

About the Art

**Peter Irving and
Susan Kocen**

Peter Irving

When I started to keep a journal just for drawings, I also started to draw using a style that I had not tried before. I started by simply being unfocused; then I just scribbled on the page and spent some time looking at it. Sometimes I saw a figure within all of the scribbles, waiting for finishing touches to give it life; other times I filled in spaces and out of that figures appeared.

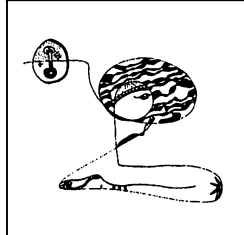
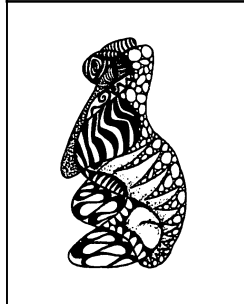
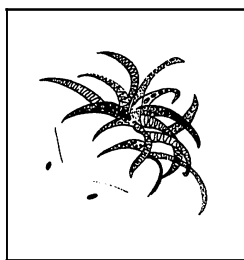
The characters that emerged amazed me—they had sharp teeth and crazy eyes, wild expressions of their pain and spirituality. I saw in the drawings parts of myself that I did not often talk about, parts that I didn't even have a sense of, and some that I feared to express due to the full impact of the story behind them. I recognized the spontaneous images as figures that appear within me; these images are part of me and I am part of their image.

Working on myself using these characters required more than the ability to simply let them out. It was shocking to see these things slide out of my pen and onto the page, taking form, taking to life, leaving the page and entering into my reality. Acknowledging these messengers and seeing them as powerful parts of myself trying to come to life was far beyond my original brief thoughts and expectations for my drawing journal.

I felt afraid and alone in the drawing process. Addressing this fear required actively taking my place among all that had been happening in my life, which I felt I had no control over. It meant finding and encouraging these unknown aspects in myself. The sheer beauty, struggle, spontaneous flirts and accidents that helped to create these images took me to the edge of my own reality. The spirit that drew the figures was not always the one that ended up trying to work with them, and I found myself having to go back and discover how I had gotten where I was.

When I sat at this point I always drew something that seemed more spiritual, priests and shaman figures with lots of weird symbols. I drew someone who at this point could leap out of consensus reality and into the unknown! The answers actually emerged faster than I could ask the question or formulate it in my intention. Creation is a sentient and instinctual flow that determines where to go and what to change or omit. I found myself simply following this unfolding mystery.

As I write I want to write like I draw, to let myself scribble and then meditate on the stream. I want to see the life that looks back at me, the depth and the breadth of it, in its own form. The edges of the lines and the black and white spaces all interact with each other. When I write, I want my feelings to come across, but words seem to have a different type of dreaming for me, more difficult. The drawings more easily express the individual gestalts coming together.



I dig in the dirt by the river and I still see these faces. I look at the wrinkles in people's clothes and see the same thing. These figures are like men following me, calling to me with their messages.

Through drawing, I explored an individual artistic style of inner work. This method of expression resonated with my nature and way. Like a shaman, I attempted to be open to the forces working within me through meditations and personal challenges. Together the drawings and other aspects of the process act as a shaman guiding me to myself. I see this guidance as coming not just from my everyday human reality but from something more sacred, from the full spectrum of life.

Peter Irving grew up in Sydney Australia and spent ten years in Brisbane before moving to Portland, Oregon. A graduate of the Master's in Process Work (MPW) program, he has always drawn and painted. More recently, he decided to keep track of his drawing as a record of his process: some of those drawings and reflections are reproduced here.

Susan Kocen

Since I was a child I have had this thing about filling up the blank page. Something so white and empty seems to call out to me to be filled with color and pattern. I sometimes envy the artist who places few lines and shapes on the page and leaves plenty of space. My own relationship with painting is unstoppable until the empty is filled.

I never know what the final piece will look like; it just arrives and then is there. It sometimes surprises me that I had anything to do with what is suddenly on the paper in front of me. It sometimes surprises me that I had anything to do with the person that sits surprised at the artwork in front of her...it is all a mystery, needing no solution.

I must mention my shyness too, shyness about how proud I feel to have this piece of work on the cover of *The Journal of Process Oriented Psychology*. It means so much to me, and to be a part of this learning, this community, and now this journal, is a huge blessing.

As for the art itself, it is me and it is something that is not me, something amazing to me, more wild and colorful and ecstatic than I realize that I am. It is also a thrill, to be heading there, to be becoming this. I hope you like it too.

