



***Reaching For Rainbows- Moving beyond Trauma***

***An educational art show***

Featured mixed media pieces by 11 local artists

April 5-21 2001

**The Annex Gallery, Victoria Eaton Center**

# Beginnings

- Reaching for Rainbows grew out of a school research project Jennifer Callow undertook on mental illness, as well as her own experiences as a trauma survivor within the mental health system.
- Amongst many health professionals and the general public, there is a lack of knowledge about trauma's many effects and how to effectively help trauma survivors. By sharing our own experiences through our artwork and poetry, we as exhibitors hoped to expose people to new ways of viewing trauma and trauma survivors
- Art and sometimes poetry, have been lifelines for many of the exhibitors as they work to heal from trauma. They are an important form of self-expression and growth. In sharing our art, we are sharing our journeys.
- Rainbows are a symbol of hope for many of the exhibitors. As a child, Jennifer believed that a rainbow in the sky meant everything was going to be okay.
- Reaching for Rainbows celebrates creativity, diversity and imagination. Life is never the same after severe trauma, and to experience joy again.

» Reach for your rainbows

Jennifer Callow.  
Event Organizer



This group presentation challenged survivors, health professionals and the general public to broaden their understanding of trauma and its varied effects, and showed that it is possible to heal from trauma.

The show exhibited works from eleven professional artists, amateur artists and others who had discovered art through their healing process. Some were traumatized in the healthcare system and others were survivors of abuse. Many were diagnosed as having some form of mental illness such as bi-polar disorder, depression, disassociation or attention deficit disorder.



This was Jennifer Callow's section of the show. She like many other artists, provided an artist tour of her journey through trauma.

Jennifer was the brains, drive and the event organizer for this huge project. Through her own experiences as a trauma survivor within the mental health system, Jennifer found a lack of understanding in the overall approach to trauma.



She decided to do this show along with eleven other artists, she used this exhibit to show how you can express all trauma, work through it and come out the other side.

It is possible to heal from it.



There was a variety of products donated from around the community to the exhibit for the raffle at the end of the show



Shylene designed and donated this table, especially for the exhibit. "Beyond the Rainbow"



In one corner of the show we provided a place to sit and read poetry and prose written by the participants of the show.

Shylene made this table from left over materials. She found the coffee table on the side of the road and mosaiced the top with left over tiles from a bathroom project. Showing how to use what you have to create beauty.

The table symbolized the recovery from trauma and Flying with the birds in clear blue skies.





In the back corner of the show we provided another station For the visitors of the show. We gave them supplies to write About their own trauma and then we invited them to “Shred Your Baggage”. By the end of the show we had over two Garbage bags filled with shredded paper.

This year Shylene took all the recycled shredded paper and Made hand made recycled paper invitations for her wedding. Again showing how you can use what you have to make Beautiful creative things.



Some artist submitted a collection of works all relating to their healing and journey through trauma with creative expression as their teacher and guide

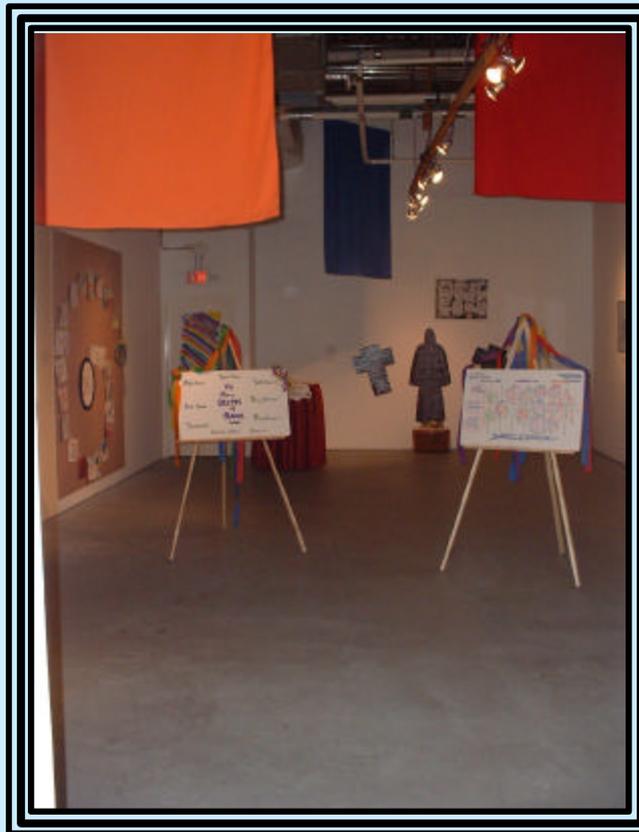
While others produced a multi-component biographical collage to detail their expression of healing and endurance.





The information ranged from the myths about mental health, to how to help people dealing with trauma.

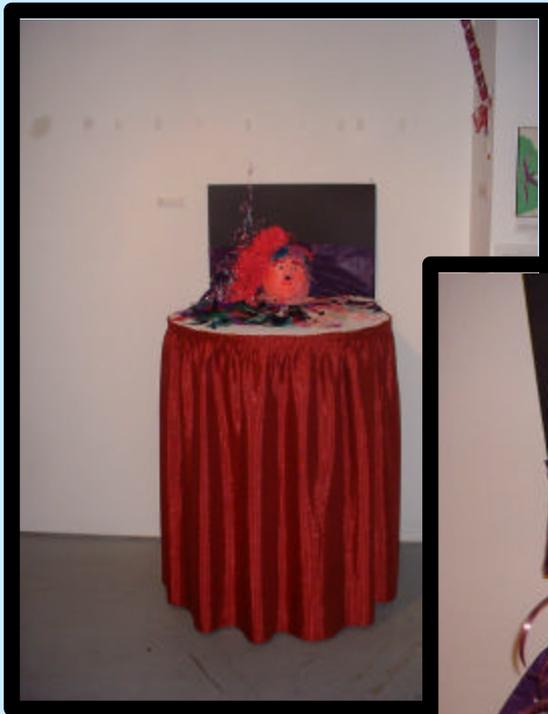
Throughout the two-room exhibit we supplied the public with current information on trauma recovery and the community services available. We also had a large collection of reading material People could take home.





One artist created her story through clay figurines which told of her journey through abuse and recovery of self.





One of the artist created this mask that was her way of expressing herself, and her journey through her own self discovery and healing.



This artist worked in mixed media collage to Document her journey through abuse and healing. She used Her art as a tool for both communication and self-expression.



Within the show there was a re-accruing theme of the cycle of recovery. A few artists made pieces that depicted this cycle from trauma to healing.



This educational art show was my first community based art project. It taught me a lot about the healing process, the value of art therapy and the ins and outs of organizing an event this size. The knowledge I gained was priceless and it really has helped drive my own creativity and journey towards art and education.

This presentation was designed and photographed by me, Shylene Calla.

This show was sponsored by many local companies, through the donation of raffle items, cost printing and advertising.

Thank to all the Sponsors

# The End

Stay tuned for the next exhibit of  
Reaching For Rainbows coming in  
the next few years.