WW Community Center, 1275 Highway 2)

Houses have been decorated for the holidays and draped in warm and wonderful quilts created by artisan members of the Guild. This year's tour will include an eclectic mix of homes unique to the community of Wrightwood nestled in the San Gabriel Mountains. Advance tickets for the Tour are available after November 1 for \$15 by mail. For more information about the Guild, visit pnqg.org.

This monthly arts newsletter is a publication of the Wrightwood Arts Center, working to support artists and arts organizations within the Wrightwood community. To view the full community calendar, subscribe to this newsletter, or to become a member, visit our website.