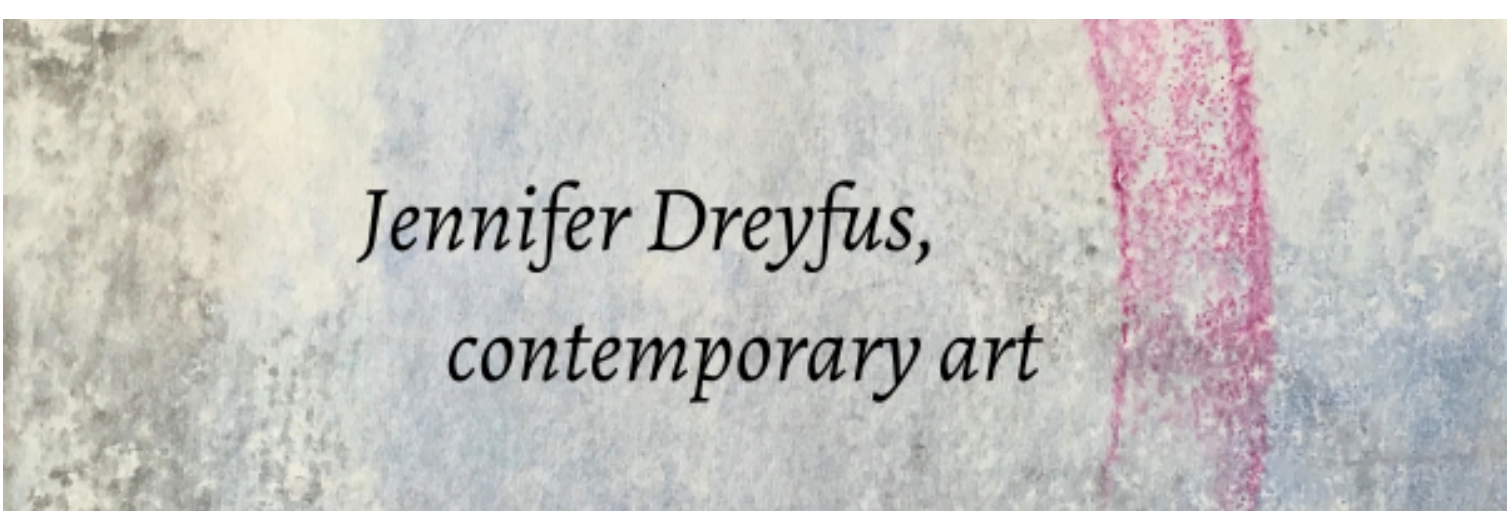


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March 2024

As Spring Arrives

Looking out the window, I see the budding trees, a sweet reminder that renewal is just around the corner. I'm so pleased to be back in the studio and working on a new series. You can read about the genesis of this series below. As always, please feel free to give me your comments or suggestions for future newsletters.

Jennifer

A Moment of Zen

When people say "Let it go," what they really mean is "Get over it," and that's not a helpful thing to say. It's not a matter of letting go - you would if you could. Instead of "Let it go," we should probably say "Let it be"; this recognizes that the mind won't let go and the problem may not go away, and it allows you to form a healthier relationship with what's bothering you.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Creative Blocks or How to Get Unstuck

Ever found yourself facing a creative block where the mere act of working on something creative seems insurmountable? Or, you've spent a tremendous amount of time on a project only to feel that it's not working? I can empathize with those feelings and have two tricks that have often helped me overcome these hurdles.

First, the obstacle of 'I'm stuck and can't create' can be particularly paralyzing. Over one of my work tables, I have a close-up photograph of a section of Laurie Anderson's work *Four Talks*. The phrase that speaks to me says "If you get stuck, do your worst work. Just see what happens" (see below for a picture of the entire piece with my favorite phrase in the red box). Push forward even if you don't know where you're going.



Chuck Close, a photorealist painter, once remarked "Inspiration is for amateurs; the rest of us just show up and get to work." The pressure to achieve perfection can be daunting, so it's essential to remember that not every stroke needs to be a masterpiece. Embrace the process and see where it leads.

There is also the challenge of 'I just can't get this right after trying and trying.' When I paint, there may come a time where I reach a balancing point between movement and stillness. I've captured what I want to say and believe the piece is done. More times than I can count, I seek that point thinking, 'if I just add X or modify Y, it will be done' - only to find out that what I tried doesn't work at all. I'll do something else, and it just gets worse. I try again and nothing is working. I set it aside for some time and try again, only to meet frustration again and again.

After repeated efforts, I'll reach for something totally different. One of my teachers said that you can reset by 'killing your precious darlings'. They meant that the artist needs to get rid of those parts of the painting that were their favorites - those precious darlings. If you loved the right side of the work but not the left, then get rid of the right side. The whole must work, and one can rarely succeed without resetting the entire work.

Another way to reset is to do something completely out of character with the work. I had one painting that had at least 30 layers of paint as I reworked and reworked the piece. After setting it aside for several weeks, I finally decided to go a different direction by adding large areas of black and white. It transformed the work, taking me down a whole new avenue I want to explore. After just a few more steps, I believed the work was complete and Gridlock may become a new series.



internal gridlock
oil, hand-painted papers, and wax, 48"hx30"w

Sometimes embracing the unexpected can unlock hidden potential and guide the work to its completion. Embrace these challenges, be patient with the frustrations, and just keep showing up.

[check out my website](#)

Art Openings: a Tongue-in-Cheek Guide to Navigating the Artist Encounter

So you got the invitation in the mail to attend an art exhibit opening. You've bravely donned your finest jeans and mismatched socks, ventured out deciding to grace an opening with your presence. Now, the overwhelming question arises: how on earth do you talk to those enigmatic, mythical creatures known as artists? Fear not, I have compiled a fool-proof guide to help navigate the treacherous waters of an art exhibit opening and interacting with the artist.

- The fashionably unfazed attendee.** First and foremost, throw away any notion of a strict dress code. In the wild world of art openings, fashion is as subjective as the art itself. The only rule: wear what makes you feel magical. Remember, you're there to enjoy yourself and not blend in with the artwork.
- Be the inquisitive explorer.** Approaching an artist is like discovering a mythical creature in its natural habitat - they're not known for biting (usually). Feel free to ask questions about the artwork, its meaning, or the mystical efforts behind it. Most artists love to share their insights. You may walk away with a new appreciation for the piece or a better understanding of the artist's mindset during the creative process.
- Diplomacy with gallery gurus.** When it comes to purchasing a piece, those fall under the spell of the gallery manager or staff. They're not just there to arrange the snacks; they're the gatekeepers to the business side of the magical art world and would be happy to talk to you.
- The enigmatic discount dilemma.** At the opening, avoid asking the artist for a discount on a piece you like. Artists have delicate relationships with their gallery sorcerers, and attempting to haggle is like suggesting a dragon and a unicorn share a stable. If you seek magical treasures at a lower price, you may speak with the gallery owner. Alternatively, you are free to explore the artist's website to see if there are choices you prefer more.
- Abstract art: spotting animals in an imaginary menagerie.** As you enter the fantastical realm of abstract art, horses may roam freely unbeknownst to the artist. Resist the urge to shout, "Look! A giraffe!" Abstract artists prefer to let imagination run wild untethered by the constraints of a literal interpretation. Once you see and share a specific tangible thing within an abstract piece, it's impossible for others to unseen it. More than once, I've painted over what I thought was a finished piece, when someone pointed out something representational in the work. If you see an animal or other literal object in an abstract work, much appreciation for keeping such sightings for the next safari.
- Be the zen master of open-mindedness.** Approach the art with an open mind, much like a Jedi approaching the Force. Whether a piece sparks joy, discomfort, or a sudden urge to break into interpretive dance, your reaction is valid. Art is a mirror reflecting you and your life experiences. Embrace the adventure and you might discover your inner dancing Jedi.

Armed with these insights, you are now ready to venture into the daring world of art openings. May your conversations be as colorful as the artwork and may your journey through the gallery be filled with laughter, wonder, and a touch of magic. Enjoy!

[check out my website](#)

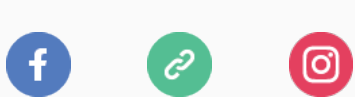
You Can Still Purchase Cards

Cards have been created from five of my works. Each package has five 4"x6" cards with a blank interior and matching envelopes. A packet of cards is \$20 or 3 packs for \$50. Shipping within the US is a flat \$7.50 regardless of the number of cards ordered. If you are local and want to avoid the shipping charge, let me know and we can arrange a pick up or drop off time.

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