

**DENITA BENYSHEK**

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Artwork:

[www.denitabenyshek.com](http://www.denitabenyshek.com)

<https://www.instagram.com/denitabenyshek/>

Research and publications:

<http://saybrook.academia.edu/DenitaBenyshekPhDMFA>



*Our Garden*, Denita Benyshek, composite photo print.

**CURRICULUM VITAE**

**EDUCATION**

- 2018 Shamanic initiation, traditional *Naerim Gut*, with South Korean mansins Kim Junghee and Sung Mi Lee, with mudang Jung Kyung Nam.
- 2013 PhD humanistic and transpersonal psychology, Saybrook University, San Francisco, CA.
- 2010 Graduate Certificate, psychology of creativity, Saybrook University.
- 2004 MA Psychology, Saybrook Graduate School.
- 1995 MFA in painting, University of Washington, Seattle, WA.
- 1979 BFA in painting, Wichita State University, Wichita, KS, Magna cum Laude with Departmental Honors.

**AWARDS**

- 2022 Artist in Residence at Botanica Gardens, Wichita, KS, through Fisch Bowl, Inc.
- 2019 Mary Lou Panter Scholarship, Creativity & Madness Conference, Santa Fe, NM.

- 2012 Nominated for Dissertation with Distinction Award, Saybrook University.
- 2011-12 Doctoral candidate research grant, Saybrook University.
- 2011 Professional Conference Honorarium.
- 2010-11 Alumni Scholarship, Saybrook University
- 2008 Society for Shamanic Practitioners, Santa Fe Conference Scholarship, Olivenhain, CA.
- 2007 Rudy Melone Presidential Scholarship, Saybrook.
- 2007 USA Funds Access to Education Scholarship, Indianapolis, IN.
- 2006 The Alfred G. and Elma M. Milotte Art Scholarship, Atlanta, GA .
- 2006-09 Seclef-Hoetzel Scholars Merit Award, Council of Higher Education Scholarship Program for Students of Czech, Slovak, or Rusyn Descent, Chicago, IL.
- 2006 Finalist, Eileen J. Garrett Research Library Fellowship, Parapsychology Foundation, New York.
- 2006-09 Tuition Grants, Saybrook.
- 2006 USA Funds Access to Education Scholarship, Indianapolis, IN.
- 2005 Tuition Grant, Saybrook Graduate School.
- 1995 Liquitex Paint Product Grant, Binney & Smith, Inc., Easton, PA.
- 1995 W.W. Stout Fellowship, The Graduate School, University of Washington.
- 1994 Full Scholarship, Pilchuck Glass School, Stanwood, WA.
- 1994 Special Project Grant, School of Art, University of Washington.
- 1994 W.W. Stout Fellowship, The Graduate School, University of Washington.
- 1994 Liquitex Paint Product Grant, Binney & Smith, Inc., Easton, PA.
- 1993 Support Grant, Gary Smith, Ross, CA.
- 1988 Emerging Artist Grant, 200+1 Corporation, Seattle, WA.
- 1984 Artist-in-Residence, The Ucross Foundation, Ucross, WY.
- 1975-79 Miller Art Scholarship, Wichita State University.
- 1973-78 Kansas State Board of Regents Scholarships, Wichita State University.
- 1973-77 Art Scholarships, City of Wichita, KS.
- 1963 Art Scholarship to Wichita Art Association (now MARK Arts), Wichita Board of Education.



Kuan Yin in the Garden, Denita Benyshek, 2024.

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITS

- 2000 Denita Benyshek, Hope Collection, Canyon Road, Santa Fe, NM.  
*Northwest Women in Glass*, Rebecca Meloy Gallery, Bellingham, WA.
- 1999 *The Return of White Horse*, Gallery Oscar, Sun Valley, ID.
- 1997 *In the Red Year*, Anderson Glover Gallery, Kirkland, WA.
- 1996 *The Still Lake of Revery*, Childhood's End Gallery, Olympia, WA.
- 1995 *Artist's Collection*, Pilchuck Glass School Open Studio Tour, Seattle, WA.  
*Windows to the Past*, Continuous Spectrum Gallery, Tacoma, WA.
- 1991 *Glimpses of Soul*, Olympia Art Walk, Olympia, WA.  
*My Soul The World*, Bell Gallery, Seattle, WA.  
*Benyshek Solo*, Littman Gallery, Portland State University, Portland, OR.
- 1990 *Visionary Paintings*, University of Alaska – Anchorage, National Competition.
- 1989 New City Theatre, Seattle, WA.
- 1988 *New Work*, Bruskin Gallery, Pt. Townsend, WA.  
*Solo Benyshek*, Broadway Performance Hall, Seattle, WA.
- 1987 *I Tell Stories*, Bruskin Gallery, Pt. Townsend, WA.  
*Of Two*, with photographer Corwin Fergus, University Unitarian Gallery, Seattle, WA.  
*Letters*, St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN.
- 1985 *From My Garden*, Century II Gallery, Wichita, KS.
- 1984 *Paintings from Wyoming*, Big Red Gallery, The Ucross Foundation, WY.
- 1983 *Components of Multi-Media Performance*, Duerkson Fine Arts Center, Wichita, KS.
- 1981 *Inscapes*, Century II Gallery, Wichita, KS.
- 1977 *Recent Work*, McFarland Gallery, Wichita State University, Wichita, KS.

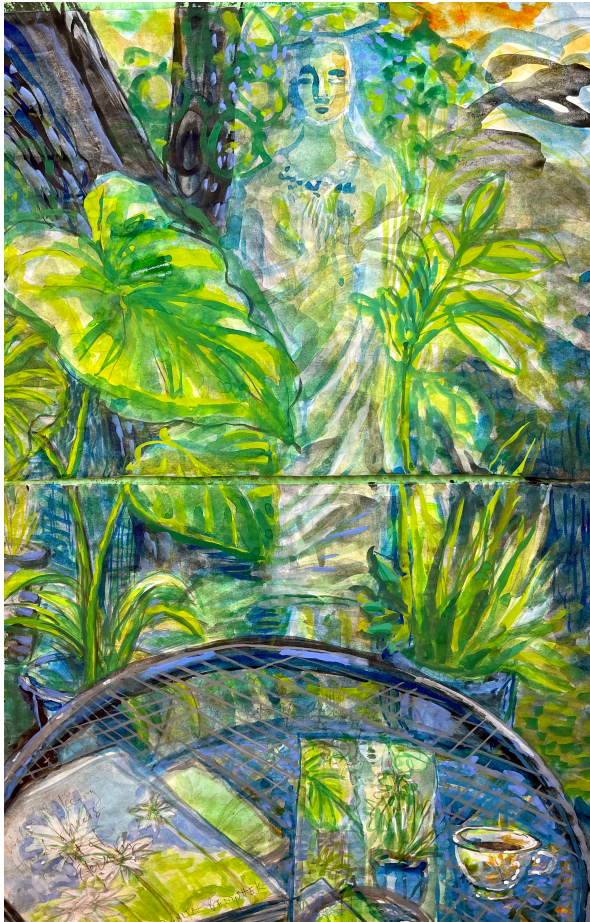
## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITS

- 2001 *Alumni Exhibit*, Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University, Wichita, KS.
- 2000 Wyndy Morehead Fine Arts, New Orleans, LA.  
Vitrum Gallerie, Ashland, NC.  
*Masters of Drawing*, Invitational, Shoreline Community College Gallery,  
Seattle, WA.

- 1999 *Northwest Women in Glass*, American Art Gallery, Tacoma, WA in conjunction with International Glass Museum.  
*Work on Paper*, West Coast Paper Company, Seattle Center, Seattle, WA (juried).
- 1998-9 *The View from Here: 100 Artists Mark the Centennial of Mt. Rainier National Park*. (Invitational, Peggy Weiss, Curator) Exhibit Tour:  
 Yakima Valley Museum of Art, Yakima, WA;  
 Museum of Northwest Art, La Conner, WA;  
 Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Bellingham, WA;  
 Seattle-Tacoma Airport;  
 Citizens Cultural Center, Fujinomiya, Japan (Mt. Rainier/Mt. Fuji Sister Mountains);  
 Seafirst Bank Art Gallery, Seattle, WA.  
 Reviewed:  
 Howe Verhovek, S. (1998, December 23). Arts in America: The Mountain as Muse, Glacial, Menacing Or Not So, *The New York Times*.  
 Glowen, R. (1999, January 8). Rainier Centennial, *The Herald*, Everett, WA.  
 Berger, D. (1998, November 12). 100 Views of the Mountain, *Seattle Times*.
- 1998 *Best of 1998*, Bainbridge Arts, Bainbridge Island, WA (Invitational).  
*Northwest Expression of Landscape*, Coos Bay Museum, Coos Bay, OR .  
*University of Washington Medical Center Collection Highlights*, Washington Convention & Trade Center, Seattle, WA. (Curator: Sharon Ducey).
- 1997 The Glass Gallery, Bethesda, MD.  
*The Healing Arts*, Washington Center, Olympia, WA (Juried).  
*Glass Invitational*, Pratt Fine Arts Center, Seattle, WA.  
*Human Figure*, Center on Contemporary Art, Seattle, WA.
- 1996 *Pacific Northwest Annual*, Bellevue Art Museum, Bellevue, WA.  
*16<sup>th</sup> International Northwest Art Competition*, Whatcom Museum of History and Art, Bellingham, WA.  
*Northwest Visionary Artists*, Visions Gallery, Bellevue, WA.
- 1995 *Glass Invitational*, Owens Gallery, Arts Commission of Toledo, OH.  
*Paint & Glass: The Expressive Connection*, Philabaum Gallery, Tucson, AZ  
 (International Invitational, Curator: Robert Carlson, President, Glass Art Society), participating artists included: Erwin Eisch, Tom Farbanish, Italo Scanga, Ulrica Hydman-Wallien, Walter Lieberman, Therman Statom.  
*Seattle Community College Art Faculty Exhibit*, North Seattle Community College, Seattle, WA.  
*Pratt Fine Arts Center Faculty Exhibit*, Center on Contemporary Art, Seattle, WA.  
 1004 Gallery, Pt. Townsend, WA.  
*University of Washington MFA Thesis Exhibit*, Center on Contemporary Art, Seattle, WA.
- 1994 *Interpretation of Human Form*, Childhood's End Gallery, Olympia, WA.  
*Works on Paper*, Jacob Lawrence Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle.

- (Juror: Diane Douglas, Director, Bellevue Art Museum).
- 1993 *The Elements*, Washington Center, Olympia, WA (Juried).
- 1992 *Spirituality in Art*, Washington Center, Olympia, WA.  
*Summer Faculty Exhibit*, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, AK.
- 1990 *Women Artists*, Matrix Gallery Satellite Exhibit, Sacramento, CA (Juried).
- 1989 *9<sup>th</sup> Annual Competition*, Phinney Center Gallery, Seattle, WA.  
*6<sup>th</sup> Alcoa/Gallery '76 Juried Exhibit*, Wenatchee, WA.  
*Redefining Visionary Art*, Doma Gallery, New York, NY. (Juror: Suzi Gablik).
- 1988 *In Her Image*, Seattle Women's Caucus for Art, Seattle, WA (Juried).  
*Dreams, Fantasy, Visions*, Greeley, CO (Juried, 1<sup>st</sup> Place Award).  
*Summer Faculty Exhibit*, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, AK.
- 1987 *4<sup>th</sup> Alcoa/Gallery '76 Juried Exhibit*, Wenatchee, WA.  
*3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Salute to the Arts*, Seattle, WA. (Jurors: LaMar Harrington, Director, Bellevue Arts Museum, and Glenn Weiss, Director, 911 Media Arts Center, Seattle).  
*Past Presence: A Circle of Women's Visions*, Corvallis Art Center, OR.  
*Summer Faculty Art Exhibit*, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, AK.
- 1986 *Brand XVI*, Brand Library Art Galleries, Glendale, CA (Juried).  
*BirthArt Project*, Saratoga, CA (Juror: Janet Isaacs Ashford, Editor).  
*Summer Faculty Art Exhibit*, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, AK.
- 1985 *Community Art Action*, 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the Future of Religion, Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia (Invitational, Diane Lincoln, Juror).  
*Women in the Arts*, Phoenix Art Institute, Wichita, KS.  
*Summer Faculty Art Exhibit*, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, AK.
- 1984 *Intimate Images*, Westin Crown Center, Kansas City, MO.  
(Juror: Lynn Warren, Assistant Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL).  
*Kansas Four*, Mulvane Art Center, Washburn University, Topeka, KS.  
(Juror: William Struve, Frumkin & Struve Gallery, Chicago, IL).  
*Women's Caucus for Art '84 National Juried Exhibition*, Wilson Gallery, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA. (Jurors: Audrey Flack, Joyce Kozloff, Jean Marter).
- 1983 *Womanart 6*, Century II Gallery, Wichita, KS (Juried).  
*Aqueous '83*, Museum of Fine Arts, Owensboro, KY.  
*7<sup>th</sup> National Watercolor Exhibit*, Art Association, Springfield, IL (Juried).
- 1982 *Exhibition: 1982 Kansas City Calendar, City of the Arts*, Crown Center, Kansas City, MO.
- 1981 *3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Jurored Show for Kansas Artists*, Salina Art Center, KS  
*Art, Inc. Juried Exhibitions*, Great Bend, KS, Two Cash Awards.

- 1980 *Womanart 3*, Century II Gallery, Wichita, KS (Juried).
- 1979 *Aqueous '79*, Museum of Fine Arts, Owensboro, KY.  
*Womanart 2*, Century II Gallery, Wichita, KS (Juried: First Place Award).
- 1978 *8<sup>th</sup> Greater New Orleans International Art Exhibit*, New Orleans, LA.



*Kuan Yin, Piet Ouldolf books, Peace*,  
 Denita Benyshek, summer 2023,  
 ink, watercolor, gouache.

#### **PUBLIC ART COLLECTIONS**

- 2008 Orientation Table, Snoqualmie Point Park, WA. Commissioned by Alpine Lakes Wilderness Society (ALPS), Seattle, WA. Contributed to park receiving Award of Excellence from the Federal Highway Administration and the Washington State Department of Transportation.
- 2005 Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH, Library Special Collections, Women's Studies, The Seal Press Archives.
- 2005 *The Fast Beach*, engraved glass. Glasmuseet (Glass Museum), Ebeltoft, Denmark.
- 1998 *A Tree in Winter Remembers Spring*, engraved and sand-blasted glass over stained glass. Cultural Heritage Collection, King County, WA Arts Commission, Harborview Medical Center, Seattle.

- 1995 *Crossing Over*, acrylic painting triptych. St. Peters School, San Francisco, CA.  
*Your Name Here*, ceramic tile bench and patio with poetry and painting, Arts in Public Places, baseball park, Olympia, WA. Deaccessioned due to vandalism.
- 1992 *Wheatland Star*, watercolor, gouache, ink on paper. University of Washington Medical Center, Seattle, WA.

#### **PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS, ARTICLES, CHAPTERS, POETRY**

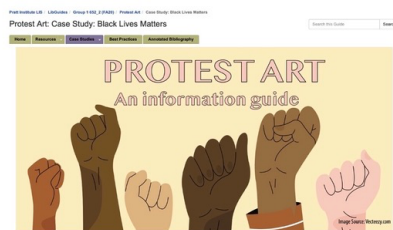
- Benyshek, D. (forthcoming). My naerim-gut: Initiation of a Western shaman by Kim Junghee, Korean manshin. Y. Owens (Ed.).

Benyshek, D. (forthcoming). An Overview of Western Ideas regarding the Artist as Shaman (Wang, Trans.). In G. Shuyun, W. Weibo & Q. Fang (Eds.), *Modern artists and shamanism* (Vol. II of *Encyclopedia of shamanism*). Beijing: 商務印書館 (The Commercial Press).

Benyshek, D. (forthcoming, 2024). The art audience as shamanic community. In Y. Owens (Ed.), *Trans-Disciplinary Migrations: Science, the Sacred, and the Arts*. London, UK: Cambridge Scholars.

Benyshek, D. (2022). Branch sky (poem). *Coreopsis: A Journal of Myth and Theater*, 10 (1). <http://societyforritualarts.com/coreopsis/spring-2022-issue/final-word/>

Benyshek, D. (2020). Smoke apocalypse (poem). *Coreopsis: A Journal of Myth and Theater*, 8(2). <http://societyforritualarts.com/coreopsis/autumn-2020-issue/smoke-apocalypse/>



Our Time of Coronavirus and Black Lives Matter: Loss, Grief, Trauma, Resilience, and Healing Change.  
"From the perspective of a white mental health counselor, artist, and mother, Denita Benyshek offers a personal narrative that weaves together the experiences of individuals, families, and society during the initial wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, growing awareness of systemic racism and police brutality, and the upsurge of Black Lives Matter protests.

Multiple data sources are integrated, including online news, research websites, social media posts, clinical research, drawings, graffiti, photographs by community members, and observations by psychotherapy clients. Social stressors and symptoms of stress, loss, grief, and post-traumatic stress disorder are considered, while adaptations of individuals, couples, families, and communities demonstrated everyday creativity that resulted in personal growth, strengthened relationships, heightened resilience, and contributed to needed social change."

more...

Protest in the Making

<https://prattlis.libguides.com/c.php?g=1091552&p=8037452>

#### Examples in Contemporary Artworks



Fath Ringgold, "United States of Attica", 1972  
Offset poster, 21 3/4 x 27 1/2 in.

**The United States of Attica** (1972), was the most widely distributed Ringgold political poster of the 1970s. This poster was dedicated to the men who died in 1971 at Attica prison for demonstrating against the deplorable conditions. This red, black, and green poster depicts a map of the United States. The dates and other details of infamous acts of violence that occurred are posted within each state – such as race riots, witch-hunts, presidential assassinations, lynching's and Indian



#### Profiles in Psychotherapy and the Arts

##### Psychotherapy and the Arts | March 2021

### PROFILES IN PSYCHOTHERAPY AND THE ARTS Our time of coronavirus and Black Lives Matter: Loss, grief, trauma, resilience, and healing change

Using creative nonfiction and arts-based inquiry, Benyshek offers a personal narrative that weaves together the experiences of individuals, families, and society during the initial wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, growing awareness of systemic racism and police brutality, and the upsurge of Black Lives Matter protests.

By Denita Benyshek, PhD  
The author presents a personal narrative about the pandemic and Black Lives Matter (BLM), integrating multiple data sources, such as news, research, social media, drawings, graffiti, photographs, and observations by psychotherapy clients. Stress, loss, grief, and PTSD are considered. Individuals, couples, families, and communities demonstrated everyday creativity and use of the arts for personal growth, strengthened relationships, heightened resilience, and contributions to needed social change.

Benyshek, D. (2020, October 09). Our Time of Coronavirus and Black Lives Matter. *Coreopsis: A Journal of Myth and Theater*, 8(2).

<http://societyforritualarts.com/coreopsis/autumn-2020-issue/our-time-of-coronavirus-and-black-lives-matter/>

<https://www.apadivisions.org/division-32/publications/newsletters/psychotherapy/2021/03/narrating-pandemic>

<https://prattlis.libguides.com/c.php?g=1091552&p=8037452>

<https://web.p.ebscohost.com/abstract?direct=true&profile=ehost&scope=site&authtype=crawler&jrnl=23330627&AN=146849378&h=Xkl4zzaGYTduLUk1hbDQYuuWICj8UmTUWk0VDGmzdpun%2bBzhkH%2f2W%2fvk4ZNVb1cIKrK5C6al6ePvMmYeKwq4JA%3d%3d&crl=c&resultNs=AdminWebAuth&resultLocal=ErrCrlNotAuth&crlhashurl=login.aspx%3fdirect%3dtrue%26profile%3dehost%26scope%3dsite%26authtype%3dcrawler%26jrnl%3d23330627%26AN%3d146849378>

Benyshek, D. (2015). The contemporary artist as shaman: An artist-researcher perspective. *ReVision, a Journal of Consciousness and Transformation*, 32(2-3), 54-60.

Retrieve from

[https://www.academia.edu/36891520/The Contemporary Artist as Shaman An Artist-Researcher Perspective](https://www.academia.edu/36891520/The_Contemporary_Artist_as_Shaman_An_Artist-Researcher_Perspective) (PDF download)

or

<https://revisionpublishing.org/the-contemporary-artist-as-shaman/>



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### The Contemporary Artist as Shaman

by Denita M. Benyshek

**S**tanding in the dark, I sense a large room around me, seemingly empty. I walk forward. A soft, white glow appears in the distance. I walk towards the light. Gradually the glow acquires the form of a white mare, muscular, with a broad breast, and ears nearly touching the high ceiling. I stretch up towards her gracefully curving neck. My hands reach her shoulder. Desire lifts me up and onto her strong back. She walks slowly forward, majestically.

We enter a long, hallway with harsh fluorescent lights, linoleum floors, and sterile white walls. Other hallways lead off right and left, but the mare continues forward, carrying me through and out of the institution.



The Healing Path

Benyshek, D. (2015). A historical and critical overview of the artist as shaman and recent research. In A. Czyżewski & E.E. Djaltchinova-Malets (Eds.), *Shamanhood and its arts*. Budapest, Hungary: Bibliotheca Shamanistica, Akademia Kiado, and The Polish Institute of the World Art Studies, Warsaw.

Retrieve at:

[https://www.academia.edu/2066714/Artists as Shamans Historical Review and Recent Theoretical Model](https://www.academia.edu/2066714/Artists_as_Shamans_Historical_Review_and_Recent_Theoretical_Model)

Benyshek, D. (forthcoming). Art audience as shamanic community: How art meets psychological, social, and spiritual needs (Wang, Trans.). In G. Shuyun, W. Weibo & Q. Fang (Eds.), *Modern artists and shamanism* (Vol. II of *Encyclopedia of shamanism*). Beijing: 商務印書館 (The Commercial Press).



Retrieve at:

[http://www.academia.edu/218741/Art Audience as Shamanic Community How Art Meets Psychological Social and Spiritual Needs](http://www.academia.edu/218741/Art_Audience_as_Shamanic_Community_How_Art_Meets_Psychological_Social_and_Spiritual_Needs)



*Traditional Transitional Picture*, Denita Benyshek,  
reverse-painted glass and gold leaf, 22.5" H x 6'2"W.

Benyshek, D. (2013). *The power of shamanic art*. Reprinted on *Threads of the Spiderwoman*, at <http://threadsofspiderwoman.blogspot.com/2013/02/the-power-of-shamanic-art.html>.

Benyshek, D. (2013). *An archival exploration comparing contemporary artists and shamans*. PhD, Saybrook University, San Francisco, CA.

Retrieve at

[https://www.academia.edu/25182315/Contemporary Artists as Shamans - Archival Exploration full text and references](https://www.academia.edu/25182315/Contemporary_Artists_as_Shamans_-_Archival_Exploration_full_text_and_references)

Benyshek, D. M. (2011). The flapping butterfly wings of gifted mentorship: Ruth Richards and Saybrook University. *NeuroQuantology: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Neuroscience and Physics*, 9(3), 535-544.

Retrieve at:

[http://www.academia.edu/927579/The Flapping Butterfly Wings of Gifted Mentorship Ruth Richards and Saybrook University](http://www.academia.edu/927579/The_Flapping_Butterfly_Wings_of_Gifted_Mentorship_Ruth_Richards_and_Saybrook_University)

Benyshek, D.M. (1990). Journey into the Dead Zone. Helen Frost (Ed.), *Season of Dead Water*, Breitenbush Books: Portland, OR. A collection of writing regarding the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound, Alaska.

Reviewed: Kaganoff, P. (1990, May 25). Review of *Season of Dead Water*, *Publishers Weekly*. Referring to Benyshek's chapter, Kaganoff wrote:

Far more inspiring are the prose pieces, several of which use matter-of-fact images to chilling effect: "There are oiled loons making their calls, oiled otters and babies . . . dead deer floating in the water" (Benyshek, 1990, p. 54).

Benyshek, D.M. (1982). Deerfield: A multimedia performance. *Calyx: A Journal of Women's Art and Literature*, 8 (1). <https://www.calyxpress.org/product-category/journals/>



Denita Benyshek, *A Tree in Winter Remembers Spring*, engraved and sandblasted glass.  
Ethnic Heritage Collection of King County Arts Commission,  
Harborview Medical Center, Seattle, WA.

### **PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES**

Benyshek, D. (2024). *Contemporary Artists as Shamans*. Creativity and Madness Conference, Psychological Studies of Art and Artists, AIMED American Institute of Medical Education, Santa Fe, NM. <https://www.creativityandmadness.com>

Benyshek, D. (2018). *My Initiation into Shamanism*. Indigenous Wisdom & Shamanism: Within, Between, and Beyond Worlds. The 34<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Shamanism, Healing, and Transformation. Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA. <http://www.indigenouswisdom.info/>.

Benyshek, D. (2017). *Disintegration and Reintegration Healing Processes: Seeing and Working with Spirits*. Protecting Earth, Water, Air, and Light, Honoring the Wisdom of our Ancestors for Future Generations: The 33<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Shamanism, Healing, and Transformation. Santa Sabina Retreat Center, San Rafael, CA. <http://shamanismconference.org/>

Benyshek, D. (2014). *Transliminality in artists, shamans, and art audiences*. The 31<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Shamanism, Healing and Transformation. Santa Sabina Retreat Center, San Rafael, CA. <http://shamanismconference.org/recordings/highlights-31st/>.

Benyshek, D. (2014). *Shamanic drum journey*. The 31<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Shamanism, Healing and Transformation. Santa Sabina Retreat Center, San Rafael, CA

Benyshek, D. (2013). *Shamanistic arts benefit audience healing, growth, and social change*. R. Richards (Chair), *Art as healer: Preschoolers to seniors to society at large*. American Psychological Association Annual Conference, Division 32: Society for Humanistic Psychology, Honolulu, HI.

## AN ARCHIVAL EXPLORATION OF CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS AS SHAMANS

Prototypical shamanic artists are socially designated spiritual practitioners that voluntarily regulate their attention to obtain unavailable information that is transformed into art, that provides psychological, physiological, social, and spiritual benefits to art audiences and individual art audience members.

Denita Benyshek

### Introduction

Shamans and artists have been perceived as similar by explorers, archaeologists, anthropologists, art historians and artists including surrealists. Nonetheless, these similarities have not been systematically explored and are poorly understood. This study investigated these similarities and determined if properties of some contemporary artists fulfill all, or some, necessary constructs defining shaman.

### Methods

Stanley Krippner (personal communication, January 12, 2010) provided the initial definition of a shaman that, after minor modifications to more fully represent knowledge about shamans, became: A shaman is a socially designated spiritual practitioner who obtains information in ways not available to the shaman's community through the voluntary regulation of the shaman's own attention, which is used for the benefit of the shaman's community and its members.

Defining constructs were operationalized and validated cross-culturally to support multidirectional comparisons between artists and shamans using archival data from psychology, archaeology, anthropology, philosophy, art history, and creativity studies.

Figure 1. How Traditional Mands Blacksmith-Shamans Fulfill All Defining Constructs of Shaman

Through arts-based inquiry methods, the integration of visual art, poetry, and stories provided an artist's perspective as well as alternate ways of knowing and art experiences for the reader.

Previous publications about 24 well-known artists provided archival data for comparisons with shamans. The dimensions explored included familial influence, talent, neurological functions, calling to vocation, social support, personality, training, initiation, inspiration, positive disintegration, transliminality, imaginal realms, altered states, purported psi experiences, mental health issues, soul retrieval, spiritual emergence, transpersonal orientation, intent to benefit, and creativity.

Tables, charts, and diagrams organized archival information that, supported by descriptive comparisons and theoretical research methods, explored the nature and extent of similarities between artists and shamans.

### Key Findings

Shamanic and shamanlike artists are generally seen as having passed through deficiency creatively needs to being creatively expressiveness, and to either be in or have moved through the generative developmental stage. These artists created art with an intent to provide benefits to individuals, communities, societies, and even the environment.

There appears to be different forms of social recognition, support, and training available to shamans and shamanic artists from traditional cultures that are not readily available to most contemporary artists.

Figure 2. Classical Category Shaman

These shamanic artists were also central members in the "Fuzzy Set Shaman," because they have all constructs defining shaman.

Shamanlike artists fulfilled some, but not all, defining constructs of shaman. Therefore, shamanlike artists cannot be members of the "Classical Category Shaman."

However, within the "Fuzzy Set Shaman," these shamanlike artists represent noncentral members.

### Results

Four contemporary artists — Norval Morrisseau (Ojibwe), Kim Kum Hwa (Korean), Pablo Amargó (Mexican mestizo), and József Szele (Hungarian) — individually fulfilled all necessary constructs defining shaman within the strictly bounded "Classical Category Shaman," wherein all members have all properties defining shaman.

All of these prototypical shamanic artists were socially designated shamans within traditional shamanic societies.

Figure 3. Fuzzy Set Shaman

In contrast, twenty artists fulfilled some, but not all, constructs defining shaman. These shamanlike artists were noncentral members in a fuzzy set where the shamanlike artists had degrees of membership and family resemblances to traditional shamans and shamanic artists.

Because art audiences were found to receive psychological, physiological, social, and spiritual benefits from creative engagement with the arts, these benefits might represent an implicit social designation of contemporary artists as shamans and, as a result, more artists will fulfill all defining constructs of shaman.

Figure 4. How Different Kinds of Social Support Affects Shamans, Artists, and Everyday Creators.

Signs of shamanic talents are often respected. Shamanic illness can lead to apprenticeship. Training includes interpreting purported visions, spirit contact, and other paranormal experiences via shamanic myths, beliefs, and cosmologies. After initiation, a shaman serves an important social role. These forms of social support may transform and strengthen the mental health of shamans possibly explaining the apparent difference in the mental health status of shamans as compared to artists.

Shamanic and shamanlike artists sometimes undergo destabilized or mildly pathological personality states that can be catalysts for change and creativity, leading to shifts in attention, productive regression in service of ego, entry into liminal states, imaginal reality, alternate states of consciousness, mystical experiences, and transformation through spiritual emergence. These experiences provide many ways for these artists to obtain information which is translated into works of art.

The artworks provide audiences with opportunities for healing, resolution of opposites, and spiritual experiences. Artworks also evoke memories and serve as catalysts for limited degrees of disintegration, catharsis, and integration, while also strengthening immune system functions, lessening anxiety and depression, increasing productivity, forming community, and promoting longevity.

The study identified and articulated gaps in knowledge, established a broad, well-grounded theoretical model that can serve as a foundation for future research on relationships between contemporary artists and shamans, and, potentially, contributed towards transformation of art experiences in artists, art audiences, and art institutions.

Benyshek, D. (2013). *An archival exploration of contemporary artists as shamans*. Humanistic Psychology, Division 32, Hospitality Suite Poster Session, American Psychological Association Convention, Honolulu, HI.

Benyshek, D. (2011). *Exploring Artists as Shamans: A Critical and Historical Overview and Some Friendly Advice to Scholars*. The 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the International Society of Shamanistic Research: Shamanism and its Arts. State Ethnographic Museum, Warsaw, Poland.

- Benyshek, D. (2011). *Art Audience as a Shamanic Community*. The 28<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Shamanism, Healing and Transformation: The Shaman's Gift to the Community. San Rafael, CA.
- Benyshek, D. (2010). *A true story: The spontaneous shamanistic healing of a boy*. The 27<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Society for the Study of Shamanism, Healing and Transformation: Traditional Beliefs and Healing Systems in a Changing World, An Interdisciplinary Approach. San Rafael, CA.
- Benyshek, D. (2009). *The Contemporary Artist as Shaman*, The International Society for Shamanistic Research, University of Alaska, Anchorage.
- Benyshek, D. (2009). *Art Audience as Shamanic Society*, Tribal Spirituality Conference, Winterstar, Atwood Lake, OH.
- Benyshek, D. (2009). *Artists and Shamanism*, Creativity Studies Program, Residential Conference, Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center, San Francisco, CA.
- Benyshek, D. (2009). *Artists as Shamans and Art Audience as Shamanic Society*, Starwood Festival, NY.
- Benyshek, D. (2009). *Artist as shaman: Academic performance art*. Shamanism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conference, Shamanism and Alternate Modes of Healing, San Rafael, CA.
- Benyshek, D. (2008). *Creative Opportunity within Creative Block*, Creativity Studies Department, Saybrook Graduate School, Residential Conference, San Francisco, CA
- Benyshek, D. (2007). *Seer and Seen*, Creativity Studies Department, Saybrook Residential Conference.
- Benyshek, D. (2004). Panel Member, Creativity Studies Dept., Saybrook Residential Conference.
- Benyshek, D. (2003). Slide Lecture regarding artwork and creative process, Creativity Studies Dept., Saybrook Residential Conference.
- Benyshek, D. (1996). Northwest Women Artist Series, North Seattle College, Seattle, WA.
- Benyshek, D. (1995). Public Art Panel – Guest Speaker, Olympia Arts Commission, Olympia, WA. Exhibit Lecture, Continuous Spectrum Gallery, Tacoma, WA.
- Benyshek, D. (1993). *Influence of Folk Art on the Fine Arts of Eastern Europe and Cultural Roots in the Paintings of Denita Benyshek*, Collection Artist Series, University of Washington Medical Center, Seattle, WA.
- Benyshek, D. (1993). *Denita Benyshek: Visiting Artist*, College of Folk Arts & Culture, Pskov, Russia.

Benyshek, D. (1993). Exhibition Lecture/Performance, Bell Gallery, Seattle, WA.

Benyshek, D. (1991). Exhibit Lecture, University of Alaska, Anchorage, AK.

Benyshek, D. (1989). *Labore est Orare (To Work is To Pray)*, Carl Jung Society, Seattle, WA.

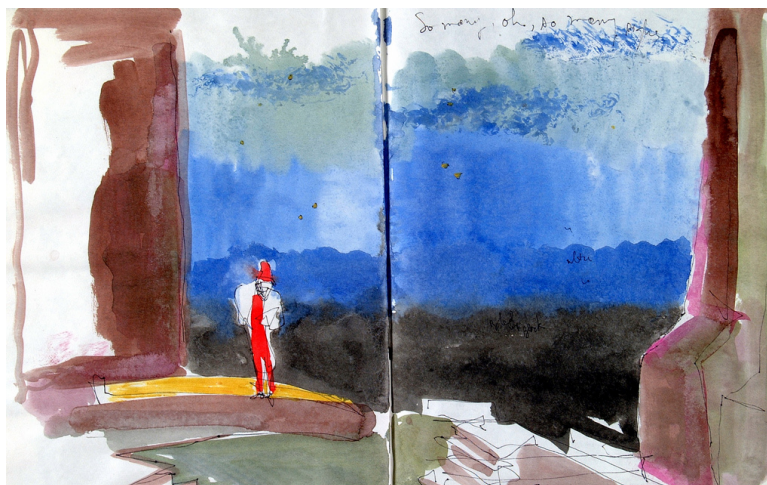


Denita Benyshek, *The Hour has Come*, from *The Pearl Fishers*, Opera Sketchbook.

Benyshek, D. (1987). *The Role of Visiting Artists in Native Villages*, Young & Associates, Artist in the Schools Conference, Anchorage, AK.

Benyshek, D. (1983). *Denita Benyshek: Visiting Artist*, Convocation Speaker Series, McPherson College, KS.

Benyshek, D. (1983). *Multi-Media Performance Art*, Dance Dept., Wichita State University, Wichita, KS.



Denita Benyshek, *So Many, So Many Sighs*, Opera Sketchbook, "Tosca," ink and watercolor.

## EMPLOYMENT

- 1979-Present Professional artist.
- 2013-Present Private practice, mental health counseling.
- 2015-21 Developmental editor, review editor, *Coreopsis: Journal of Myth and Theatre*.
- 2015-19 Art editor, *Revision: A Journal of Consciousness and Transformation*.
- 1989-98 Art instructor, Pratt Fine Arts Center, Seattle, WA.
- 1997 Art instructor, Kirkland Arts Center, Kirkland, WA.
- 1995-97 Adjunct Instructor, North Seattle College, Seattle, WA  
Taught Prehistoric to Early Medieval Art History, Introduction to Art, Drawing I, Watercolor Painting.
- 1993 Visiting Artist, College of Folk Art and Culture, Pskov, Russia.
- Mural painting instructor, Sun Valley Center for the Arts & Humanities, Sun Valley, ID.
- Washington State Arts Commission Artist in Residence: Washington State Reformatory. Led interior mural project with life sentence prisoners.
- 1992 Sitka Center for the Arts & Ecology, Otis, OR.  
Taught Image Intensive/Creative Process.
- Washington State Arts Commission Artist in Residence: Washington State Reformatory.  
Led interior mural project with life sentence prisoners.
- 1991 University of Alaska – Sitka, Summer Program.
- 1990 University of Alaska, Anchorage, AK.
- Artist in the Schools, Lincoln City, OR.
- 1989-90 Program Director, Artists Unlimited, Seattle, WA. Art education and career development program for adult artists with severe disabilities.
- 1988 Workshop on Image Intensive/Creative Process. Homer Council on the Arts, Homer, Alaska.
- 1987 Artist in the Schools, Long Creek, OR.  
Taught jazz dance and mural painting.

- 1986-89 Lectureship, University of Alaska – Fairbanks.  
Taught Drawing, Drawing the Human Figure, Acrylic Painting, Performance Art,  
Mural Painting in Music Department Building.
- 1985-89 Scenic Artist in Seattle: Seattle Repertory Theatre, Empty Space Theatre, Group  
Theatre, HBO Movie Productions. Master Scenic Artist, Intiman Theatre.
- 1983-96 Artist in the Schools, Alaska, primarily remote Native American villages in the bush:  
Wainwright, Bettles Field, Chignik Lake, Chignik Lagoon, Huslia, Delta Junction,  
Whales Pass, Kasaan, Aleknagik, Ft. Greeley, Dillingham, Barrow, Pelikan, Yakutat,  
Tyonek, and more.



Denita Benyshek, *Wild flowers*,  
pen and ink.

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE (SELECTED)**

#### Wilderness Conservation, Oil Dependence, and Corporate Responsibility

- Orientation Table.
  - Art commission from Alpine Lakes Wilderness Society for Snoqualmie Point Park, WA. Funded by Alpine Lakes Protection Society. Sponsored by Mountains to Sound Greenway and City of Snoqualmie.
- Exxon Valdez Oil Spill in Prince William Sound, AK
  - Interviewed residents of Cordova, AK, bird and animal rescue workers on boats.
    - Published excerpts of interviews in anthology of writing about the spill.

- Benyshek, D. (1990). Journey into the dead zone. In H. Frost (Ed.), *Season of Dead Water* (pp. 21-28). Portland, OR: Breitenbush Books.
- Assistant for Corwin Fergus's film, *Oil and Water*, showing the death and destruction caused by the oil spill.
- *What Do You Do with a Drunken Sailor? Elegy for Prince William Sound.*
  - University of Alaska – Fairbanks.
  - Multi-media performance/public grieving ritual, in collaboration with art students.

## Underrepresented and Disadvantaged Populations

- University of Alaska – Fairbanks
  - Persuaded art department to hire Native American instructor
  - Lobbied successfully for Native American students, working in traditional Aboriginal style, to receive art scholarships.
  - Worked with village elders to fund scholarships for talented students to UAF.
- North Seattle Community College
  - Women in the Arts Lecture Series.
  - Organized to balance underrepresentation of women artists in art history texts and art history courses (85% of associate degree art students were female).
  - Coordinated with Women Studies Department.
    - Obtained funding.
    - Organized for credit class.
- Seattle Arts Commission
  - Grant panel juror.
    - Successfully lobbied for artists from Japan and Guatemala, working within their ethnic traditions, to receive funding.
- Women in the Arts
  - Board of Directors
  - Initiated Midwest Radio Play Competition
    - Coordinated with Wichita Radio Reading Service for the Blind
    - Directed winning radio play, *The Saga of Belle Starr*.
- Artists Unlimited, a nonprofit organization serving adults with severe disabilities.
  - Program Director (Exhibits, field trips, budget, hired/supervised faculty and volunteers)
  - Producer
    - Award winning multi-media performance video, *Sometimes the Metro Doesn't Stop for Me*.





Denita Benyshek, *Farewell Rose*,  
Multi-media performance, set by Mary Ann Kelly.  
University of Northern Iowa Gallery of Art, Cedar Falls, IA.

## PERFORMANCE ART

- 2011 *Art Audience as a Shamanic Community*.  
The 28<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Shamanism, Healing and Transformation: The Shaman's Gift to the Community. San Rafael, CA. Voice, poetry, animated PowerPoint, and research.
- 2010 *A True Story: The Spontaneous Shamanistic Healing of a Boy*. The 27<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Society for the Study of Shamanism, Healing and Transformation: Traditional Belief and Healing Systems in a Changing World, An Interdisciplinary Approach. San Rafael, CA.
- 2009 *Artist as Shaman: Academic Performance Art*.  
Shamanism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conference, Shamanism and Alternate Modes of Healing, San Rafael, CA. Creativity Studies Program, Residential Conference, Saybrook Graduate School, San Francisco, CA, and  
The International Society for Shamanistic Research, University of Alaska, Anchorage.
- 1989 *The Milky Way*  
Collaboration with Summer Fine Arts Camp students at University of Alaska – Fairbanks.
- 1988 *What do you do with a drunken sailor?*  
Collaboration with Summer Fine Arts Camp students at University of Alaska – Fairbanks. A public grieving ritual for the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

- 1986 *Primordia*. Huslia, AK. Choreography created in collaboration with Artist-in-the-Schools students. Art Live: Evening of Performance, Phoenix Art Institute, Wichita, KS. Solo.
- 1983 *Deerfield*. Commissioned by/performed at McPherson College, KS. Wichita State University, KS. University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY. Video commissioned by English Department, Wichita State University, KS.
- 1982 *Farewell Rose*. Collaboration with environmental sculptor, M.A. Kelly. Commissioned by at University of Northern Iowa Museum of Art, Cedar Falls.

## FILM

- Fergus, C. (Writer & Director, 2004). *Oil and Water: Reflections on Madness and Psyche*, Bow, WA. From a Jungian perspective, examines how wilderness is critical habitat for human psyche. Conducted interviews.
- Kaplan, E. (Director, 1993). *Chips, the war dog*. United States: Walt Disney. Scenic artist/sculptor.
- Benyshek, D. (Producer, 1989). *Sometimes the metro doesn't stop for me*, Artists Unlimited (a nonprofit agency serving severely disabled adult artists), Seattle, WA.

## REVIEWS/ARTICLES REGARDING ABOUT BENYSHEK and HER WORK

- Cardeña , E., Iribas-Rudin, A., & Reijman, S. (2012). Art and psi. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 76(1), 3-23.
- Coreopsis: A Journal of Myth and Theatre. (2009). Featured art and artist: Denita Benyshek. 1(1), Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/site/mythandtheatre/Home/spring-2009-vol-2001-no-2001/featured-art-and-artist-jinka-denitabenyshek-zavanova>. Color photographs.
- McGuire, R. (2008). Snoqualmie Point Park to get orientation table. *Mountains to Sound Greenway*, 15(2), 2.
- McGuire, R. (2007). ALPS creates orientation table for Snoqualmie Point, *Alpine: The Newsletter of the Alpine Lakes Protection Society*, Seattle, WA, 2, p. 2. Black and white reproduction.
- This Side Up, Journal of European Glass Art (1999). *Stand*, Amsterdam, Holland, p. 32. Color photograph.
- Sun Valley Art (1999). Brief Accounts – Sketch, pp. 16-17. Color reproductions.
- Wood River Journal. (1999, March 3). The Great Mahaska. B5-6. Reproductions.



Denita Benyshek, *The Source*.  
acrylic, lacquer, collage on glass.  
6'2"H x 22.5"W.

Express. (1999, March 3). March gallery walk. C-3. Reproductions.

American Craft Magazine (1997). Gallery, 57, 5, p. 13. Black and white reproduction.

Im, S. (1997, October 22). Visual Arts: Mohammed Eunos & Denita Benyshek, *Eastsideweek*, Arts & Leisure, p. 29. Black and white reproduction.

*Art Access* (1997). *Denita Benyshek*, 6. Cover, pp. 14 & 42.

*Eastsideweek*. (1997, October 8). Mirror, mirror, p. 73. Reproduction.

*Eastsideweek*. (1997, September 3). Fall arts guide. Reproduction.

Boylen, J. (1996). Interesting art covers walls at annual show. *Journal American*, D4.

Polaris. (1996, March 11). Women artists: New course comes to North Seattle Community College, p. 5.

Airlines Magazine. (1995). Destination: Seattle/Pioneer Spirit. 5F. Reproduction.

Artist Trust Tri-Annual Journal. (1995). Artist news.

Boylen, J. (1995). University of Washington MFA show at Center on Contemporary Art (COCA). *Reflex Magazine* (August).

City Week - Tucson. (1995). Live glass.

Glass Art Magazine. (1995). Paint and glass. (July/August), 22-23. Reproduction

McLennan, D. (1995, March 3). New gallery opens with works by Denita Benyshek, *News Tribune*. Reproduction.

Private collection, San Francisco, CA  
The Olympian. (1995, October 21). New art to grace Olympia, pp. C-1. Reproduction.

Tucson Television. (1995). Arizona today. Tucson, AZ.

University of Washington School of Art Newsletter. (1995). Student news.

Rosenthal, A. T. (1993). Seattle Women's Caucus for Art. In L. Brunsman & R. Askey (Eds.),  
*Modernism and beyond: Women artists of the Pacific Northwest*. New York City, NY:  
Midmarch Arts Press.

The Olympian. (1992, November 6). A peak at the innermost of Olympia artists, p. ETO 4.

Mathieson, K. (1991, March 1). Real fantasies of family and earth, *Seattle Times*.  
<http://community.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/archive/?date=19910301&slug=1269109>

Willamette Week. (1991, January 12). Art choice: Beauty.

Doma Gallery. (1990). *Redefining visionary art*. New York City, NY. Reproduction.

Kaganoff, P. (1990, May 25). Season of Dead Water. *Publisher's Weekly*, 54.

High Performance Magazine - Los Angeles. (1983). Action Alaska. 8(3), 6. Photograph.

High Performance Magazine - Los Angeles. (1982). Deerfield. 7(1), 3. Photograph.

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

2023	Association for Transpersonal Psychology.
2023	International Network for the Study of Spirituality.
2018-2023	International Society for Academic Research on Shamanism, Athens, Greece.
2018-2020	International Dance Council, UNESCO, Paris, France.
2011-2012	Seattle Poets Society, WA.
2010	American Art Therapy Association.
2009-2023	International Society for Shamanistic Research, Budapest, Hungary.
2009-2020	American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.
2009-2013	Society for the Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts, Division 10,
2009-2013	Society for Humanistic Psychology, Division 32.
2009-2012	National Association for Gifted Children.
2007-2013	American Anthropological Society.
2007-2013	Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness.
2006-2009	Society of Shamanic Practitioners, Olivenhain, CA.
2005-2006	The Foundation for Shamanic Studies.
2005-2006	Advisory Board, Works of Heart: Ecopsychology and Eco-Art Nonprofit, KS.
2002-2005	American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists.
2002-2005	Washington Association of Marriage and Family Therapists.
2001-2002	Contemporary Art Society, Seattle Art Museum.
1994-2005	Artists Trust, Seattle, WA.

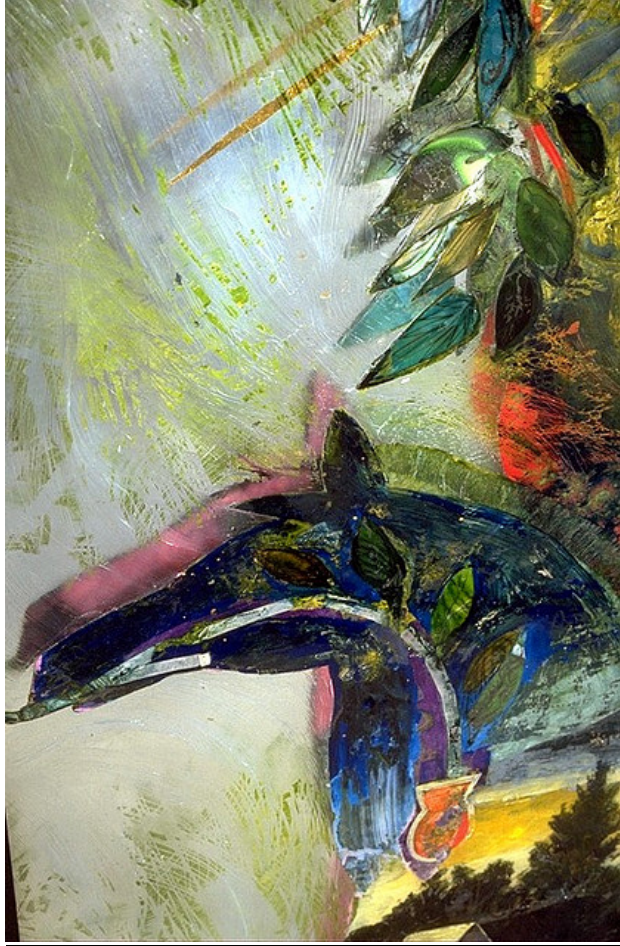
1994-2002 College Arts Association, New York, NY.  
1994-2001 Glass Art Society, Seattle, WA.  
1987-1991 Carl G. Jung Society, Seattle, WA.  
1985-1988 Foundation for the Community of Artists, New York, NY.  
1983-1986 Women's Caucus for the Arts, National Chapter, Philadelphia, PA.  
1983-1985 Board of Directors, Women in the Arts, Wichita, KS.  
1980-1985 Artists Equity Association, Washington, D.C.  
1978-1983 Kansas City Artists Coalition, Kansas City, MO.

### **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama, Canada, Poland, Russia, Siberia, Karelia, England, France, Holland, Estonia, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Sweden.



Denita Benyshek, *In the Well*.  
Chalk pastel.



Denita Benyshek, *Beginning of a Long Journey*, detail,  
reverse-painted glass, collage, and mirror.  
Private collection, Santa Fe, NM.