



The Portrait Project

with
Deborah J. Welsh

Licensed Creative Arts Therapist
and Mental Health Counselor



*Life isn't about finding yourself.
Life is about creating yourself.*

What is the Portrait Project?

The self-portrait is an interesting and exciting way to know ourselves and present ourselves to others. By having the courage to experience the not-knowing of the creative process, we can allow for new experiences to emerge. The arts bring out truths that we may never have thought ourselves to be. In this non-judgmental, but challenging process, we shine a light on the deepest Self.



Why create a portrait?

One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light but by making the darkness conscious. C.G. Jung

Whether we like to admit it or not, we are often strangers, not only to others, but to ourselves. Dancer and philosopher, Maxine Sheets Johnstone says that if we are attentive to this fact, it is possible to live more fully within the world with all the possibilities and limitations presented to us. A core aspect is attentiveness to our animated bodies. In the Portrait Project we explore and share the light and the dark - our strengths and our vulnerabilities - through our creative, embodied actions that are seen, and most importantly accepted, by ourselves and others who have the honor of sharing in the performance of the portrait.

What's involved?

All participants are the creators of their own portraits (with Deborah's guidance). Any art forms may be included, and the portrait will culminate in a presentation, even if the audience is only one other person. For example, someone might create a dance with music and a specific costume and/or props. Another person might write a small play. A third person might prefer to do visual art and then animate it in performance. Other possibilities include poetry reading, singing, playing an instrument, photography, or video. Emphasis is on the portrait being one's own creation. Structured improvisation, not the end product, is at the heart of the process since it will be a little different every time it is performed.



What is the Creative Process?

According to Anna Halprin, the creative process involves four parts: collect resources, create a "score," or basic structure, perform the score in rehearsal, and respond to the score. Repeat these four parts, re-working them, until ready to perform the portrait. This process is similar to C.G. Jung's Active Imagination, in which ego consciousness is lowered to allow for the contents of the unconscious to be given form, and learned from creatively.

Who can create a Portrait?

The best part is that the Project is open to ANYONE! The purpose is discovery and the act of opening our minds, raising our consciousness, and being seen and heard, often after many years of not being seen or heard. Here's the chance to be the star of your own show! Deborah is willing to work with all ages, genders, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, body/minds. Consider this a unique and enjoyable personal, family, or group project to celebrate who you are. Give it as a gift to someone experiencing and coping with life-changing events such as chronic illness, surgery, loss, or for someone feeling unsure and stuck. Or to mark a special birthday or anniversary.

What does it cost?

The fee structure for the Portrait Project is negotiated individually, or with groups if done in workshop format. For those wanting the project to be focused more deeply as psychotherapy, Deborah's private practice fee is \$70 an hour, with some insurance available. The fee for those more focused on an arts experience, and details like the number of times to meet, the budget and location can be worked out by phone or email.



Be a part of the Full Circle.

Who is Deborah Welsh?

Deborah Welsh, Ed.D has been doing various forms of self-portraits, mainly in dance and movement, since 1976 when she studied "The Life-Art Process" of dancer Anna Halprin. The experience was so profound that she embarked on doctoral study to better understand it through the psychology of C.G. Jung and sacred dance. She has taught dance and has led many workshops, taught graduate Creative Arts Therapy and movement for actors courses. In her life's work she has facilitated thousands of self-portraits. She is a Board Certified Dance Movement Therapist, and is a Licensed Creative Arts Therapist and Licensed Mental Health Counselor in private practice and at the Hutchings Psychiatric Center in Syracuse, NY.



Contact:
Dr. Deborah Welsh, LCAT, LMHC
Full Circle Studio
404 Oak St. Suite 205
Syracuse, NY 13203
315-479-7718
djwelsh@syr.edu
www.deborahjwelsh.com