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Subject: Summer Greetings!
Date: 8 June 2023 at 12:06
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Welcome to June....

We are so lucky here in Devon, we have had some glorious summer weather - long may it continue. I hope you are all keeping well and having a wonderful time basking in all the sunshine! It has felt so lovely to have the sun on my face and blue sky above my head.

I have recently returned from a wonderful time in Cornwall just roaming the coast path, visiting galleries and generally just being in the Cornish landscape. It was balm for the soul. There is something so delicious about consciously slowing life down, it does wonders for our senses, we see, hear and feel more of everything, and with the space to digest it properly. I love this process of absorption, committing it all to memory, knowing that it is there to draw on when needed, both in life and in the art work!

Cornwall always inspires me, with its wild open spaces, fantastic light and endless coastline and it always reminds me of the value of exploring and getting lost.

I reflect on this theme of getting lost in my latest blog which you can read here:

<https://www.clarebrown.co.uk/blog/getting-lost-in-something-bigger>. This is proving to be a rich seam of exploration in the studio at the moment so I will keep you posted on how that goes! I am currently getting lost in all sorts of random work and its nice to know there is a thread linking it all together, however diverse it looks.



As always there is so much to be inspired by! Going to new places, the season, nature, new books, discovering a new favourite song! etc

This month I have been inspired by [Your Brain on Art by Susan Magsamen and Ivy Ross](#), (other book sellers in your local high street are available!!!!) two academics who have been researching this area.

Anyone who has a creative practice of any sort - from gardening to cooking, to music and painting or sea swimming, will know that it's good for them - it's in the feeling as they say. But there is more and more evidence being accumulated about the benefits of having a creative or art practice of any kind.

It has been widely known that viewing art or being in nature or listening to music etc has tangible benefits for our wellbeing, physically and emotionally. This book is highlighting that when we are in the practice of creating the art itself or participating actively in a creative practice, that this has even more

profound benefits. The book reminds us that: -

- *Art and creativity has positive effects on the brain*
- *Art and creativity can help us process emotions*
- *Art and creativity helps us access our curiosity - one of the keys to a good life*
- *Art and creativity helps us experience wonder - and live longer*
- *Art and creativity helps us experience flow - and get better results*
- *Art and creativity enables us to be in the present moment*

We all know what it is like to be in flow. Those periods of time where life passes by in a flash and we lose hours and wonder where it went because we are so absorbed in the moment. (me with paint, on the coast path or in a wonderful exploratory conversation!)

This book and work has inspired me, as I feel that it will start to provide the evidence to ensure that creativity and art practices are more encouraged, prescribed, made space for, in schools and family life, and as an essential part of everyone's health and wellbeing. Hurrah for art I say!

The clincher though - which I really love - is that it's not saying we have to spend hours and hours in the studio or the greenhouse or the sea (brrrrrrrr) - they point out that all it needs is 20 minutes per day.

Yep you read that right **20 MINUTES!!!!**

I know from my own life that it can get really busy at times, despite my best planning and time management, and that sometimes life gets in the way of our plans! But I have learned to create micro-practices sprinkled in my day so that if I can't get outside and sketch or go in my studio, I can still get lost for 20 minutes.

My work desk has sketchbooks and a mini-studio kit of pens crayons and inks etc so that if I get a break between calls or meetings, I can play and immerse myself. If I am away, I have an app on my phone and can draw with my finger (try it its amazing what you can create) and a small sketchbook that I can doodle in.

These little practices are extra beneficial when we are really busy, or under the weather or feeling stuck (usually the times we stop doing them!) as they keep us connected to our-selves and that part of us that likes to get lost in what we love.

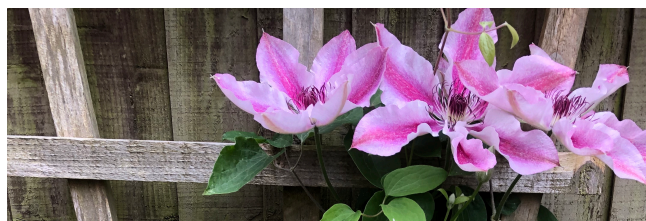
I'd love to know what you would spend 20 minutes on each day if you chose to? And it's good to remember that even taking a detour on the way to work, or running a different route on your daily run, is a creative act.....;)

Also in terms of inspiration - I can't not mention the flowers. As a lover of nature and colour this is such an inspiring season. Everywhere is bursting into colour and it makes me smile. Cornwall definitely inspired. This time in particular, it was the abundance of hedgerows and flowers and in particular the bluebells. They were everywhere. We followed the coast from Lelant through to St Just, I love this bit of the far west of the county and its wild terrain and gorse. On the way we pass a little homestead with trees in the back garden and under the trees was this luminous carpet of blue, it was glorious. Bluebells have such a lovely energy.

Coming home I was greeted with the first rose blooms of the year in my garden. My pink David Austin Olivia Rose, which is not only beautiful visually, but smells divine. Tranquility, a white rose is now blooming too with large heavy, voluptuous flowers bursting with petals. I have roses at the entrance to all the doors at the back of the house like soft gentle wayfinders.

I have been particularly inspired by the clematis. This flower to all intents and purposes looks dead come autumn/winter - like really dead and I am never entirely sure that it will come back again, but boy it certainly has.

It reminds us to ensure that there is sufficient time-out in our lives - to be quiet, to rest, to go inwards and take what we need for our-selves so that we can bloom again.....I find this is also conducive in the process of creativity - space for fresh ideas to come through and to have the energy to bring them to life.





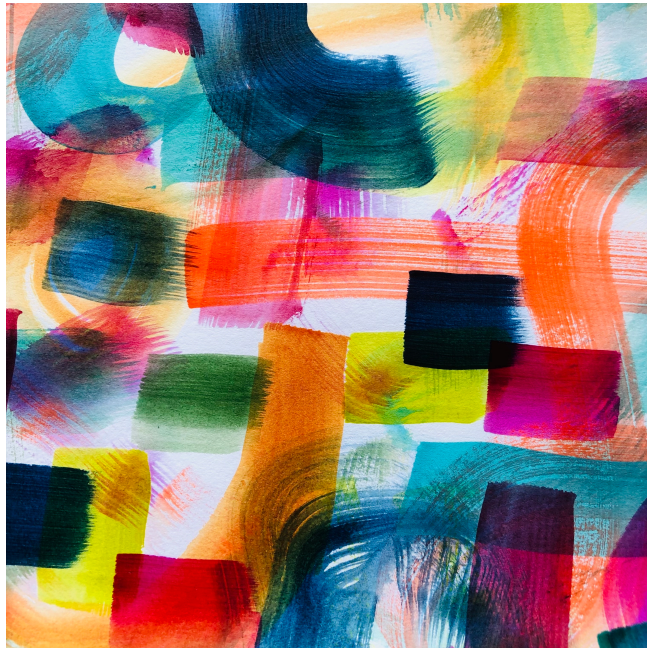
Colour

Well frankly I love colour in any way shape or form - its like a an elixir. And this month I bought myself some new colours! Anyone that knows me knows I'm a complete colour addict. I spend hours just mixing colours and putting paint down. If I never produced any other work again - this one activity would be enough to sustain me for the rest of time! Honestly it's that good. Everyone has their thing - this is mine!

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So imagine my excitement at the arrival of new paints! And these are not my usual paints these are high quality pigmented paints. This means they have a vibrancy and purity that is way beyond your average paint. For me this brings something to the work that has me really excited and curious to see what it can do. So as well as making some little colour charts - I used up the left over paint on the brush (way too good to waste even a thousandth of a smidge) to just smooch it about on a spare piece of paper.

As you can see - these colours are epic! (sorry - not sorry if you don't share my enthusiasm! ;))



Conversations

This month I have had some of the best conversations, with friends, mentors and my granddaughter! And I missed a couple too which I am looking forward to having this week. Subjects have varied from how the bees make honey (not the metaphor) which Charley was learning at school - the uniqueness of our creative expression - through to consciousness and creativity!

The latter I am super lucky to explore with my dear friend Rachel Singleton who is also an artist and coach. It is our favourite type of conversation so we decided to create a new podcast called The Circle of Pollination so that we can invite other people to hang out in it too. In it we aim to blend our love of nature, spirituality and creativity and explore how this is showing up for us in our creativity/art, life and work with people.

Our very first episode has been published which I am so pleased to share with you. <https://www.buzzsprout.com/2045509>

This is my first rodeo and I feel very blessed to have my experienced and accomplished friend Rachel with me. It's been great fun and I am really looking forward to sharing more with you - we have soooooo many topics we want to cover!

If there is anything you would like to hear us chat about let us know, as we really want this to ultimately be the start of a community that loves being in this kind of conversation.

I know that many of you have creative practices like swimming, writing and growing, or create businesses or communities, and we love hearing about what people are seeing about the nature of being..... (both creative and human!)



This month my mind is on finishing some work in the studio and getting prepared for my collaboration with the Academy in Cranbrook in September. It's such a good thing to have something to aim for as it is having me learn all sorts of things including about printing and thinking about how to hang it all together cohesively.

Because it is in a school I am constrained by types of frame and space etc - but I am excited to make it interesting for the students and children and share my processes and create some projects for them to try for themselves. Hopefully learning and growing their creative muscles and mine at the same time!

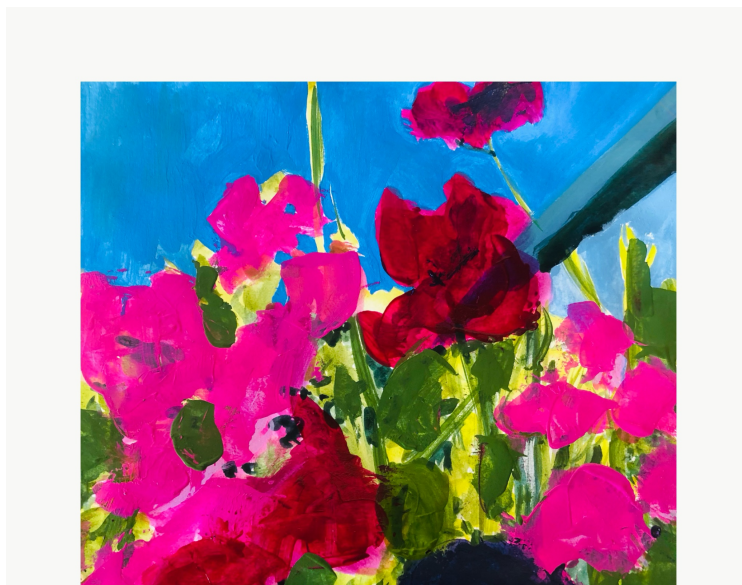
I am thinking about future intentions too and I note that this month is the [Royal Academy of Art Summer Exhibition](#) - which is open to anyone to submit to - it is on my bucket list to submit something - perhaps next year. It is also [Devon Open Studios](#) in September which is too soon for me this year but I want to aim for next September as another milestone to work towards. I would like to collaborate with some other local artists to create something together, so I am putting that out there too! Do take a look there are some wonderful creatives and artists here.

And it is good to pause and look back and reflect now and again as if we don't, we miss being present to all that we have already created, and the many steps that have enabled us to get to this point. I think that's so helpful to see - and often comes up in my work with professionals - we get so busy creating the next thing - we lose sight of the present moment and what is important to us now - gratitude is an amazing lubricant for creativity in any form.

At the end of the month on the 23rd and 24th June I am at Dartington Hall with Ian Watson for the summer session of our [Natural Wisdom Programme](#). I am doing the sunshine dance in earnest to ensure that our group have warm weather so they can sit outdoors in the glade and soak up the wonderful energy of the gardens.

We really love facilitating in this space and will be back again in the Autumn to begin a new cycle of the seasons. I am grateful to have this conscious connection with the seasons through this work, I hope it nourishes our participants as much as it does me. The rhythm of the seasons is so comforting.

For now I am going to luxuriate in the outdoors!
I hope you are having a wonderful time in the sunshine
xxxx





Summer Garden work in progress - New paints on paper!!



Memories of West Cornwall from my holiday. Acrylic on Board

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