***Healing Through Art***

In *Healing Through Art*, the exhibiting artists share a piece of themselves and their own struggles, telling a deeply personal story that wants or needs to be heard.

Studies have shown that creating art can reduce stress and anxiety, as well as increase positive emotions and connection to others. For most artists, this knowledge is first-hand; it is often the reason we pick up the paintbrush
or pencil to begin with. This nourishing creative process can go by different names: “blowing off steam” in the studio or “getting in the zone,” finding that “happy place” where productivity, meditation, and creativity collide. The twenty-six artists find solace in paints and brushes, paper and scissors, a camera lens or a myriad of other tools.

For some, making art can be a constant ritual, a necessity to preserve a sense of balance and well-being. Numerous artists echo this sentiment of creativity sustaining their spirit, or as Colleen Lineberry describes it, being “as vital as breathing.” Roni Ramos writes that her work calms her thoughts, stating “I do not usually know how that happens,
or understand the physiology, but I feel the results.” For some artists in this exhibition who deal with the continuous struggle of mental illness, use of art can be a healthy tool to keep their minds occupied.

Certainly, the goal of making art is not necessarily the finished piece of art at the end; it is often the process itself that matters most. RitaMarie Cimini had a different vision in mind when she set out to create her paintings but acknowledges that they were “exactly right” because they helped her “heal the hurt and confusion” surrounding a life-changing occurrence. For others, like Miriam Jacobs’s series, making art can be a reflective process to confront painful experiences, come to terms with them and release emotions. In these ways, art can bring closure.

Art-making often provides a means for contemplation and reevaluation of circumstances. Florence Weisz and Virginia Block’s variations on art journaling document the healing process in a more tangible sense, chronicling their steps to recovery after physical challenges. Loss of someone or something, or the threat of loss, can force one to reexamine the value of different aspects of one’s life, as evidenced by Linda Steinhardt and Walter Oliver.

The artists in this exhibition share in the universal struggle of human emotions and experiences, using their art as a means to navigate life and foster healing. Making art keeps us moving forward by helping us to heal, learn, and grow. By making sense of our past and our present, we can look toward our future.

**Co-Curators**
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