

## QUADRANT'S FEATURED ARTIST

### Shaun McNiff

The artistic process is integral to everything I do. I envision a continuity between art and life that transcends the silos we create in academic disciplines, professions, and the arts themselves. Painting is my most consistent medium of imaginative inquiry and expression. The two early and lasting influences were studies with the New York School painter Theodoros Stamos and my work with untrained artists at the Danvers State Hospital in Massachusetts. The patients in the art studio taught me how to paint in direct and authentic ways in response to the immediate environment as I combined figurative imagination with the abstract expressionist emphasis on spontaneous gesture, color, and the physical qualities of paint.



During the 1980s and 1990s I made art in the training studios that I led in various parts of the world mixing features of the particular locale with imagination and dreams--images from this period have been selected by the *Quadrant* editorial staff for display in the current issue. I incorporated paintings into my books *Depth Psychology of Art* (1989), *Art as Medicine* (1992), and *Art Heals: How Art Cures the Soul* (2004). It was the first time an art therapist revealed personal expressions in this way and it encouraged others to integrate artistic expression into education, practice, and the public persona of the discipline. This experimentation informed my 1998 book, *Art-Based Research* and the emergence of this discipline. I have described Jung's *Liber Novus* as the exemplar of *Art as Research* (2013) and his more complete practice as anticipating just about everything we do today in the arts and therapy. Jung had his concerns with the words "art" and "artist" and preferred to speak of his creations as "nature," where I see all as partners.

In the early 2000s I began to paint in response to the immediate place

where I live on Cape Ann in Massachusetts. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=feGmBrLI5J4>. This new work and my focus on art as a force of nature are re-connecting me to studies 50 years ago with Thomas Berry who has become a celebrated figure in the earth movement. <http://thomasberry.org/> As an undergraduate at Fordham, where Jung gave his first American lectures in 1912, I was introduced to his thought by Berry and others in courses on Eastern thought and world religions. In spirit with my friend James Hillman, I have always felt grateful that my orientation to *Psyche* happened far from the conventional psychology department. Art, nature, and depth psychology have come together in my work by opening to the whole of life and expressions that are native to all people.

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Shaun McNiff's life work is freeing the artist in every person as documented in his many books that include *Trust the Process: An Artist's Guide to Letting Go*; *Art as Medicine* and the recently released *Imagination in Action: Secrets for Unleashing Creative Expression*. He has lectured and taught throughout the world, often at Jung Centers, and is represented by the Jane Deering Gallery and Flatrocks Gallery in Gloucester, Massachusetts. In 2002 he was appointed as the first University Professor at Lesley University in Cambridge where in the early 1970s he founded the *first graduate programs to integrate all of the arts in therapy and education*.




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For more detailed information visit <https://www.shawnmcniff.com>