

SHELDON SHALLEY - DREAM PAINTING

www.artbyshalley.com

I am a clinical social worker practicing in Indianapolis. I began painting in 2002 in response to a dream. In the dream I am invited to a family's home for dinner. After dinner the host says that we are going to paint. I tell him that I do not know how to paint, but he doesn't seem to care. He gets out canvases, brushes and paints, and we start painting.

I swirl paints onto a large canvas. As I paint I notice that images are appearing. It was like the painting process in the dream was instructing me on how I was to paint.

I was in a dream group at the time, and I shared this dream with the group. They told me that I needed to start painting. I told them I didn't know how to paint. They said just do what you did in the dream.

Following the dream's suggestion, I regularly begin my process by painting several colors into a background until I see an image emerging. I then develop whatever it is that I see...a part of an animal, a bird's beak, a person's nose, etc. I develop that image and let the painting emerge.

At first I brought little detail to the images. Over time I began to paint more and more detail, defining the

images more clearly to the style that I have today. My paintings evolved to include images met in dreams and during meditation. I paint a background of an undefined and ambiguous scene. I then paint the images that I see emerging from this undefined space.

As I interact with the images, painting them, amplifying them, dialoguing with them, listening to their personal and universal meanings, I reveal unconscious forces at work in my own soul. Since the mind has a tendency to structure ambiguous scenes into personally meaningful images that symbolize underlying motives and emotions, my paintings are a kind of witness that speaks to my life condition, a way to interact with and integrate unconscious parts of me into consciousness and a way to build a relationship with them in the greater sense as spirit beings in non ordinary reality as met in my dreams and meditative journeys.

As you view my paintings, I invite you to let them speak to you out of your own unconscious and from your soul.

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