



EnSights

Resources for Tapping into Our Inner Wisdom

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The focus of this week in the Circle is all about the three C's—*Connections, Conversations and Collaborations*. Here are some random thoughts and some resources that might provide a spark as you enter the second half of your residency.

Connections

The term “archetype” is Greek for “ancient pattern.” Carl Jung’s insight into the human psyche is that we are embedded with these patterns from the collected unconscious. They emerge in literature and rituals throughout cultures so frequently that we could say that archetypes are elements of the human experience.

In her award-winning book, [Soul Collage, Intuitive Collage Process for Individuals and Groups](#), Seena B Frost uses the concept of archetypes to create a process for identifying our own inner characters or “parts” by creating collaged cards and then consulting this personal deck for self-discovery.

The genius of her work lies in the visual embodiment of the many parts of ourselves. For example, I have a delighted child that appears often in my studio as well as a harsh critic that can sabotage my joy. Acknowledging both of these elements in myself gives me a concrete way to use their gifts to support a healthy studio practice. It is a process of making connections in myself that I find useful. Besides that, the cards are fun and inspiring to make!

Conversations With Your Art

In writing this week’s EnSights, I researched how we, as artists, converse with our work and how we “hear what our work is telling us.” As you can imagine, we all do that differently. I don’t seem to have much trouble with my own art conversations until I get stuck. Most artists I talked to take a wait and see approach when that happens, laying a problematic piece aside until a direction becomes clear. That works for me sometimes. But I stumbled on a way that often gets things back on track much faster.

If I didn’t want to stay stuck, I discovered that if I would shift focus from analyzing the art on my table to singing to it something would happen. Sounds silly but shifting between art modalities is actually based on sound science. (Google Expressive Art Therapy). When we step out of our *logical* mind and let ourselves get caught up in the *intuitive logic* of our imagination, we shift to the world of metaphor and symbol where surprising solutions can appear like magic. Shifting among arts—poetry, drama, music,

dance, and any other art form—takes us immediately into right brain creative play. Want to try it next time you are in the studio? The trick, like many of the exercises in the EnSights is to keep yourself out of the process, meaning stay flexible, be spontaneous, don't think, just act. You will feel a little foolish at first, but it gets easier the more you explore and use this playful part of yourself.

Here's some things to try:

- Find a pattern in your art. Use an instrument or your hand to tap it out. Sing a made-up rhyme to the beat of the patterns or let your body form the shapes in your painting.
- Speak from the voice of your sculpture. Let the words become a dramatic tale. Use different voices and participate in the drama yourself as one of the characters.
- Free associate with your art and move with the emotions you feel when you write the words. Imagine huge buckets of paint with colors that you didn't use. Paint them onto the canvas with an imaginary brush. Close your eyes and see the new painting with the new colors. Take a deep breath of the new painting. What does it smell like? Sing and smell song to the old painting and see what happens.

Note: If you find yourself resistant to the spontaneity and silliness of these exercises, use the Soul Collage approach and create a card for your Playful Child. Bring her to the studio with you. She will teach you how to be silly and like it!

Collaborations

What do [Andy Warhol & Jean Michel Basquiat](#), [Walt Disney & Salvador Dali](#), and [Jackson Pollack & Lee Krasner](#) have in common? They melded their creativity and complementary skills toward creating new and groundbreaking work. Sometimes one artist has an idea and needs the skill that another artist can provide. Other times the work requires many hands. These are only a few of the many reasons that artists might enter into a collaboration.

The first collaborative artwork that I saw was in a show at Southwest School of Art (Southwest Art and Craft) sometime around 1978. Two artists began a conversation about art across a distance for a year. What came out of that conversation was a book created with fabric and paper pages that was so profoundly beautiful that I have a clear image of it in my mind almost fifty years later. I love the idea of being in that kind of artistic conversation with another artist and have both initiated and participated in collaborations many times since.

For a collaboration to be a source of growth and satisfaction it always came down to mutuality. If the collaborators have mutual respect for one another, have an equal voice in the direction of the art and contributes shared effort, there is a good chance that something amazing will be created. Because each member of the team has his or her own creative process, entering into a collaboration means setting aside ego in the work toward a common goal, not easy to do and probably not for everyone.

Note: The Enso Circle is a perfect place to explore collaborations. Sharing your ideas and comments in SLACK, creating something in response to another resident's thoughts or work, expand an idea collaborative with others in SLACK... The list of ways is endless!