

Ignite Your Creative Fire

An Interview With Pam Christiansen

by Kwami E. Nyamidie

Visionary artist Pam Christiansen heads the Creativity Center on Bainbridge Island. Here, she shares her amazing insights on the healing qualities of creativity and offers simple tips to connect with your extraordinary inner creative powers.

Kwami: How did you get interested in art and creativity?

Pam: It all began when I was a child growing up in the San Fernando Valley, California. My parents were very creative people. My father, William Watkins, worked in the movie business as the production manager for movies such as *Black Rain*, *Coming to America*, and *Target*. My homemaker mother was always decorating and redecorating, cooking, and making gifts.

I started drawing at about age five. I had a stack



"Kundalini" by Pam Christiansen

of wild looking drawings in vivid colors which I hid in the back of my closet. Art at that time linked me to something true for me where I felt connected and safe.

That's still the case. I create art when I'm inspired, when I want to understand myself, and when I want to manifest something in the world. I even create art when I want to heal.

Kwami: How do you use art to manifest?

Pam: When I first moved to Bainbridge Island, I didn't have rent money, so I housesat. Later, some people gave me their office space to use as a studio. I ended up living with a patron. Then I began to sell my work.

When my patron sold her house and moved, I had to find another place. Tired of moving around, I asked myself, "Why can't I manifest a home? What's wrong with me?" I wanted a little cabin with a studio space, a view and mature landscaping.

I started drawing this dream cabin, putting all my feelings into the painting. I had done a lot of inner work, and uncovered and confronted my limiting ideas centering on nurturing and owning a home.

Because just drawing it wasn't going to do it, I went to the classified section and found two available places. One was a cabin that had mature landscaping, a magnificent view, and a little backroom that I could use as studio.

When I went to see the landlady, I met her talking with her neighbor. I knew then that the place was mine. The neighbor, a woman with whom I had done some trades, gave the landlady a good recommendation for me. I got the place and lived there for 10 years.

Kwami: Is there any relationship between creativity and spirituality for you?

Pam: When I'm painting, I feel connected to the source. Connection to the oneness for me is spirituality. Creativity is my spirituality.

Kwami: You said art heals. How so?

Pam: Before the Creativity Center opened, I started a nonprofit called Return to Creativity to support and advance the creative spirit in individuals, families, and the community. Because I've noticed that every time I've veered off and gone in a wrong

direction, I became unhealthy, mentally, physically and emotionally. It's been clear to me that creativity is a healing force.

When my creative process is flowing, I have energy. Things open up for me. I manifest. I feel fuller. When I'm turning away from it or trying to prove something I shut down. My energy is low. I get physically unfit and things don't work well. Every time I return, life opens. This has gone on for decades now.

As I realized this, I also noticed people coming around me who have similar stories. When people returned to their creative natures they experienced amazing healing whether it was from cancer, MS, depression, or nervous breakdowns.

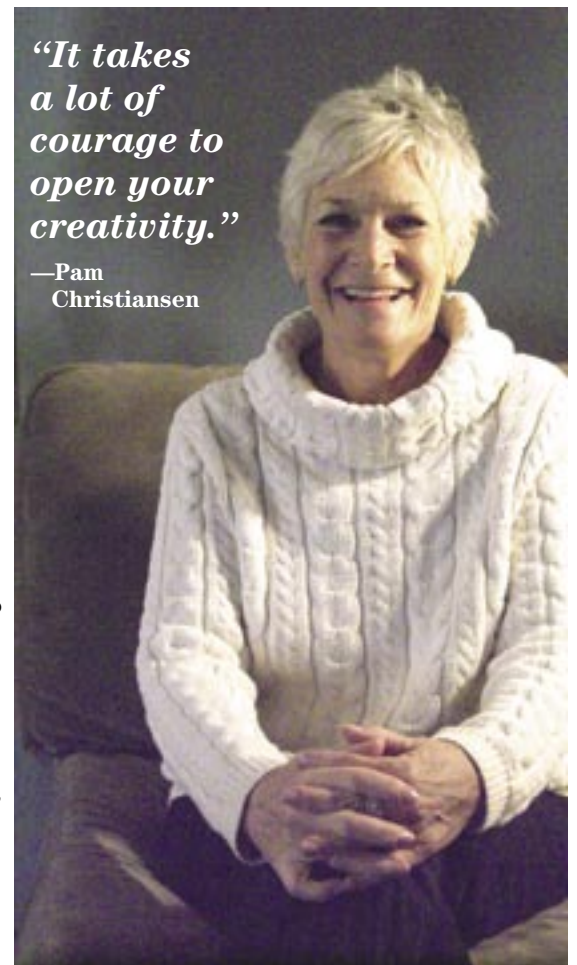
Kwami: What is the Creativity Center about?

Pam: The Creativity Center is a visual arts school. It's part of an organization called Oil And Water Arts, an impressive 15-member faculty of well-established and experienced artists and teachers bring their extensive skills with an understanding and sensitivity. It takes a lot of courage to open your creativity.

We teach figure drawing, watercolor, oil-painting, and multi-media. I teach a non-media-based class called The Bridge to Creativity that takes a look at our limiting ideas around creativity and how to open up that flow.

"It takes a lot of courage to open your creativity."

—Pam Christiansen

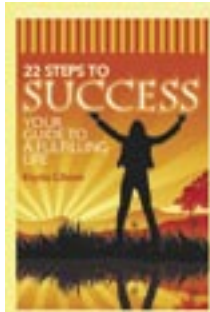


Kwami: Any suggestions for readers who wish to be more creative?

Pam: I start my class by asking my students how they would like to expand their creative process. The students often answer that they'd love to do more of what they love. Then I ask the core question: "Why doesn't that happen?"

I hear the barrage of excuses: "It doesn't happen because... I don't have enough time, space, money, so I can't take the class. I'm not talented; my sister is the talented one."

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