HIDDEN LEAVES

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FALL 2020

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On Individuality and Community

PHOTO: Michael Gerdes

I've been very interested in beauty my whole life and I'm still not sure why. I'm poking at it, trying to figure it out. I do know that beauty is balance. The individual artist tries to take things that are usually separate — good and bad, beautiful and ugly, wise and not, all those things — and connect them so they add to each other, rather than fight.

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The interview with my friend Milenko in this issue makes we wonder what makes his works on public art spaces, and mine, different — if anything. Milenko builds community in real neighborhoods. He gets people who might not be friends, who might even be enemies, to talk together. My work on Pacific Rim Park is similar, but I — and Kyle Bergman, PRP's Director — gather art and architecture students from around the Pacific Rim and have them build a park in only 30 days, one lunar cycle. They become a family very quickly.

One is not better than the other. Whichever approach you use, you learn that our society today often overestimates the individual. A community is more like a large tribe that may have huge differences to overcome. Milenko's community approach gives us the tools to get along, which may seem impossible at first, and accomplish something we're all proud of. In a family like PRP you start from a place where you know you won't burn the family house down.

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But individuality will always be important. I visualize our culture today as a big ship plowing down a great river. Alongside, and out in front, are some small rowboats. And the individuals in them are rowing like crazy. They're the first to notice the waterfall ahead, and they turn back to warn the ship's captain.

You see, if you don't have these outside influences, these visionaries, who help turn the ship in time, you're in trouble.

Today we're at a point where we're trying to determine the future. Adversity is our chance to stop and ask what we'd like our world to be like. Turn the ship. Otherwise people simply do things because they're afraid — afraid of the future. They have no vision of how good it can be, and without this we might go through a great catastrophe — over the waterfall — because we continue in a direction that is not going to work.

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Anne wrote an article once about a bus driver in New York City. Everyone would get on his bus, and most were mad at each other for one reason or another. This driver — this individual — was so friendly that after a few blocks everyone was laughing and talking to each other. That driver was an artist in the way he built community, but we don't value or define what he did as "art." Instead we only call someone an "artist" when they work with materials and change them into something else.

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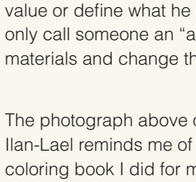
The photograph above of a very special night at Ilan-Lael reminds me of a poem I wrote. It's in the coloring book I did for my granddaughter. Parts of it read, "Come with me. Walk the cloudless sky ... We are the children of dust, of space ... Open your hand. From your palm will spring a voice, a magic dream."

— May your dreams these holidays be magic dreams.



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A Message from the Executive Director

I've been helping Jim Hubbell bring to life his vision for the Ilan-Lael Foundation for more than 15 years. At every step he's challenged me to think holistically about creativity, meet the moment, and to avoid allowing the Foundation to be entrenched in any one idea or path.

"Don't get boxed in," he says. "There's always more than one answer."

This is Jim, speaking as an artist. When faced with a blank page, an untouched block of wood, a lump of clay, his artist's mind opens to possibilities while his hands feel their way through the material, following the grain of the wood, the feel of the clay, the stroke of the brush. He trusts his skills, opens up to new ideas, allows something to happen.

We've followed his lead throughout this pandemic year. When business as usual fell by the wayside, we got busy doing what we could, trusting our instincts, feeling our way through. Working from Jim's playbook, we knew we must be fearless, endlessly surprising, and ultimately optimistic. We made our Ilan-Lael community stronger through art making, art sharing, and encouraging community though we are apart.

I'm really proud of what we accomplished, and even prouder to share these achievements in this issue. Most important, we functioned once again as a community by working together, making magic happen. You, too, are part of our community simply by reading our newsletters and emails, staying abreast. We hope we've offered some welcome diversion and comfort. We are always grateful for your interest.

We hope you share our conviction to learn and grow the Ilan-Lael community and will support us in any way you can, whether it be attending an art class when it's safe to do so, or our Open House next June, or — right now — helping us with your end-of-year giving. Whether you make a purchase from our online store, become a monthly sustaining supporter, give an annual gift, or include us in our estate and legacy planning, you're supporting our creativity, our growth, and our optimism for the future. As Jim likes to say, "There's always more than one answer." Thank you for your support and friendship!

—Marianne Gerdes

Thinking like an artist when it matters most

Working on a new commission, James considers a design that incorporates fused glass and a Torrey Pines cliffs theme

PHOTO: Marianne Gerdes

ART & GOINGS ON (ON YOUR SCREEN!)

San Diego's museums and cultural institutions are serving their communities during the shutdown with passion and creativity.

Ilan-Lael Gallery
A virtual gallery to shop for James Hubbell original artworks from home. Featuring paintings, sculpture, and glass from the artist's personal collection, and those on loan to the Santa Ysabel Art Galleryo. ***www.ilanlaelfoundation.org/gallery***

California Center for the Arts, Escondido
Drive-In Events – Missing live performances? You can experience concerts and theater drive-in style. The full calendar of events is at ***www.artcenter.org***

Mingei International Museum
Reopening in March 2021 with a beautiful, accessible, and amazing new look which has been several years in the works.Watch a 5-minute Youtube video about the transformation. ***https://youtu.be/kYIRIvd9zr4***

Artist's rendering © LUCE art studio

Oceanside Museum of Art
Now re-opened to the public! Timed tickets are available for a whole new slate of exhibits to enjoy in person. ***Oma-online.org***

Virtual San Diego Museum of Art
Enjoy SDMA from the comfort of home with exhibits viewable online. Featuring works from around the world and at-home activities for children. ***www.sdmart.org***

San Diego Symphony
Now streaming performances with Symphony Stream. Hear full orchestral performances featuring musical director Rafael Payare, Lunch and Listen programs celebrate "musicians behind the music." ***www.sandiegosymphony.org***

Athenaeum Music & Arts Library in La Jolla
Offering their popular lecture and educational series live-streamed online. Members continue to enjoy limited access to in-person art exhibitions and the library. ***www.ljathenaeum.org***

Lux Art Institute
Offering an online Art Exploration program. Engage with the artist-in-residence and virtually learn about current exhibitions with a Lux Liaison docent as your guide. ***www.luxartinstitute.org***

Museum of Making Music
MoMM@Home is a new series of live-streaming events with museum staff and guest musicians sharing their love of music. ***www.museumofmakingmusic.org***

San Diego Botanic Garden
Offering limited in-person visits, virtual walks in the Garden and downloadable activities for families to enjoy at home. ***www.sdbgarden.org***

In the first years of publishing Hidden Leaves, we often featured thoughtful commentary by friends and colleagues who shared Ilan-Lael's goal of putting creativity to work as a catalyst for positive change. Never has this notion seemed more compelling than in these challenging times.

And so we turn once again to long-time friend Milenko Matanovič for insights on the times we live in, and the ways we can heal fractured communities. Milenko and James piloted a joint community-build exercise at Kuchumaa Passage on the grounds of Rancho La Puerta in Tecate, Baja California, in 1989. James took the lessons learned and went on to create the Pacific Rim Park series. Milenko took another path, founding Pomegranate Center, a non-profit that teaches the principles of democratic engagement around the building of community spaces. While our current feelings of isolation and polarization will take years to overcome, Milenko gives us a valuable reminder that democracy is fundamental to a civil society, and it starts at home in our own communities.

—Marianne Gerdes

Using Art To Build Community

An interview with Pomegranate Center Founder Milenko Matanovič

Was there a moment that made creation of Pomegranate Center most compelling?

There were many moments. When I grew up in former Yugoslavia, in what is now Slovenia — a country of only two million people with its own language — I rebelled against the conventions and attitudes I encountered with adults and leaders. It was all one-sided. Power was flowing from them to us. The teachers were like that, and the leaders, and at the time I had no words for this, but I had a sense that something different must be around the corner.

So, I rebelled and tried to find my own way. Initially I was only able to say "no" to things. This was not what I wanted. I felt it enough to recognize it by the absence of certain qualities. Then, after a while, I started to discover art and music and they started to tell me this was more like it.

One of the things that bonded me to the United States was Benny Goodman's Big Band. For some reason his 1938 concert at Carnegie Hall recording was sold in a local store. It was a revelation. Not just great music and fun music; it was celebratory. It had qualities that I lacked in my social environment. More importantly, I saw a different kind of leadership, how power was used. It was not centralized in Benny Goodman where everyone had to follow his commands. Musicians could claim their solo time. Suddenly this image of how the collective and individuals can coexist became very powerful for me. I saw it in that music. It made me fall in love with a particular layer of the U.S.

When I came to the U.S. in the 1970s, I had this idea that people here would gather, consider various ideas, select the very best ones, and join forces to implement them. That was my ideal of how American democracy works. I read Walt Whitman, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and his second inauguration speech, the Declaration of Independence — these were very noble and powerful ideals of democracy. I saw something in the U.S. that was not just great for this country but universally applicable to where we humans need to go next.

I started to attend public meetings to see how the democratic ideal plays itself out. I was bitterly disappointed. I found people who were only looking out for their self-interest or particular point of view or ideology. They were unable to hear anything outside their own talking or thinking points. People would argue and not be interested in an improved future, as I was. That was the moment when I probably decided that maybe with my innocence and idealism, I should do something about it. That was the beginning of Pomegranate Center.

Many people would have thought that a Pomegranate model would be in a policy or business arena, but you chose art. What made art the driving force behind Pomegranate in addition to your ideals?

I had a very short but fiery burst of artistic life in Slovenia: very avant-garde conceptual/land art that made the group OHO that I worked with pretty famous. It still is considered one of the more important artistic groups in Eastern Europe.

I exited that world when I was 23 because I could not visualize myself in the marketplace of art making. I came to the U.S. in 1970 to prepare for an international exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The museum put my colleague David and me in touch with American artists. I met Christo and Walter De Maria and other well-known artists. They told me how the business of art works. One had a private foundation supporting his salary. Christo put an endless amount of energy into doing sketches that he sold, and gathered enough money to implement the ideas behind those sketches.

Since I was from socialist Yugoslavia where there were no foundations or wealthy individuals, it was impossible for me to visualize making a living as an artist. But more importantly I felt I could not channel my emerging interests through art alone. So, I decided to travel and learn about ecology and intentional communities, and I got married and had children. I made music, did manual labor, conducted occasional workshops. My wife and I did many different things to help the family survive. During that time, I sought out people who were doing interesting work on the edges. I put the interviews with these individuals into a book. James was one of the people I contacted. We met in 1984 and became friends and collaborators.

When I started Pomegranate Center in 1986, I wanted to bring art back into focus, but in a very different way. Instead of pursuing my artistic career — "Milenko the artist" — I decided that, whatever meager artistic skills I had, I would make them available to communities. The model my colleagues and I developed was that community members would decide what they need and desire, we would help with design which they would need to approve, and at the end they would work with us in building the park or public art piece.

There are lots of benefits to this model. One, it's very specific. If we would have a conference about safety and identity and democracy, the talk would be never ending and second, it would be abstract. But when we transform a specific piece of land to replace negative activities (like drug dealing and dangers to children), with positive ones, these shared concerns and solutions make it easy to ask people to help us transform that place.

We built 60 such projects over two and a half decades. In the last four years it was really hard to move beyond doing one project at a time. I was not able to persuade foundations to support this work. In 2011 we built five projects in one year. It was a tremendous accomplishment and I wanted the world to know about it. I sent a press release about the five projects to TV stations, newspapers and magazines, and not one was interested in reporting on our work. I realized that our work was not perceived as something valuable or important — we were

"We were ahead of the curve, providing answers to questions not yet asked"

ahead of the curve, providing answers to questions not yet asked: how to collaborate with diverse people, how to strengthen community, how to do great work where people thought it was not sustainable.

We gradually shifted into educational work where we now offer training workshops to transfer our hard-earned skills to the hands of others who want to improve their communities and engage citizens in the work.

One of the goals of our conversation is to make Ilan-Lael readers more aware of Pomegranate Center and see if they can replicate this model to improve their own community.

We find that the lessons learned with the work of 60-plus projects behind us are applicable to just about any community project. We are working with a new library campus. We worked on town centers, main streets, bicycle paths, schools, regional plans ... anything of community value. We have already trained more than a thousand people in Washington state, Oregon, California and New Zealand. These days, when democracy is sputtering, we find that our experience can be put to greater impact in improving democratic processes.

When people meet Jim and take the time to delve into his life and accomplishments beyond his own art and amazing compound near Julian, California, they soon discover his work in Mexico, his parks around the Pacific Rim. Do his methods differ from yours?

There are a lot of similarities. We first collaborated on Kuchumaa Passage at Rancho La Puerta. That project inspired James to start applying the participatory methodology around the Pacific, and inspired me to do it with American communities. The biggest difference is that Jim invites selected people who come as guests to build the projects. I was a part of the first few projects (such as these) as an educational director, overseeing the process that took us from zero to design.

In the Pomegranate projects, people we work with are not just artists and architects, but ordinary community citizens from all walks of life. We wanted to work with people who would be most impacted by the place we were creating. If it was going to serve their community, they needed to be involved.

I recognize that working with communities is not easy. There are tensions to negotiate all along the way. For example, how to move the project along while including many people with many different ideas? How to achieve artistic excellence while encouraging participants with little or no experience? I had to learn how to convene meetings, how to facilitate so people feel involved and therefore have ownership for the project. I wanted to create conditions in which other people could excel. It became clear that creating artistic projects was an excellent way to build community, to connect people in new ways, and to offer hope.

San Diego Foundation, through a private funder, sponsored some projects of ours down in the San Diego area. They commissioned an evaluation of one, and it confirmed that in addition to having a built project, the benefits included an increased sense of safety, new willingness to get involved with the community, a stronger sense of ownership, and many new friends and colleagues made.

This was music to my ears. The results were outstanding, especially against the backdrop of cynicism that prevails in so many neighborhoods where people say their ideas don't really matter. Now ideas and contributions did matter. I realized what we were really doing was kick starting new connections in a community. Terrific, right? I am now focusing on grafting these lessons into others' projects and organizations. I work as an advisor on how to turn any project into a laboratory for collaborative democracy.

You make me want to be involved with a project right now! I saw Kuchumaa Passage happen. The camaraderie, the hard work.

Continued on next page

"Heron Rising," above left, was a painting made with hand- and fingerprints of 300 students, teachers, and PTA members in Medina, WA. Middle photos show a park in Tuscaloosa, AL. Oak tree banners, above right, show how "non-artists" can create beauty with a dot techique.

PHOTOS: courtesy of Pomegranate Center

"Butterfly Park" in National City, CA, (above left and middle) features a monarch-wing theme created by hundreds of volunteers who turned unused land into a community gathering space. Milenko's daughter, Katya Matanovič, (leading a workshop above right) is now CEO of Pomegranate Center.

It was a splendid project and we all learned a lot. I wanted to transfer that same spirit and approach with citizens at large. The greatest challenge was how to manage that tension between lots of people participating but still keeping the quality of work high.

In our model the people who live there, next to a piece of land wherever it is, have to tell us what has to happen. Right from the beginning. We will design it around their vision. This is being a servant artist rather than saying this is an opportunity to show my stuff, "Milenko's stuff."

That was a big shift, and that's where we probably are different from what Jim is doing.

This takes away the barrier of most people saying, "I am not an artist."

Yes, and there are tricks we learned to overcome that. And Jim is very good with that. You must sense who can do what. For example, we had to give very basic jobs to some volunteers depending on what kind of shoes they were wearing. If they are in sandals, we might put them in the kitchen or making fine art. Only people with steel-toed boots go on the construction site. We make quick judgements and make sure not to put the wrong people in the wrong spot where they can hurt themselves.

We developed very user-friendly techniques. If too sophisticated, only specialists can do the job. We had to simplify the form enough so amateurs could step into being artists or construction people for four to 10 days. There was some magic that happened in those moments. People would say, "You don't want me to ... make awful art." But we learned to give them some very simple tools.

SIMPLE TOOLS ...

For example, we developed a way to do murals or banners with dots of color because paint brushes were technically too demanding; people had a hard time controlling them. We designed the negative space and put a sticky plastic over the area we wanted untouched. We minimize the mistakes. In the case of making dots, they used little bottles with foamy tips. No drips. And then we told volunteers to 'feather out' [around the negative space] with dots, in certain colors, warm or cool. They learned how to do that very quickly and, in the end, we still had a very interesting design made with lots of hands, just like tile work.

If we had four days only on a project, we could not do tile work that might take a month. So, we had to invent quicker folk versions of tilework like simple wood carving and banners.

STAYING SAFE ...

We also didn't give people tools that could damage the artwork or hurt the volunteer. We had one person injured in all of the 60 projects — only one! — because we made our techniques safe.

FOSTERING "I DID THAT" MOMENTS...

We want volunteers to see that "... today I am an artist" — how wonderful it is to leave the park with pride that they've done something worthwhile, that their hands were in this project. I once created a painting of a heron where all students at a school, and their teachers and PTA members, touched the painting with their hands and fingers. They still come to that painting 15 years later, point to the dot that was their finger, and say, "I did that." We discovered that the fuel for bonding people together is the co-creative process.

Again, the challenge is always to create structure that people feel ownership of at the end, rather than saying, 'I'm helping Milenko do his work,' they say 'We are doing our work, we are creating this!'

I had to learn how to step aside and be almost invisible. I did not even call myself an artist. I realized early on that some people automatically assumed that I would do my own stuff and they would be reduced to helping me, they would not have their say. This stepping aside was a powerful lesson for me: I made a pledge to hear their ideas first, before I would insert my suggestions, and to design around their wishes.

Those are some of the methods and practices that are a little unorthodox for artists who are accustomed to a solitary journey and making a name for themselves.

I've seen your work as an artist, especially some of your watercolors, and the inclination would be to stand back and expect amazing things from you while the rest of us watched and followed.

These dynamics play themselves out in every project. I had to learn to adjust my skills, whatever they are, to the situation that I encountered. That was an early lesson in Yugoslavia. I could make art objects that every artist does, but instead I invented art that celebrated collaboration with nature and coworkers. I would 'collaborate' with a wheat field or a river and we would create something together. But I would first pay attention to where I am, to the setting. I had a lot of training in that, so ...when I came to the U.S. there was an opportunity to say, "Can I understand the community here, not just the site, so that we create their artwork?"

Are we coming to a point at which changing how people live is art in itself? Has art moved beyond being a physical object to become the way people live in that neighborhood?

When I exited formal art (the world of museums and galleries and so on), I was very young at the time, 23. I imagined that ... I must commit to the idea that art needs to move into life at large rather than 'art-making.'

Now I think that art making is a quickened schooling. Art miniaturizes larger processes and we bump into important lessons along the journey. It starts with learning to listen and imagine what is possible, the poetry of the beginning. To listen to one's intuition is an important part of artistic practice.

How to express that? How to incorporate the situation, the setting? What are the structures through which intuition now will travel?

How then to craft, to create forms that are translucent, like stained-glass windows where the light of the initial intuition still comes through.

The reverence for materials and your coworkers is a part of the practice. And learning how to let go of one's own work and create space for new beginnings.

After 50+ years, these lessons became second nature to me. I am always looking at the relevance of those lessons to the society. For example, if we really took an attitude of attentiveness to the site like James does with his buildings would we have cities as we do now? Would the cities change? Would we create different kinds of neighborhoods? Probably. In that sense our land use [today] is just poor art, right? Not well-executed.

The same lessons belong to economy, education, health, governance ... all are waiting for refinement, to be infused with extra energy and extra light. I wish to infuse artistic lessons into everything. How can we build a new hospital? New town centers? Everything becomes a structure through which some of these ideas can flow.

Wonderfully put ... and very idealistic.

Yes, I wouldn't be doing the work if I was not naive and idealistic.

We live in a time when some artworks, usually located in parks, are dividing our nation: symbols of oppression, such as Confederate generals. These are being destroyed or moved into warehouses, out of sight. What are we learning about this type of art? Is it useful for art to portray our society's worst sins?

They're also testaments to a particular period's thinking and attitudes that need to be transformed. I would prefer to see them collected somewhere and used as a touchpoint to learn powerful lessons. Recently I heard that someone wants to change the name of the state where I live — Washington — because Geo. Washington was a slaveowner. It's like taking only one part of his huge personality and making it the whole thing. It is focusing on flaws and mistakes only, while ignoring everything else. With that philosophy we would all be discredited because we all are fools, we all have done some stupid things, and we all are brilliant in other moments and do wonderful things.

I would prefer ... that we looked at the awful stuff to see what lessons they offer. Some, like slavery, are truly awful. "What can I do to prevent it from ever occurring again, in any way, shape or form?" To answer this, we need to unpack our prejudices and assumptions. It is hard, courageous work. To get rid something without an accompanying inner work is just destruction. But with lessons learned we have an opportunity to really grow our society, our democracy.

At Ilan-Lael our mission is to explore the relationship between art and nature. One generates the other. Can art exist without nature?

You're bringing up such big questions here for a short discussion! One way to look at it is we ARE nature. [The goal of art] is not so much to mimic nature as something external, but to be in touch with something very natural, organic, something very universal that flows through every human being. There are artists and whole traditions of philosophy and a way of thinking...that celebrate that moment when we are in alignment, in a flow, a natural celebratory condition with what is happening around us.

I feel an affinity with Taoism. The goal is to live by doing nothing that goes against nature. The Tao – the way of life – never does anything, yet through it all things get done. So, it is about the nature that flows through us, not just nature out there. If we understood this better, we would not be destroying the planet. We would see nature as a collaborative partner, and would know that going against nature means destroying ourselves.

In great art you recognize those rhythms and patterns and juxtapositions and contrasts that live within oceans and trees and birds and clouds, and in deep human emotions and feelings. We can hear them in pieces of music, see them in good architecture, or admire them in a great garden. I would also like to see them in our economy and education and health and politics. Maybe we're all in a kind of kindergarten trying to learn what collaboration with nature and other, different humans, really means. And it may start by realizing that 'I don't need to do things to show how brilliant I am' (that is part of the problem) but if I can align myself with those bigger forces, it all flows naturally. Our society is so far from that right now, hopefully in the last gasp of a mindset that sees power as something to control and hold, and not as something to share.

Yes, I think there is a transfer between art and life, and if we don't recognize it, we should. The sooner the better.

The Case for Everyday Democracy: Turning Community Meetings into Engines for Collaboration, by Milenko Matanovič is available on Amazon.com.

You can learn more about Milenko's work at PomegranateCenter.org/about-us/

Sumner Gathering Place, 2011 – transforming an empty alleyway into a festive space in four intense days. Below: A young volunteer stands in front of a banner-mural she helped create. Bottom: View of the finished banner -mural and alleyway.

NEWS

from our creative community

It's autumn, and the year that never seems to end is suddenly moving at a fleeting pace. For months last spring things seemed a bit surreal, but at Ilan-Lael creativity never shut down, and our community's energy stayed alive and vital. We reinvented what we do and how we do it, meeting the challenges with creativity, spirit, and a sense of fun. With Jim Hubbell as our example, we've once again proved that artists are quite adept at navigating change.

PHOTO: Peter Jensen

Jim's new stained glass designs in the Jewel Box of the Art Center seem to shift colors and swirl in the sunlight.

Summer arrived as it always does in June, with gardens blooming and birds and bees oblivious to the disruptions that shut down visitor traffic at Ilan-Lael. But we found new ways to share our space via a new Virtual Tour that replaced our traditional Father's Day Open House. You can view the film at: *https://ilanlaelfoundation.org/visit/virtual-open-house-and-tours/*

Father's Day without a traditional "open house," when hundreds of visitors usually tour the Hubbells' home, studios, and grounds for our biggest fundraiser of the year, would have been a disappointment as well as financial setback. But, as so often happens in the "Hubbell bubble," a solution was found right in our midst: Ilan-Lael's Executive Director Marianne Gerdes has a parallel vocation as a television producer.

Just a few months before Marianne had released a documentary for PBS television titled *Between Heaven and Earth.* It told the story of James Hubbell's life and work, with a special emphasis on the role his art plays in lifting the spirit.

"With all the video and film assets we now have, I knew we could create a tour," said Marianne. With only months to go, she and her husband Michael Gerdes, the cameraman on well-known PBS projects such as the garden series *A Growing Passion* and documentary *Between Heaven and Earth*, went to work.

Watch Our New Virtual Tour Film

They found an interview with Jim and Anne secreted away in the Hubbell archives. Ilan-Lael board member and long-time friend Vicki Bergstrom, with photographer Garrett Phelps, recorded it a few years back. New interviews with the Hubbells' four sons, and some on-camera insights offered by Gerdes, rounded out the new virtual tour.

"We succeeded in creating a great story of how Ilan-Lael became both a private home for a family, a busy atelier for Jim, and the 'mother ship' of a non-profit arts organization with projects around the world, most recently in China," said Marianne.

It's unclear how long it will be until we can welcome large numbers of visitors back to Ilan-Lael. Until then, we'll welcome very small tours when possible, and keep sharing the swoop and soar of rooflines, stained glass colors at play, and the fragrance of sage wafting in the mountain air — all brought to life via film and your imagination.

Notes From South of the Border

James's love affair with Baja California to be celebrated

The long-awaited James Hubbell art show at IMAC in Zona Rio, Tijuana — postponed last summer — is back on for 2021. Featuring the scope of Hubbell's work in Tijuana and Tecate, B.C., the virtual show will celebrate the region's beautiful cultural tapestry woven between San Diego and Baja, as expressed through art. We'll keep you posted as more details firm up.

Colegio la Esperanza Puppet Program: can you help?

Zoom school is in session north and south of the border. Christine Brady, the lion-hearted President of The Americas Foundation in Tijuana, has rounded up laptop computers, a wi-fi hot spot, and coached her staff to deliver an on-line curriculum to 200 children ages 5 through 12. Yet it has been a real challenge; many students just starting out cannot read and are not yet computer literate. She's now incorporating puppets and puppetry into her online class for the youngest students. If you would like to contribute puppets, materials (foam, patterns, fleece, yarn, etc.) or dolls that can be converted to puppets, contact Christine at cebrady2@cox.net. Donation checks are always welcome and should be sent to The Americas Foundation, P.O. Box 574, Chula Vista, CA 91911.

PHOTOS: Courtesy Colegio Esperanza

Teachers use the Zoom classroom to continue educating students enrolled at Colegio la Esperanza schools.

Kindergarten students wish a virtual happy birthday to the school's founder and president, Christine Brady.

Puppets are incorporated in the education program for students who are just starting to read.

Colegio's construction crew with a newly built puppet stage.

A whale of a tail for Baja California's Pacific Rim Park

A Tijuana organization is hoping to install a sculpture in the PRP park site at La Joya in Playas de Tijuana on the coast road to Ensenada. The sculpture honors the gray whales that migrate past the nearby Los Coronados islands. Artist Fernando Mendez, with the help of architecture students from the Universidad Iberroamericana and PRP alumni who worked on the park, has in mind a whale sculpture that will enhance the park site (selfies anyone?) and attract more visitors to stop and contemplate his homage to human and mammal well-being.

PHOTOS: Laurel Costa

PHOTO: Lorena I. Henseler

A Cottage Nears Completion

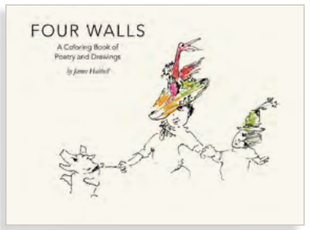
Never one to let extra time go to waste, Jim used the quiet quarantine months to turn out exquisite designs for gates, windows, doors, and new sculptures as the Art Cottage moved steadily towards completion. Masked workers scaled ladders and scaffolding to embellish the dome-shaped structure with colored plaster, decorative brickwork, stained glass, and mosaic tiles. The floor plan is small but remarkably accommodating, thanks to careful view lines out windows, and an open plan with rooms flowing one-into-the-other in — of course! — a very organic way.

Jim collaborated with a cadre of Hubbell Studio artists and builders and his son Drew, a licensed architect who has done many houses throughout the region. Drew's expertise in alternative building materials came to the fore with the cottage project, which uses a lightweight material with a high-insulating R factor to form the curvaceous outer walls. The blocks could actually be carved.

When complete, the bungalow will house an artist in residence this winter; you'll meet her soon!

Above: swirling brickwork now adorns tops and bottoms of windows, while an arched stained-glass artwork will pour colored light into the interior.

Trust Life, Grab Your Crayons, and Watch Yourself Age Backwards



A new coloring book was a gift from James Hubbell to all of us — especially our children and grandchildren — as we grappled with the challenges and confinement of the pandemic. James used the quarantine to document the Spring with his pencils and paints. We shared his work via social media and you responded with artworks of your own using the hashtag #trustlifeproject.

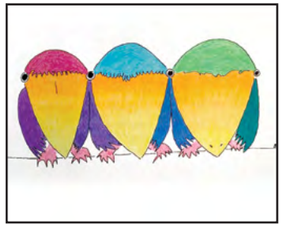
Four Walls" was born out of a conversation between James and his 10-year-old granddaughter who was disappointed when Easter celebrations were canceled due to Covid19. James dug deep into his archives to find poems and pictures that lifted his spirits while inviting other members of the family to experience the same.

What else can one do with a coloring book? Why not bring in the entire Ilan-Lael family by having a coloring contest? We received dozens of entries after we invited everyone on our mailing and social media lists to color a favorite page from Four Walls and post it to Ilan-Lael's Instagram page.

Fay McQueen received the People's Choice prize, earning the most "likes" for her rich shading of a dog and butterfly in the forest (above). No surprise: Fay was a Hubbell studio artist for many years and her artistic talents are well-known.

Jan Beaton was chosen a winner by James and Anne Hubbell for his vibrant interpretation of fanciful Hubbell creatures (below). Jan is a frequent volunteer for Ilan-Lael. His reasons for entering the contest included, "I have seen those same creatures I colored walking around our property late at night."

Lastly, the Ilan-Lael and Hubbell Studio artists awarded



the "Academy Award" to **Linda Hintzman** whose vivid trio of birds amused and delighted our team of creatives (above). Linda has volunteered at past Open Houses. "It was a little daunting having my work judged by the amazing artists at Hubbell Studios," she told us,"but I figured I had nothing to lose."

Indeed — there are no losers when it comes to coloring! Thanks to everyone who participated. If you want to see entries, please visit our Instagram page @ilanlael!

To purchase 4 Walls, see: https://ilanlaelfoundation.org/product/four-walls-a-james-hubbell-coloring-book-of-poetry-and-drawings.

Drawing: Our Fingerprint

Drawing, of all the art forms, is one of the most direct in the artist's bag. But it is under-valued in our time.

Just as the lines of our fingerprint reveal an individual different from all others, the line of the artist reveals his or her uniqueness and an era. An era's drawings are truly its fingerprints. Goya's profound use of black made his work an expression of his tortured period. The Spanish civil turmoil is there. Rembrandt linked himself to humanity in a web of caring. The scribbling on a subway wall tells us of the torment of faceless individuals.

What we call style comes not from rules learned in school or historical footnotes by critics. Style is revealed in the honesty of the artist's work. When an artist's hand traces thoughts, emotions or dreams over paper, his/her inner self and the outline of the period are revealed. Within the ancient calligraphy of China, the prehistoric caves of Spain, or the cartoon in the New Yorker, is humanity's history and our own place in it.

Blake claimed one could understand the universe in a grain of sand. It is also true that one can understand the Renaissance by the way Leonardo drew the line of the Madonna's eyebrow.

Drawing, because it is the first probing of the artist's mind, is less self-conscious, more playful, and closer to what is described as the scribbling of the soul. Look for it.

— JTH (First published in Hidden Leaves, 1985)

You can purchase a complete anthology of Hidden Leaves publications from 1983 to 1987 at https://ilanlaelfoundation.org/SHOP.

Above "Lady and Bird," 2000, by James Hubbell featured in the online gallery "Following the LIne." View this and more work at https://ilanlaelfoundation.org/about/james-hubbells-work

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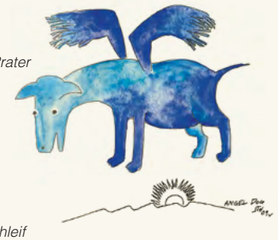

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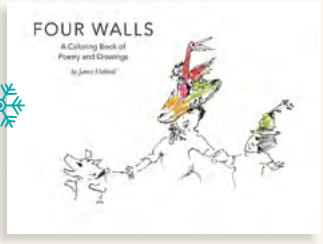

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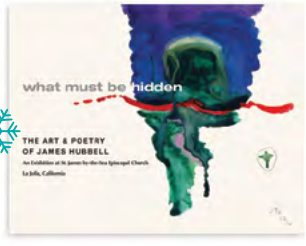

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