Put Passion Into What You Do

by Brent Brotine and Cindy McEwen
photos Stan Kotecki

How do we find and maintain our passion? Who are we as individuals? How can we have a more self-fulfilling life. C3 members and guests gathered to explore these metaphysical questions on Wednesday, April 24 at our panel discussion “Work as an Act of Identity”.

This thought-provoking meeting held at the Mural Building featured give-and-take between an audience of about 30 creatives and our exemplary panel of artists. We were pleased to welcome:

Steven Fischer, Moderator—an award-winning documentary filmmaker whose latest work is Old School New School
George Berlin—artist, animator and illustrator
Rebeca Kling—transgender artist and educator
Andrew Snyder—senior creative director at August Jackson
Robert Tolchin—commercial and fine art photographer and educator
Molly Z. (Zakrajsek)—artist, illustrator, designer and muralist

Steven skipped formal introductions, instead asking each panelist “who are you?” Their responses revolved around their work—as most of American society also does. Most agreed the context of the surroundings influenced the answer; this was a business event and the responses may have been different at a special-interest gathering.

The panel stressed that passion and passionate people sell, so find something you never tire of and do that for your work. Ways to keep the passion include:

• Bring more than what is called for by the challenge.
• Keep engaged and find the fun.
• Keep toys in the office; wear a costume or that.
• Make healing a subtext of work: bring hope and comfort to clients.
• Do something to make the world better.

While your identity is how you define yourself, your image is who you are to others, and the goal is to find clients who want who you are. Ways to find these clients include:

• Present the kind of work you want to get.
• Focus on specific themes.
• Spend more time on live connections with people than impersonal marketing.
• Use easy to produce one-off direct mail to remind long-past clients of your work.
• Use unique one-of-a-kind 3D pieces to thank great clients you want more work from.
This year’s programs on creativity—and how to lessen the feeling of duality between our personal and professional creative lives—led the Chicago Creative Coalition’s Board of Directors to reflect on C3’s own mission, which felt like it had been changing over the last couple of years. Kindly, Karen Woodbury offered us a special “family” rate on The House at French Creek, her rental in Lansing, Iowa, so we could hold a strategic planning and visioning retreat. (Author’s note: why is it known as a “retreat” when what you’re trying to do is advance?)

We also received exceptional pre-meeting advice from Stacy French Reynolds (no relation to the House or Creek), of Anchor Advisors, Ltd. Stacy specializes in consulting with non-profit organizations. She very kindly provided us with her script on planning and visioning, then met with me and George Berlin to discuss how to tailor her plan to our organization.

I went into the weekend with a fair amount of trepidation. Besides the fact that I’m an anxious guy to begin with, I would be adopting the roles of facilitator as well as participant. I’ve been involved in a number of strategic planning sessions for various non-profits, and as a participant, you always assume that no matter how murky or tangential things may get, your facilitator will bring things back in line, and wrap things up in a way where all will make sense. In this case, there was no net. I was it.

I’ve also done a lot of work with Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), a non-profit that is at the leading edge of arts and education. I’ve been involved in and documented a bunch of professional development sessions with them. These workshops, as CAPE conducts them, are very interactive. Participants have to contribute, and usually this involves some art making or physical performance that loosens people up, gets them out of their locked-in thinking modes and opinions, and sends them spinning off in unexpected ways (to the participants, at least). It was all about bringing everyone to the table, keeping an open mind to all views, being willing to go past your normal boundaries, and be real, relevant and present. Arnie, theater director and CAPE’s founder, told me I had to “trust the process.”

(heavy sigh)

I knew that. I also knew that I didn’t understand and know the process well enough, or at least, I didn’t trust me (the root of much anxiety, to be sure).

Not intending to disappoint (another big one) Stacy, or the other retreat members, or even you—fellow C3 member—I entered the breach, as it were.

And found, to my delight, that we were strategic in our thinking, open to new visions, able to share ideas and feelings without fear of vulnerability or exposure. But it wasn’t the process—it was the people.

The camaraderie and sense of purpose we shared made the messy process work. We did not always agree or stay on track, but we were open with each other, willing to give contrary views, and still work back to some basic consensus. It was serious, it was fun, it was like an extended Board meeting on steroids.

I have always maintained that of all the aspects of what membership in C3 entails, I get the most fulfillment from Board meetings. And in this I can’t generalize, as I’m on other boards, and oftentimes those meetings are train-wrecks. They’re not fun or enriching, but C3 Board meetings are that and much more.

As we roll out this Strategic Plan and look to stay true to our Mission and fulfill our Visions, we hope you will join in. Because it is all about us, and I, for one, want that “us” to be as inclusive as possible.

Drop by a Board meeting if you can (first Tuesday of each month except the summer, T. J.’s studio). Let someone on the Board know in advance so we can put an extra plate on (we eat well—thanks, Karen!).

BTW, that picture up-top is from the retreat. Took that right before the farmer’s sister told me I was trespassing and gave me a little piece of her mind. Come on out to a Board meeting and you’ll hear all about it; and be asked to contribute some stories and opinions of your own.
Food, Farm, Fun and Focus

by Stephen B. Starr
photos by Stan Kotecki

Eight C3 board members left Chicago Friday morning, May 3 and drove in steady rain to The House at French Creek in Lansing, Iowa, the retreat center owned by board member Karen Woodbury and her husband Doug. This turn-of-the-century farmhouse offers stunning views of rolling farmland, comfortable rooms with overstuffed chairs and couches, and a farm kitchen turning out sumptuous meals.

With coordination from Karen’s Sous Les Sapins Arts Program, the weekend began with Mike Tanimura and George Berlin leading us in a strategic planning session based on the work of Stacy French Reynolds of Anchor Advisors. We set upon the task of defining what we want C3’s identity to be, why we are different and how we define success.

On Saturday, we watched a short TED talk by Simon Sinek on how great leaders inspire. Breaking up into groups of three, we shared in more detail with one another about why we need C3 in the next decade. We spent the afternoon crafting a core purpose statement—the “why” that drives the five bold steps C3 will take—based on our consensus of “enriching, educating and inspiring creativity”.

All the while, Karen made sure our brains were amply nourished with a sumptuous tapas dinner Friday, a Saturday continental breakfast and farm lunch, and a cookout Saturday evening at the nearby Stonehaus Farm. We spent our Sunday meandering back to Chicago with a stop at Effigy Mounds National Monument in Harpers Ferry and a lunch stop at “Old Man River” in McGregor.

Marching under a renewed core purpose is significant for any organization and the board looks forward to making this a reality for all C3 members and those who will join our ranks in years to come. Our thanks to Karen and Doug: the retreat website is frenchcreek-farmhouse.com.
CREATIVE EXPO

Chicago Creative Expo: 3 Prospects Were In The Bag

by Michael Tanimura
photos by Stan Kotecki

Once again the first weekend in March saw the Cultural Center jam-packed with artists (and those who rely upon them for their survival) as the 10th Annual Creative Chicago Expo filled all the large exhibition spaces and many meeting rooms, besides. Joining the throng, anchoring the west side of beautiful Preston Bradley Hall, was your very own Chicago Creative Coalition.

Armed with a whole lot of sass and our new C3-logoed bags (fully recyclable and made from recycled material, from our good friends at Consolidated Printing), George Berlin, T. J. Hine, Stan Kotecki, Nate Marks, Laura Marie Sanchez and Michael Tanimura greeted hundreds of fellow creatives and did their best to make the C3 elevator speech fresh each time they mouthed it.

It was expected by organizers that 3-4,000 artists would make it to the 2-day event, and C3 volunteers sure felt like they saw at least half that number. And—kid-you-not—every fifth or sixth person who passed the booth knew George “Hurricane” Berlin! Dapper as always, George engaged them in repartee that kept everyone smiling. We collected 150 names for our eNewsletter list, gave out 250 bags with information about C3, and gained a couple of new members (welcome Andrea Garcia and Joey Korom!).

Every board member should work this event at least once. You meet an amazing range of individuals, who all have art and a creative outlook in common. C3ers met people who had never heard of C3 but were interested, people who just stopped by for the bag (that’s why Cindy McEwen had us get them, and the few who always confuse us (because of our name) with being one of the Expo sponsors, and are sure they’ve been getting our emails and attend our programs regularly. We were all happy that Chicago Creative Coalition gained a little more public presence.

The Renewal That Keeps On Giving

In a short while a C3 membership renewal will hit your inbox. We hope you will join us again for what will be an interesting mix of programs meant to help you gain and sharpen your artistic, business and commercial art acumen, and ramp-up your creativity and passion. That’s a lot for $95. Access to a peer-group that has come together to freely share knowledge, collaborate on projects, and network—all in a supportive, rather than competitive, atmosphere.

Chicago Creative Coalition is a unique organization. The breadth and depth of our combined knowledge and experience in craft, fine and commercial art, and graphic and communication arts cannot be matched by any other local organization. Please join us again as we enrich our creative lives.

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C3ers Learn To Work Smarter, Harder, With More Satisfaction In 2013

by Brent Brotine and Cindy McEwen
photos by T. J. Hine

With many C3 members seeing a recent uptick in business, our February meeting was all about how to take advantage of today’s positive environment. On February 21, two-dozen C3 members and guests—including invitees from Independent Writers of Chicago, Chicago Web Pros and Chicago Women in Publishing—gathered at Chicago’s Mural Building on North Ashland for our presentation “Focusing Your Business.”

Two veteran business advisors took the stage to share tips and insights. First up was consultant Brad Farris who heads the EnMast.com online business owners community. Brad showed how business success is dependent on how we balance three intersecting circles: what we do well, what we want to do, and what we can get paid to do. While ideal clients are at the center of all three, most do not which means we have to repackage what we do to be more successful.

Some of Brad’s recommendations are to charge new clients more, to weed out one-offs. To raise prices with the ideal clients you do have, who will likely accept it without question. To avoid going after business you aren’t good at or don’t enjoy. And to never lower your rate, instead taking work off the table to meet a client’s budget. 

Brad’s web site is www.AnchorAdvisors.com.

Next up was personal business coach Gail Zelitzky—along with guest star George Berlin doing a live iPad visualization of Gail’s talk. Gail is a strong advocate of planning, and recommends every business make an annual plan that includes sales, customer relations, branding, PR, business development, media and alliances. She also stresses that the goals you set, to be meaningful, must be SMART—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-Based.

Some of Gail’s advice included creating multiple revenue streams from your core business; not only performing your specialty but teaching it, selling items, making speeches, etc. Making a 12-month networking plan and implementing it. Using mentors and coaches. Constantly reinventing yourself to create a marketable niche. And getting more from your existing clients by creating strong customer loyalty.


2013–14 Board Nominations

President  Michael Tanimura
Vice President  Stephen Starr
Secretary  Karen Woodbury
Treasurer  Carolyn Aronson
Programs  George Berlin, Stephen Starr
Membership  Michael Tanimura
Communications  Cindy McEwen
Newsletter  Cindy McEwen, Brent Brotine
Internet  Jason Feinberg
Social Media  David Tanimura
Marketing and PR  Brent Brotine
Internships  Karen Woodbury
Special Events  T. J. Hine, Stan Kotecki

Upcoming Programs

Chicago Creative Coalition has engaging programs on the horizon. On Friday, June 21, please come to the C3 Annual Meeting, a family-friendly event at Chicago Mosaic School, 1806 W. Cuyler in Chicago. We’ll eat, drink, conduct a short business meeting, and learn the basics of working with glass as we build our own tiles.

Sometime in August, we will continue expanding our creative horizons and get some exercise. What a two-fer! We’ll pedal along the bike path adjacent to the north branch of the Chicago River, then wind our way through the Skokie Northshore Sculpture Park. We’ll wind up at Karen Woodbury’s house for a barbecue and discussion about what programs C3 should engage in during this coming year. More info from George “Pedal Power” Berlin will be available shortly.

And as it becomes October it’ll once again be time for the (lucky) 13th Annual C3 Gallery Walk. Like Chicago weather, it’s always changing and never what you expect. Great art, better conversation and wine and cheese galore. Please join us!
La ciudad de Calatrava / Calatrava’s City was taken in Valencia, Spain in the fall of 2009. It captures just a sliver of the science museum on the campus of the City of Arts and Sciences. The people in the foreground help give the building some scale.

Harvest was taken in Pisac, Peru in the summer of 2009. Our tour bus was leaving the salt mines we had been visiting when I saw a pile of corn stalks seemingly walking towards us. As we got closer, I saw the man under the pile and snapped the picture as we continued on.

Juliet’s Walls was taken in Verona, Italy in the summer of 2009. Before entering the courtyard of Casa di Giulietta (Juliet’s house), there is a tunnel full of love notes and love graffiti, establishing everlasting love. I captured this couple making their mark.

Untitled 1 and Untitled 2 were taken in the summer of 2011, right after this couple got engaged, after being high school sweethearts and dating for five years. We spent the day doing activities they love to do as a couple: a picnic at the beach, playing at a playground, and playing cards. Both pictures show the heart of their relationship: fun and loving.

Andrea Garcia
Photographer
773.318.3427
garcia.freelance@gmail.com
Flickr account: flickr.com/photos/garciaa
1. In addition to teaching a Relief and Monotype class, Judy Zeddies is now the head of the Printmaking department at Lillstreet Art Center. The department offers classes in etching, relief, monotype, screen print on paper and book-binding. She hopes to add a letterpress class to the curriculum in the fall. [www.lillstreet.com](http://www.lillstreet.com)

2. In March, Paula Tsurutani was recognized by the Legal Marketing Association-Midwest with a “Your Honor—Honorable Mention Award” for an annual report produced for Winston & Strawn’s diversity committee. She spent several days in Savannah enjoying the architecture, taking a number of walking tours, and attending concerts at the Savannah Music Festival.

3. Cindy McEwen credits Judy Zeddies for convincing her to teach glass beadmaking at Lillstreet Art Center. Her first 5-week class of beginners was a success with no major cuts or burns. This has encouraged her to continue with more classes this spring and summer. Cindy also participated in her 10th Bead & Button Show in Milwaukee in early June selling her beads, buttons and jewelry.

4. George Berlin, Live iPad Artist Extraordinaire, went to Vegas in March for an insurance company’s growth conference where he drew the dreams of agents live and projected on his iPad (with just a finger!) Other entertainment at the event included a bar with free candy (and candy girls dressed in candy bar wrapper dresses) live music, sleight-of-hand magicians, psychics, and fancy-pants Kobe beef burgers. George spent his free time in Vegas respectfully appreciating the local sculpture.

Susan Marx and husband Jordan adopted Marcus on February 25 after three years of being foster parents.

Cindy McEwen

New C3 Members

Joey Korom
architect, photographer, writer
414.791.1408
joeykorom@sbcglobal.net

Dywine Betts, Jr.
videographer
dbetts87@gmail.com
517.214.5267

Congratulations to our Chicago Creative Expo membership winner!

Andrea Garcia
photographer
773.318.3427
garcia.freelance@gmail.com

Three drawings by Mary Wagner—Whirling Dervish, 1,321 Revolutions, and 1,312 Revolutions with a Twist—were on exhibit May 31–June 6 at ArtFutura: Art in Motion. The show was held at the Ryan Family Atrium, Northwestern University Lurie Center and fifty percent of proceeds from sale of art went to the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago.

A selection of Mary’s smaller drawings is now available at The Haymaker Shop, 5507 North Clark Street, Chicago, featuring home decor, furniture, and art from Midwest designers and artisans.

Lila Stromer photographed two productions for ShawChicago; A Quartet by Barrie and a one-woman show The Loves of Charles II. Editorially she completed one book in early April, and has two projects in the works.

The big news is that after two years and two false starts, Lila and her husband Joe are planning to move back East this year, with the goal of living in either Brooklyn or Queens.

David Tanimura proudly participated in his first solo show—Apocalyptic Nouveau—at Firecat Projects! His digital collage combine photographs and classic nouveau imagery to create the broken landscape of a world at war. This century long fight for identity and deliverance; a delicate dance at the brink of oblivion. Enjoy yourself, it’s later than you think.

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Company  Korom Creative LLC

Occupation  I am an artist (painter) and a non-fiction writer. As owner of Building Biographies, I also am an architectural researcher and photographer. I am a retired architect.

Current Project  I am writing a five-book series about the architecture of Chicago.

Dream Client  My dream client would be a person who sincerely appreciates my art and who regularly purchases my work.

Family/Kids/Pets  I have two daughters, one cat and one wife.

Hobbies/Interests  Of course I am passionate about architecture and art. I do collect antique postcards, fossils, ancient arrowheads, and old books.

Three Words that Best Describe Me  Intense, artistic, organized.

Gadget I Can’t Live Without  A corkscrew.

Favorite Movies  The Day the Earth Stood Still, Reds, Pollock, Manhattan, The Wizard of Oz, Inherit the Wind, Psycho.

Favorite Musicians  J. S. Bach, Albinoni, Scarlatti, Mozart, Handel, Beethoven, Armstrong, Mingus, Peterson, Davis, Coltrane, Monk, Lennon, and Madonna.

I’d Give Anything to Meet  Abraham Lincoln, as a figure of the past. Neil deGrasse Tyson, as current figure

Prized Possession  My autographed book of the work of Helen Frankenthaler.

My Inspiration Comes From  Artistically speaking, much of my inspiration comes from Robert Motherwell.

Places I’ve Traveled  As I am an architect, and because I am a very urban person, I have traveled to some 50 major U.S. cities. My favorite, by far: New York.

The One Thing Nobody Knows About Me  I wear glasses.

Favorite Food  Squid Pad Prik

Favorite Restaurant  Almost any Thai restaurant.

Favorite TV Show  The Twilight Zone

I Always Find this Funny  A Three Stooges short.

Favorite Way to Chill Out  Enjoying a glass of wine while watching a good movie.

If I Won the Lottery, I’d  Depending upon the amount won, I’d buy the Uptown Theater and restore it to its glory days.

How to join C3
The easiest access to a C3 membership application is through our website: www.chicagocreative.org/memberapp.php.
Pay online through PayPal or contact mike@sicreative.com for a membership application to fill out and mail with a check to:
Chicago Creative Coalition, P.O. Box 578477, Chicago, IL 60657-8477, Attn: Membership Director.
E-mail questions to: C3@ChicagoCreative.org or to the Membership Director: mike@sicreative.com

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