



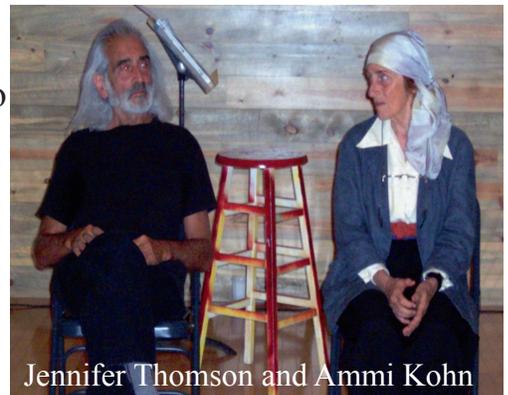
Creative Art History

by Jennifer Thomson, Crestone, Colorado.

The real task of creative art history is to lead each of us into an experience of how the spirit of the times intersects with the artist's soul.

How did they view the world and the role of art in the world? What influenced their art? How did their work fit into the evolution of consciousness and of art, throughout the ages? Diving into their shoes is a challenge, but an interesting one.

Viewing their art brings clarity about who that person was, just as learning about the person, sheds greater light on their art.



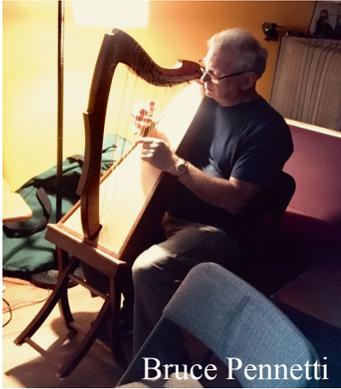
Jennifer Thomson and Ammi Kohn

Every August for 13 years, I've given an Art Retreat in Crestone, Colorado. During these retreats we offer an art presentation evening which centers on a chosen artist's life and work. Some of these artists have been: Marc Chagall, Wassily Kandinsky, Franz Marc, Georgia O'Keeffe, Emily Carr, Paul Cezanne, Matthias Grunewald, Cy Twombly, Odilon Redon, Winifred Nicholson, Beppe Assenza.

It began with me giving the presentation alone, somewhat like a classroom situation. I personally found it too boring. I wanted to somehow bring the artist alive for the audience. I asked my friend and colleague Ammi to help me by making the art presentations more dynamic. During O'Keeffe, Ammi created a skit between O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz, which he and I acted. I'm not an actor so it was a new experience to play Georgia, to say the least. Ammi has helped me with creating these art presentations for the last few years. As time passed, others joined in, Bruce {flutist} and Richard {actor}, even some of the retreat students. During Franz Marc and the Expressionists; Bruce, the



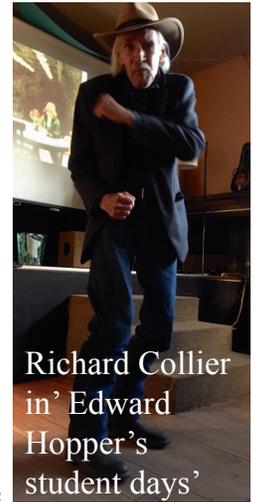
In town, Cloud Station with Torodd Lien



Bruce Pennetti

flutist, became Hitler for a short time creating quite a stillness of suspense in the room. He also plays some of his own music during the presentations. Another memory is Richard's performance of an artist's studio. He created such a mood that I could see the studio.

Crestone is a small town. So bringing something artistic is culturally important. In this year's performance, Bruce, retreat cook, played his harp in the beginning as the audience walked in. There are lots of artists living here and many come to the art presentations. Noah, environmental artist, joined our performing group last year. This year a speech and drama artist Torodd, from Norway, joined us. It was interesting when Noah put together a humorous skit between Charles Burchfield and Edward Hopper. He and Torodd played it together as the audience watched the living, deep interchange of these two very different artists come alive!



Richard Collier in 'Edward Hopper's student days'

We explore combining text, music, verse and poetry in an artistic flow. I have felt really confirmed in my intuition from many years ago, that it is so important that we not only talk about art in an intellectualized classroom style, but that everything about how an art presentation is done should also be artistic in itself! We are lucky to have the two Bruces to play flute and harp. This creates a wonderful transition in sound and a release from too much talk. Of course there are slides of the art too. Practicing is always an ongoing quest, especially due to life demands, but we give it our best and hope for the best. Sometimes we are surprisingly surprised!

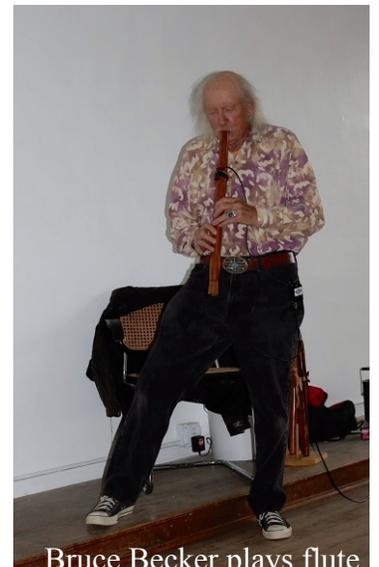
There are two of us who work on researching of the chosen artist. As the program develops, we all help to bring the final event together. I think it has strengthened our production, with the different voices reading parts or acting it out. Many haven't heard of these artists or seen their works before.

I'm glad we can bring some awareness of the past and perhaps inspirations for future work. I look forward to future events as we continue to evolve our work together, and find new ways

to participate in the inner soul movements of different artists and how this transforms into the movements of color and form in their art.



Noah Baen and Torodd Lien



Bruce Becker plays flute