

Art  
Inspired  
By  
Words

Artwork by ArtDivas



ArtDivasArt.com

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# Introduction

This publication reflects the work completed by eleven women artists during 2017. The scope of the project was to create art inspired by words.

Seven of the artists are Ann Jacobs, Annie Johnson, Janet Manalo, Robin Rossi, Anna Maria Sablan, Brigitte Sukeforth, and Ramona VanDeberg. They are also known as The ArtDivas and are members of an Art Collective formed in 2004.

Together they embarked on the adventure in January 2017. Each of the ArtDivas revealed a single new word each month. The selected words were: *Journey, Imagine, Nest, Power, Symbolism, Ekphrastic, and Enduring*. Work was created in response to each word, during a 4-5 week period. The size of the work was roughly kept to 12” x 12”. The media and platforms used by each ArtDiva were entirely up to each woman.

At regular monthly meetings, each artist presented her ‘themed’ work. Techniques, inspirations, difficulties, and newly acquired skills were shared. At the conclusion of each meeting, to great fanfare and drum-roll, a new word was revealed by another ArtDiva and the creative process was repeated.

During the course of the adventure, four guest artists were also invited to participate. They are: Chris Meade, Janet Barnes, Jane Corich, and Christine Long.

## Insights

Throughout the project, the artists often reflected on its continued success. They discovered that the limited time frame to complete a piece often increased the artist’s spontaneity and resourcefulness; that the size restriction instigated focus; and that a single word became intriguing as the various interpretations were revealed. After seven months, 43 pieces of art were created (some of The ArtDivas opted out of certain assignments due to complicated life demands).

The chapters in this book are organized by words. Each chapter begins with the inspiration and art from the ArtDiva who provided the word to the group.



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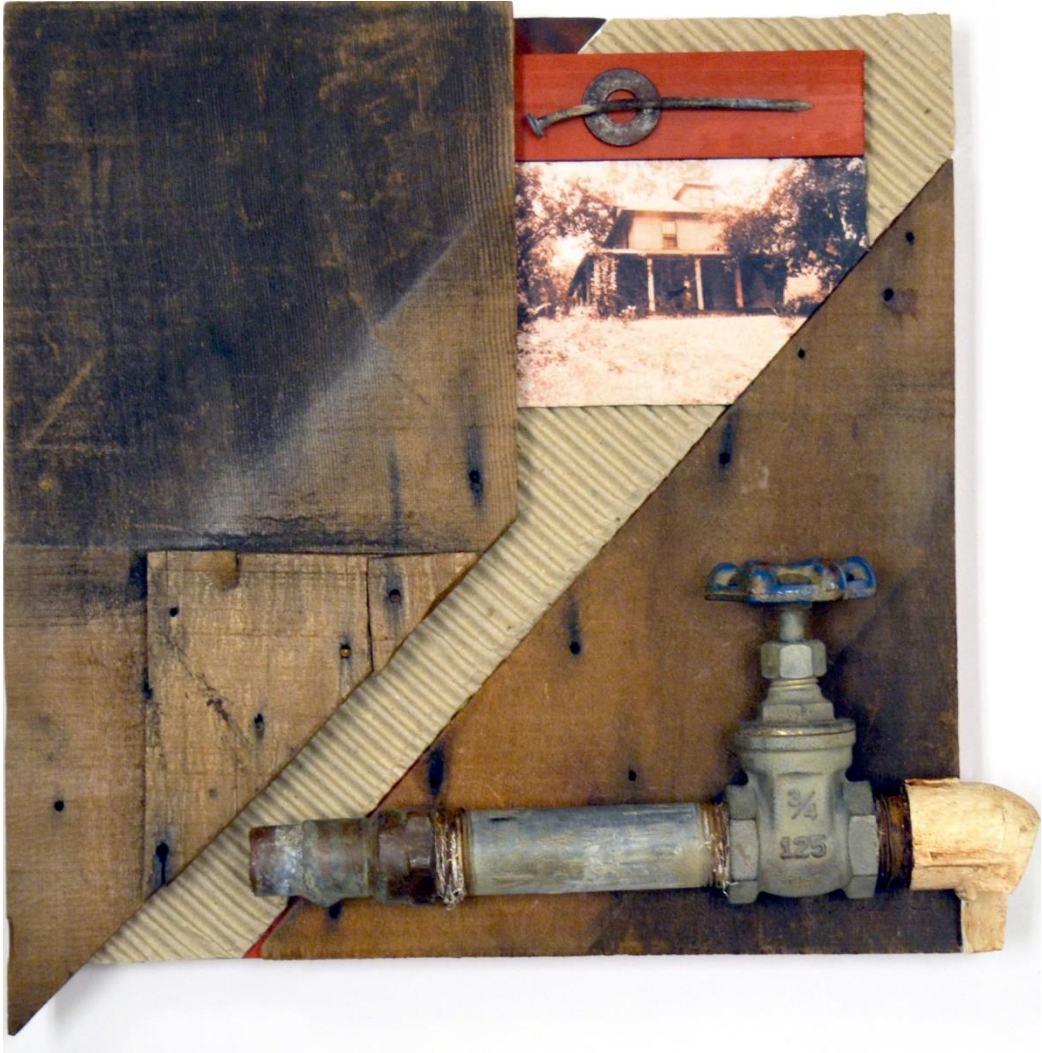


# JOURNEY

People say, “Life is a **journey.**” As we pass along the road of life, we often remember the days of our youth and the home of our childhood.

Anna Maria Sablan





*Long Road Home*  
Assemblage by Anna Maria Sablan



*My Art Journey*  
Mixed Media Collage by Annie Johnson



*Bird Woman's River*  
Mixed Media Encaustic by Ramona VanDeberg  
Courtesy of E. Cohen



*Life's Journey*  
Mixed Media Altered Book by Janet Manalo  
Courtesy of S. Evans



*Journey of Discovery 1824-1947 : Horses to Model T*  
Assemblage by Ann Jacobs  
Courtesy of J. Fisher

# Our Inspirations for *Journey*

Anna Maria Sablan

*Long Road Home:*

“Long Road Home” tells a story . . . the long road we’ve travelled to get to where we are and our memories of a home we once knew.

Annie Johnson

*My Art Journey*

Nature is always in the back of my mind when I start a new art piece and is often the inspiration I need. All seven pieces reflect this interest.

Ramona VanDeberg

*Bird Woman's River*

Using hand-printed paper, this piece honors Sacajawea, or Bird Woman in her native language, and her historic journey with Lewis & Clark. A river in Montana was given her name after her heroic rescue of supplies and those invaluable exploration journals which documented the feat. Clark wrote that she deserved a greater reward for her attention and services on that long, dangerous, and fatiguing route. For this seven month project, I created seven artworks honoring women in history.

Janet Manalo

*Life's Journey*

I wanted to capture the spontaneity of Life as well as its unpredictability. This piece was the first of seven pieces which involved components of books.

Ann Jacobs

*Journey of Discovery 1824-1947: Horses to Model T*

My art honors an English/Scot pioneer descendant of “The Old Three Hundred” settlers near the Gulf of Mexico.

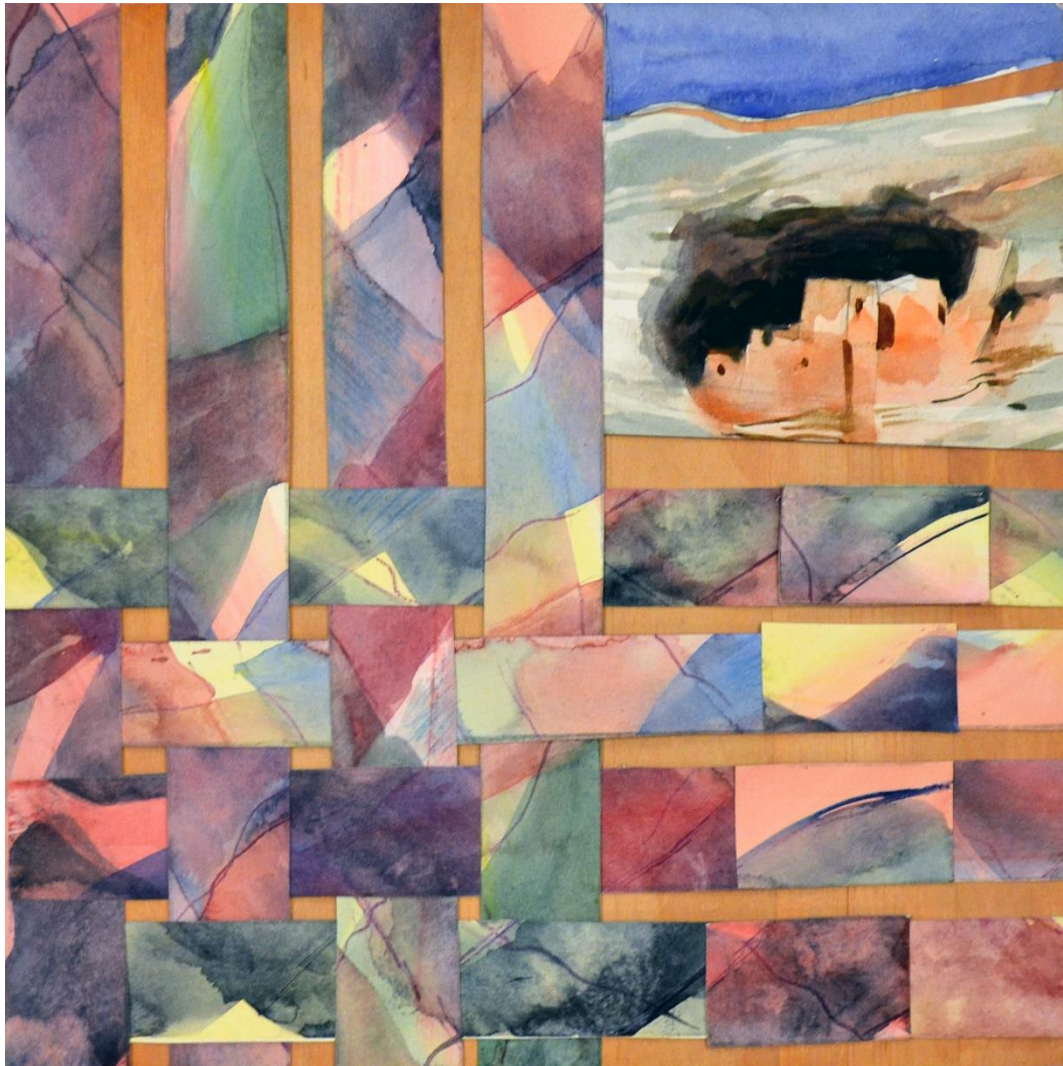




“To know is nothing at all, to **imagine** is everything.” This is a favorite quote of mine. I think all the arts find that the imagination is vital for creation of original works.

Annie Johnson





*My Heritage*  
Mixed Media Collage by Annie Johnson



*Stay Awhile Truth*  
Assemblage by Ramona VanDeberg



*Untitled*

Mixed Media Collage by Chris Meade

Courtesy of N. Hopkins



*Circus of Fantasy*  
Mixed Media Collage by Ann Jacobs  
Courtesy of N. Hopkins



*Seuss Meets Escher*  
Assemblage by Janet Manalo

# Our Inspirations for *Imagine*

Annie Johnson

*My Heritage*

My art piece of these cliff dwellings is where I imagine my Cherokee heritage is connected. I also imagined my kin left me a message and the message was: (ga lv la e lo hi) Honor Earth.

Ramona VanDeberg

*Stay Awhile Truth*

Using encaustic wax, this artwork depicts abolitionist and activist Sojourner Truth. After her young son was illegally sold and taken to Alabama, she became one of the first black women to go to court against a white man and win her case. Her son was returned to her in New York.

Chris Meade

*Untitled*

I imagined creating a non-objective art piece using various shades of the colors violet and orange. I believe I succeeded. I didn't give it a title as I thought that a title might suggest an objective.

Ann Jacobs

*Circus of Fantasy*

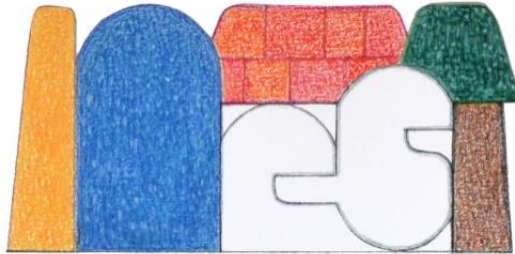
Often, we as artists, take our lives too seriously. Constructing a piece of art made of unusual subjects, patterns, sizes and shapes which are often not seen together, creates a different world. Here, the viewer can take a step back and just smile.

Janet Manalo

*Seuss Meets Escher*

My imagination led me on a whimsical path as I experimented with shapes and pages from many different books.

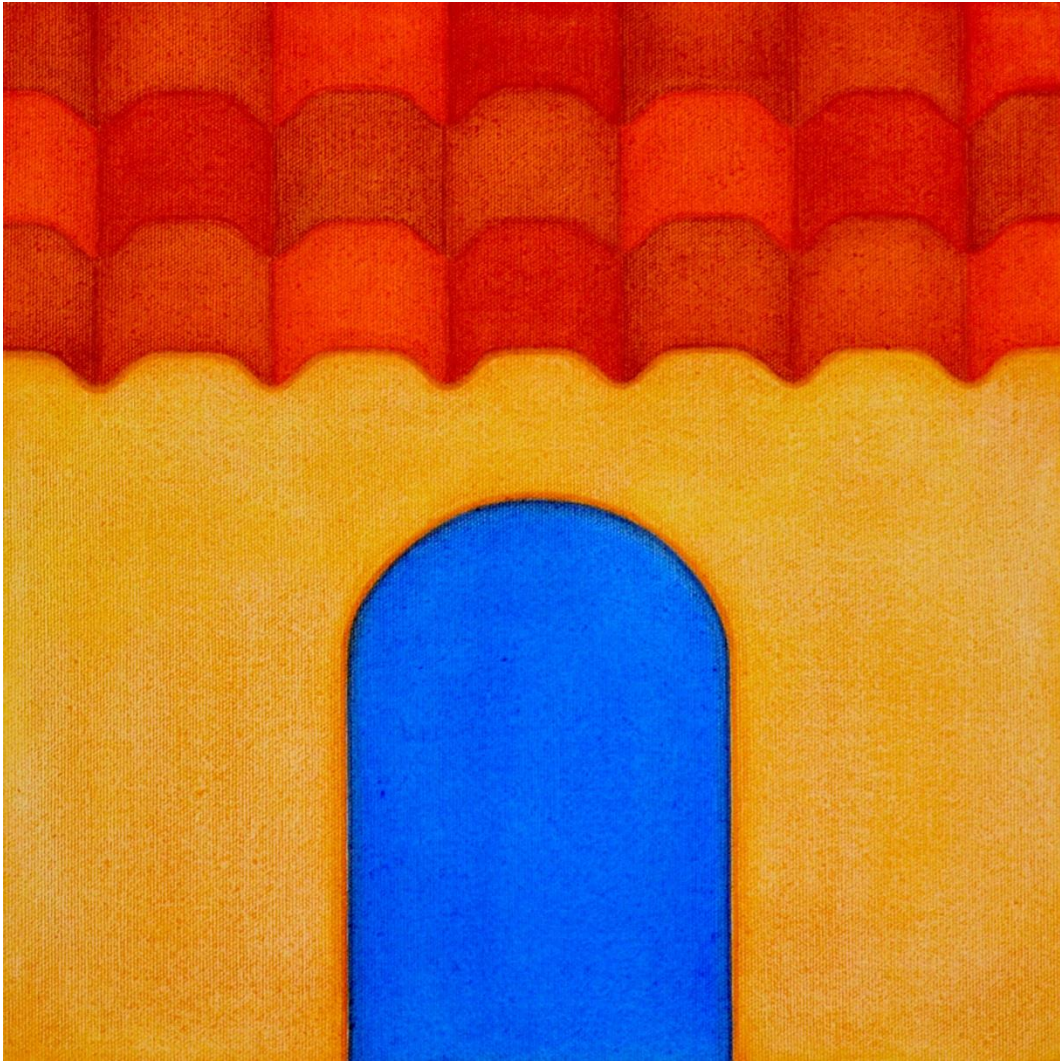




I chose the word **nest** as a more descriptive and soulful term for the concept of home as in houses, trees, and garden scapes, my trademark art motifs.

Brigitte Sukeforth





*Home: The Ultimate Nest*  
Acrylic on Canvas by Brigitte Sukeforth



*From the Desert to the Ocean*  
Assemblage by Annie Johnson



*The Family Tree*  
 Mixed Media Collage by Anna Maria Sablan



*Nested*  
Assemblage by Robin Rossi



*Sky Hive*  
Assemblage by Ramona VanDeberg



*Nest*  
Altered Books by Janet Manalo





*Mothers and Daughters ~ Threads of Love*  
Assemblage by Ann Jacobs

# Our Inspirations for *Nest*

Brigitte Sukeforth

*Home ~ The Ultimate Nest*

I chose the word 'nest' as a more descriptive and soulful term for the concept of home as in houses, trees, and garden scapes, my trademark art motifs.

Annie Johnson

*From the Desert to the Ocean*

I used this dead and down piece of cactus from Arizona and the sand dollar shell from the California beach because they are natural habitats for birds and critters.

Anna Maria Sablan

*The Family Tree*

Nesting Shrikes answer Nature's call to build a cozy home for their young.

Robin Rossi

*Nested*

My nest represents all communities occupying a shared area with understanding and respect for all life.

Ramona VanDeberg

*Sky Hive*

Using salvaged materials, *Sky Hive* is my homage to a group of pioneering women who bravely stepped forward during WWII as part of a program in the arsenal of Democracy known as Women Airforce Service Pilots or WASP. Serving stateside as test pilots, flight instructors, and towing targets as air gunners practiced with live ammunition, they flew nearly every type of military aircraft from factories to military bases across the country, including the B-29 bomber.

Janet Manalo

*Nest*

I created a nested, organic sculpture using several salvaged books.

Ann Jacobs

*Mothers and Daughters ~ Threads of Love*

I love the mystery and surprise found in a set of nesting dolls! Each hand painted doll was influenced by the bright colors of the mini spools of thread. Each spool of thread and the vintage white doily represent the palette of experiences a family shares together.



**Power** can be subtle, it can be overt, it can be visual or verbal. I felt like the word 'power' chose me as much as I chose it.

Janet Manalo





*Knowledge is Power*  
Altered Books by Janet Manalo

PATIENCE - WITHOUT COMPLAINT  
POWER OF WORDS - POWER OF A  
POSITIVE REACTION - UNDERSTAND  
FAITH IS TAKING THE FIRST STEP  
EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T SEE THE  
WHOLE STAIRCASE. - KINDNESS  
QUALITY OF BEING FRIENDLY - ART  
CREATIVE REACTION - INTEGRITY -  
STRONG MORALS - WILL H. BARNES  
COMPASSION - CONCERN FOR ALL  
DOROTHY J. BARNES - KINDNESS -  
CARE - ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO  
SOMEONE - FAMILY - FRIENDSHIP -  
DINNERTIME - POWER OF WORDS - LOVE

*The Power of Words*  
Mixed Media Collage by Janet Barnes



*The Power of the Panty*  
Assemblage by Ann Jacobs



*Silent Insanity*  
Assemblage by Ramona VanDeberg





*Future*  
Assemblage by Robin Rossi



*All That Remains*  
Assemblage by Anna Maria Sablan



*Green Trees*  
Mixed Media Collage by Annie Johnson

# Our Inspirations for *Power*

Janet Manalo

*Knowledge is Power*

Knowledge provides any individual with the power to survive and participate in society. Knowledge enriches our understanding of ourselves as well as others. With knowledge, one can seek an enlightened destiny.

Janet Barnes

*The Power of Words*

This piece was created out of my strong belief in "Positive attracts Positive". When a person speaks with positive and encouraging words to others, the others will pass it forward. If a person reacts to a negative situation with positive words, everyone will learn from that situation. Words that heal, care, nurture and love are so powerful.

Ann Jacobs

*Power of the Panty*

SEX can influence religions, destroy empires, create families. "A woman is like a tea bag; you never know how strong it is until it's in hot water" –Eleanor Roosevelt

Ramona VanDeberg

*Silent Insanity*

This artwork was inspired by marine biologist and author, Rachel Carson, whose book *Silent Spring* had the power to awaken a generation of grassroots environmentalists. Documenting the damaging effects of pesticide overuse and its impacts on the environment led to the ban of DDT in the USA, establishment of the EPA, and the Bald Eagle Protection Act.

Robin Rossi

*Future*

Science influences our way of life with positive and negative results. It is up to us to be responsible, caring and intelligent individuals who maintain the present and wisely forge a path for our future.

Anna Maria Sablan

*All That Remains*

Rusty metal, some peeling paint, a scrap of fabric and a few faded photos – in the end that was all that remained of a home lost to time and the family that once lived there.

Annie Johnson

*Green Trees*

Living trees are vital to our earth giving us oxygen and helping to clean our air. They also give us beauty, shade, wood, paper, and fruit. Trees are my favorite components of nature.

# SYMBOLISM

**Symbolism** touches us daily. It is a process that uses an object or word to create an idea, feelings or both. I chose to explore our Native American heritage for inspiration. Everything has an essence of life. Humans must interact with these to survive or fail.

Robin Rossi





*Symbols of Life*  
Mixed Media Collage by Robin Rossi



*Innate Symbols*  
Mixed Media Collage by Annie Johnson





*Betty Unbottled*  
 Assemblage by Ramona VanDeberg



*Luna Dreams*  
Mixed Media Collage by Janet Manalo



*Nushu*  
Mixed Media Collage by Ann Jacobs



*Log Cabin Quilt*  
Collage by Brigitte Sukeforth



*Sun*

Acrylic on Canvas by Anna Maria Sablan

# Our Inspirations for *Symbolism*

**Robin Rossi**

*Symbols of Life*

I chose to explore our Native American heritage for inspiration. The Hopi Flute Player presides over childbirth and agriculture. The Pueblo Bird Design represents rain. It has numerous designs as the rain bird. Rain was critical for our Native Indians to sustain their lives and livelihood, as it is today. The Navajo Kachin is the presence of life in all objects.

**Annie Johnson**

*Innate Symbols*

Our earth is a marvel of energy, beauty, structure and complexity.

**Ramona VanDeberg**

*Betty Unbottled*

Breaking down the stigma of addiction, First Lady Betty Ford gave hope to countless people following her own battle with alcohol and substance abuse when she helped co-found the Betty Ford Center.

**Janet Manalo**

*Luna Dreams*

Our dreams are a fascinating montage, symbolic of people, places, and events which we encounter in an awakened state. This piece is a collage of symbols that represent creativity, passion, flight and fantasy.

**Ann Jacobs**

*Nushu*

Nushu refers to a gender-specific writing system that only privileged, bound-foot Asian women knew how to read and write.

**Brigitte Sukeforth**

*Log Cabin Quilt*

A celebration of creating a home out of the wilderness.

**Anna Maria Sablan**

*Sun*

Over the centuries and in many, many cultures, the Sun has been a symbol of power, vision and purpose – the giver of Life and a symbol of rebirth and rejuvenation.

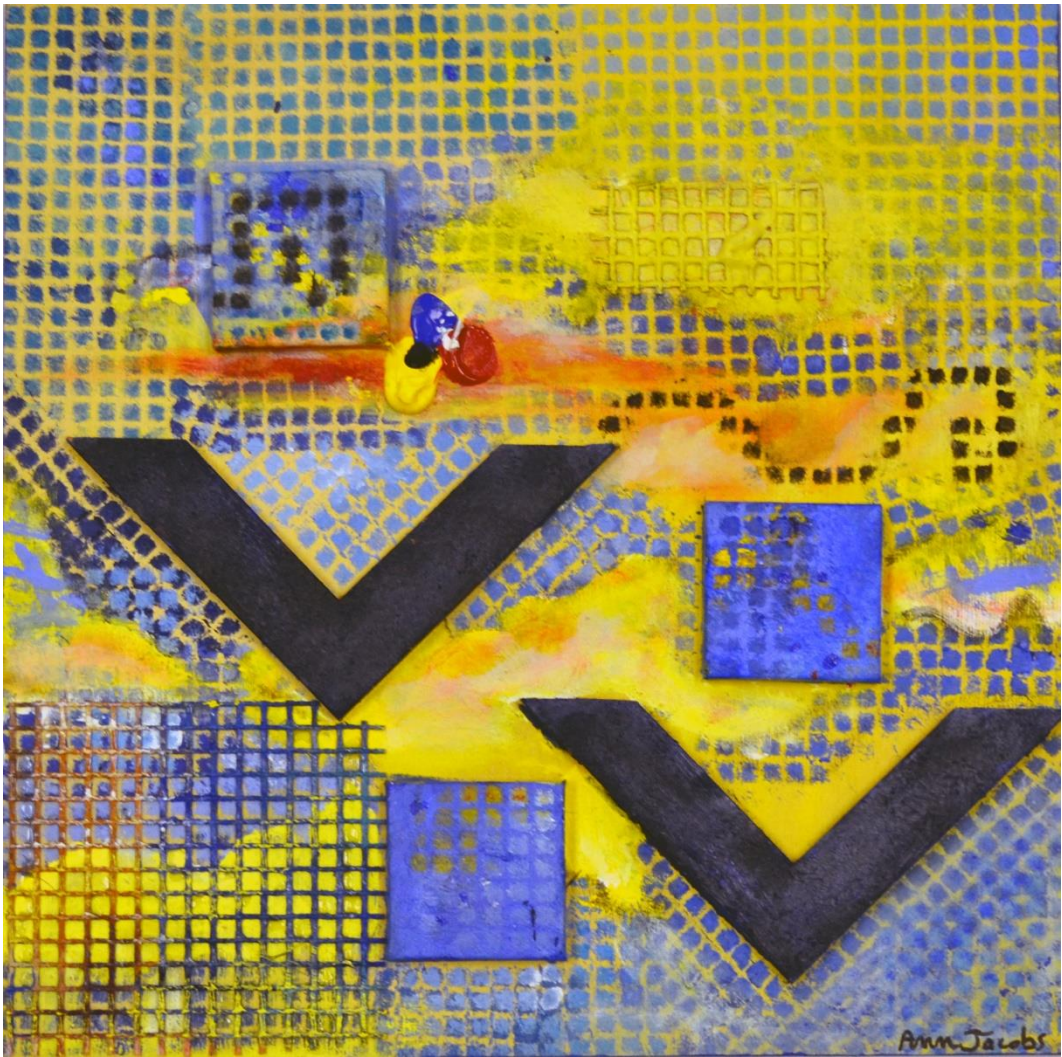


**Ekphrastic** expression usually refers to poetry inspired by art. In a reverse process, I chose to create artwork inspired by the lyrics “Starry Starry Night” written by Don Mclean, who, in turn, was inspired by Vincent VanGogh’s turbulent life.

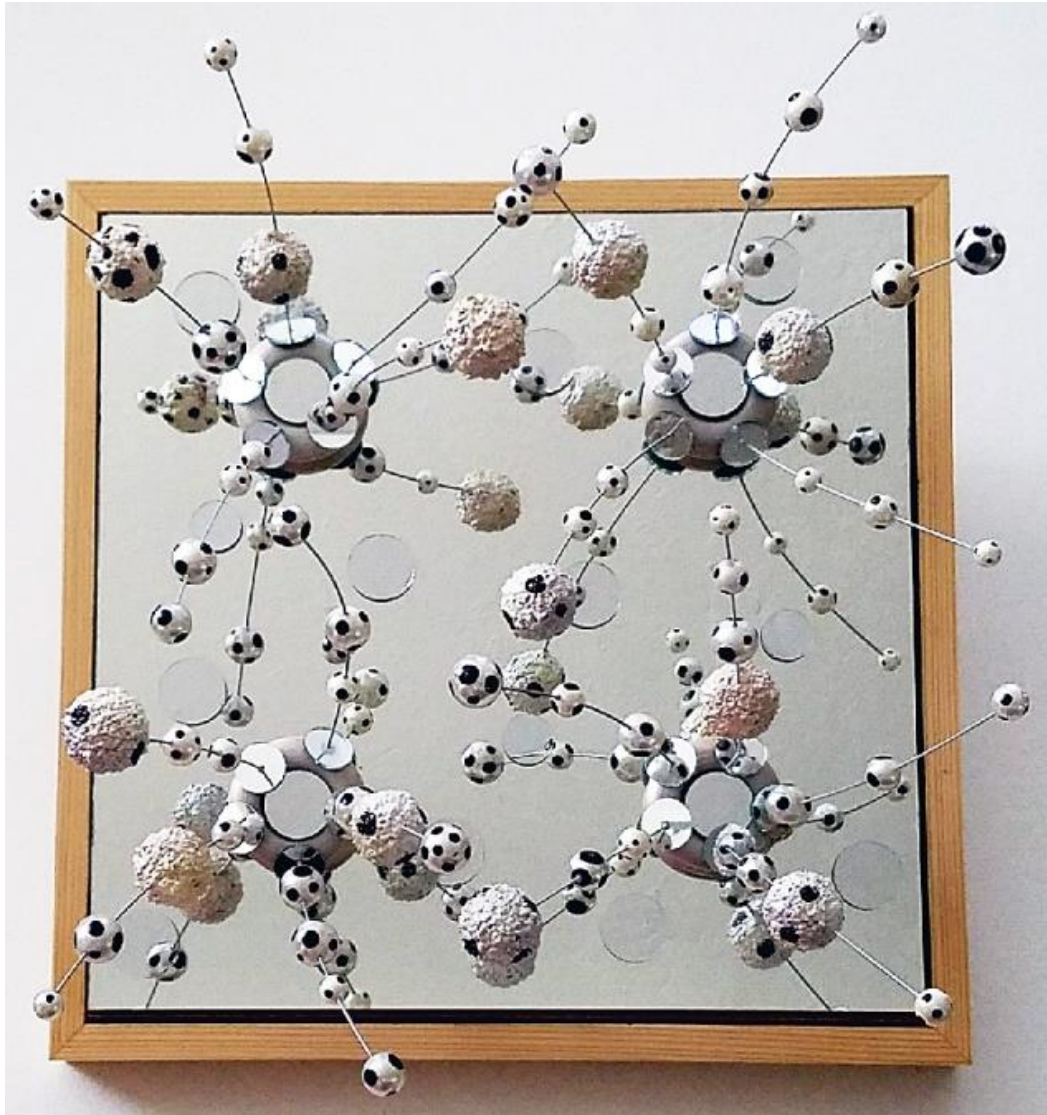
Ann Jacobs







*Vincent*  
Mixed Media Collage by Ann Jacobs



*Polka Dot Particles*  
Assemblage by Ramona VanDeberg



*Twilight*  
Mixed Media Collage by Jane Corich



*Artwords*

Assemblage by Robin Rossi



*Starry Starry Night*  
Mixed Media Collage by Annie Johnson



*Cosmic Starry Night*  
Mixed Media Collage by Janet Manalo

# Our Inspirations for *Ekphrastic*

Ann Jacobs

*Vincent*

This artwork symbolizes what Vincent VanGogh may have seen from his screened hospital window.

Ramona VanDeberg

*Polka Dot Particles*

Yayoi Kusama, known as the Queen of Polka-Dots, has spoken openly about her mental neuroses. My art piece is a tribute to her incredibly popular art exhibit of *Infinity Mirror* rooms.

Jane Corich

*Twilight*

Our assignment to make a piece of art based on the song *Starry Night* was an interesting one to me. I usually find my inspiration through visual cues but for this piece I put the song on and let it absorb into my brain without any resistance. There is darkness in the melody that I used as the foundation for color and as the warmth of his voice came through I was able to bring in light and nuance.

Robin Rossi

*Artwords*

My goal was to emphasize the complementary nature between words and visual art.

Annie Johnson

*Starry Starry Night*

I have woven my watercolors to represent the turmoil in Van Gogh's life. He was still able to create many memorable and haunting pieces of art.

Janet Manalo

*Cosmic Starry Night*

I was drawn to these lyrics in *Starry Starry Night* (written by Don Mclean): "Flaming flo'rs that brightly blaze/Swirling clouds in violet haze...". My art evolved into *Cosmic Starry Night*.



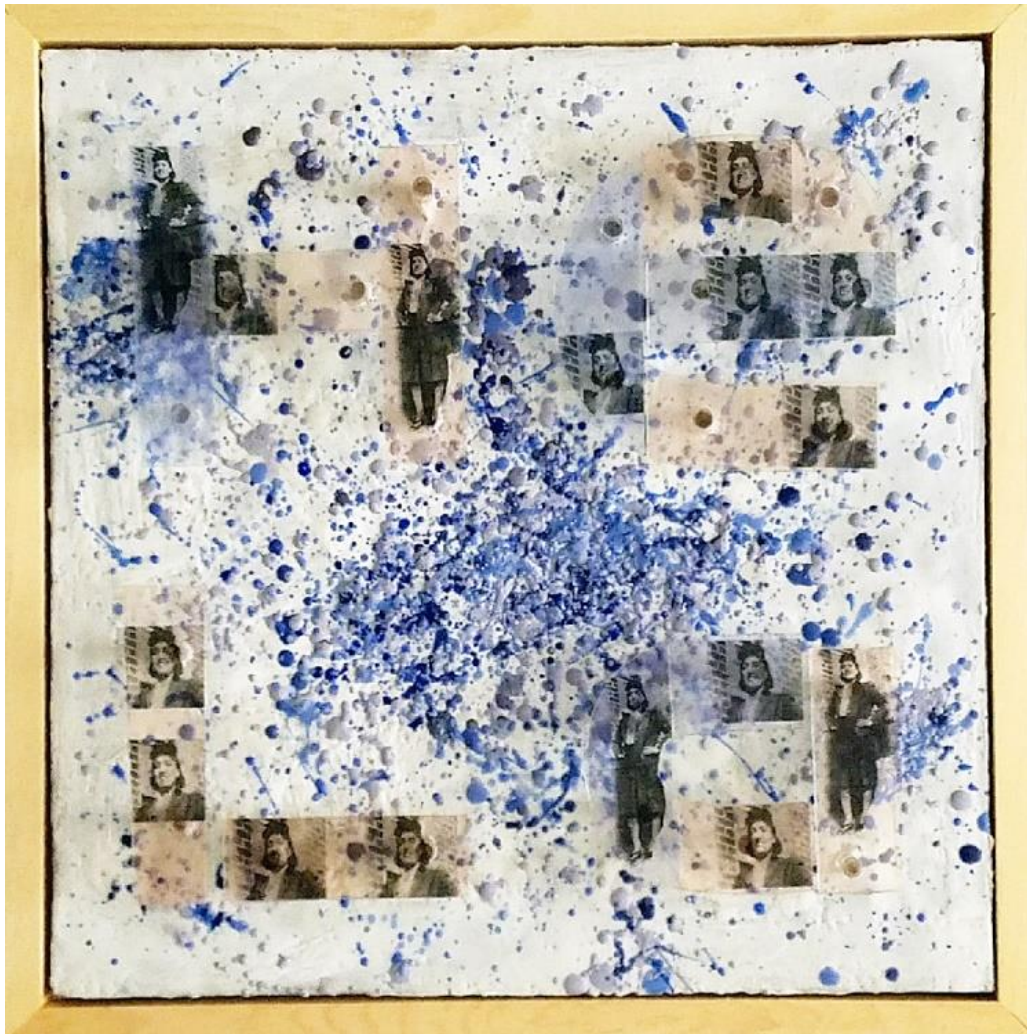


# ENDURING

**'Enduring'** has two significant meanings; one has the implication of resisting destructive forces, the other is to continue to exist over a long time. For these projects, I chose to create seven artworks honoring women in history with enduring qualities such as bravery in the face of struggle, a focus on something bigger than self, and the ability to inspire others in their absence.

Ramona VanDeberg





*Immortal Impact*  
Assemblage by Ramona VanDeberg



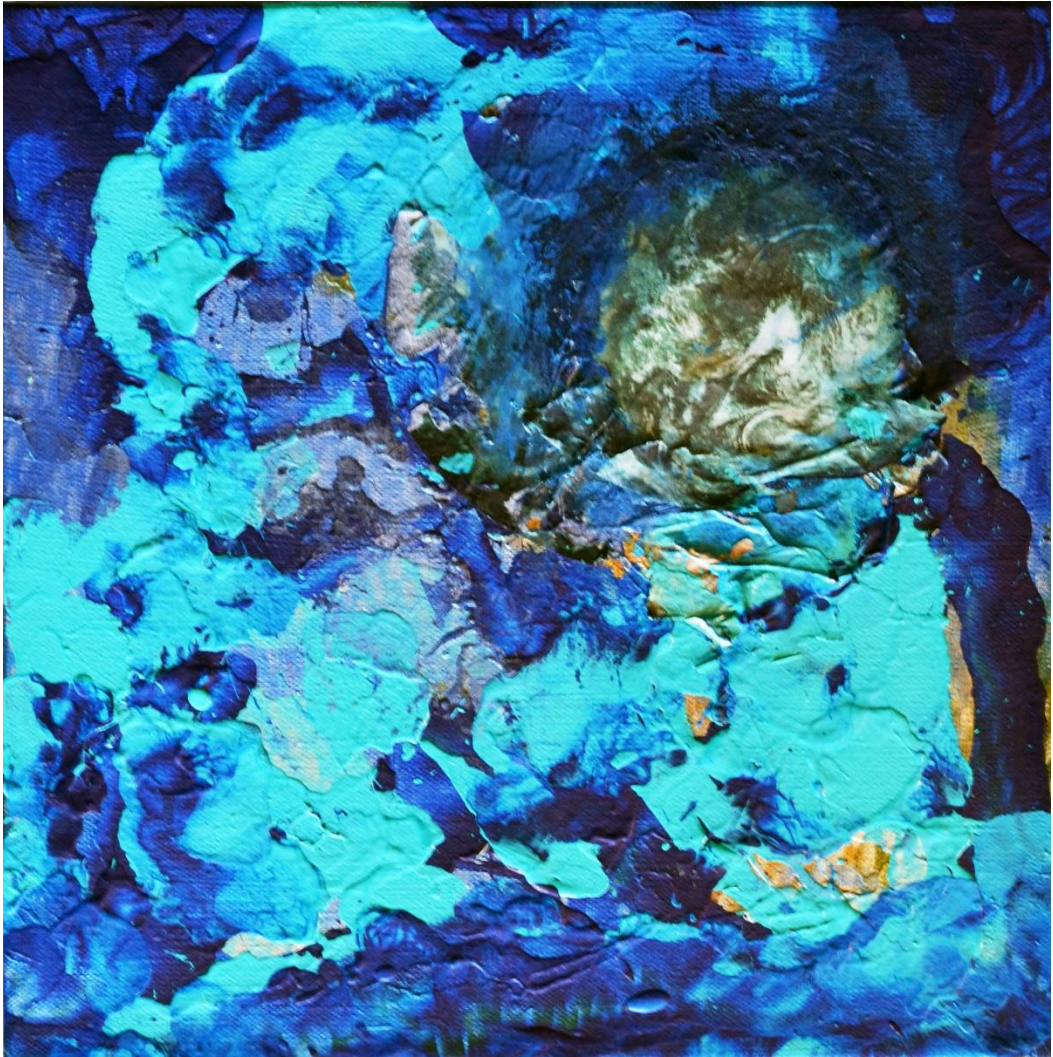
*Hot August Nights*  
Assemblage by Ann Jacobs  
Courtesy of T. Martin



*The Wondrous Light*  
Collage by Annie Johnson



*Enduring Compassion*  
Mixed Media Collage by Christine Long



*Ageless*  
Mixed Media Collage by Robin Rossi



*Infinite Love*  
Altered Books by Janet Manalo



# Our Inspirations for *Enduring*

Ramona VanDeberg

*Immortal Impact*

Henrietta Lacks was an African-American whose cancer cells became one of the most important cell lines in medical research. Hers were the first immortalized cell line, meaning they can be grown indefinitely. Known as HeLa, these cells have been used in research to develop the polio vaccine, gene mapping, cloning, cancer and AIDS research, in vitro fertilization, and even sent into outer space. Long after her own life ended, her cells continue to be researched today.

Ann Jacobs

*Hot August Nights*

1973 was one of the most significant years of the 20th century. Events like Roe vs Wade; Genetic Engineering; closures of Automobile Plants; withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam; enactment of the Endangered Species Act; and the Mississippi River flood have influenced lives today.

Annie Johnson

*The Wondrous Light*

I have experienced this beautiful time of morning. The big old sun coming up in the east as the smaller moon was going down in the western sky. This is exciting to me.

Christine Long

*Enduring Compassion*

This experimental mixed media piece was inspired by the Goddess Tara from the Hindu and Buddhist deity pantheon. Tara's symbol represents the unending compassion of the goddess who labors day and night to relieve suffering. She is one of the oldest, continuously worshiped female deities.

Robin Rossi

*Ageless*

I chose to create our space and world to represent an enduring existence. As members of our earth, we continue to learn more everyday about our people, our planet and outer space.

Janet Manalo

*Infinite Love*

Infinite Love speaks to any relationship which is woven with the mysteries of pure joy and searing heartache.



# Meet the Artists

Seven artists from California's Solano County area represent The ArtDivas. They explore the spirit of creativity working individually and collaboratively to create intriguing mixed-media art. Collectively, The ArtDivas exhibit work influenced by techniques, themes, or color palettes. Extensive coverage of their 13 years of artistry can be found at [ArtDivasArt.com](http://ArtDivasArt.com).

**Ann Jacobs** combines multi-generational images to cultivate compelling visual stories. **Annie Johnson's** art evokes the essence of her Native American heritage. Abstract artwork embodies **Janet Manalo's** style of innovation. Playful layering of found objects defines **Robin Rossi's** craftsmanship. **Anna Maria Sablan's** artwork is influenced by her graphic design background. A passion for quilting defines **Brigitte Sukeforth's** colorfully stylized artwork. And, **Ramona VanDeberg's** depictions bring common objects to life with juxtaposed, thought-provoking images.

For this seven month project The ArtDivas also invited four guest artists to participate. They were:

## **Chris Meade**

Chris Meade is a Benicia, CA artist and resident. Her medium is collage on canvas using elements such as Japanese papers, silk and at times acrylic paint. Creating is a passion for her, as well as a focus of purpose each day.

## **Janet Barnes**

Janet L. Barnes is a visual artist living in Fairfield, CA. When she is creating with her oil pastels she listens to her favorite jazz musicians. She plays her music "full blast"; the rhythm of the beats takes over the movement of her hands and her art is created with mesmerizing speed. Barnes' artworks are the result of talent and passion.

## **Jane Corich**

For Jane Corich, painting has always been an incremental process. She feels she doesn't make mistakes, but rather, makes progress. Though progress can look scary, confused or downright ugly she slogs on, editing or adding to what is in front of her. Standing still is the ultimate goal. She strives to create art that is comforting, interesting, balanced and mysterious.

## **Christine Long**

Christine Long is an educator turned artist whose interests lie in spiritual art and sacred geometry. She has many interests, travels frequently, and lives in Northern California.