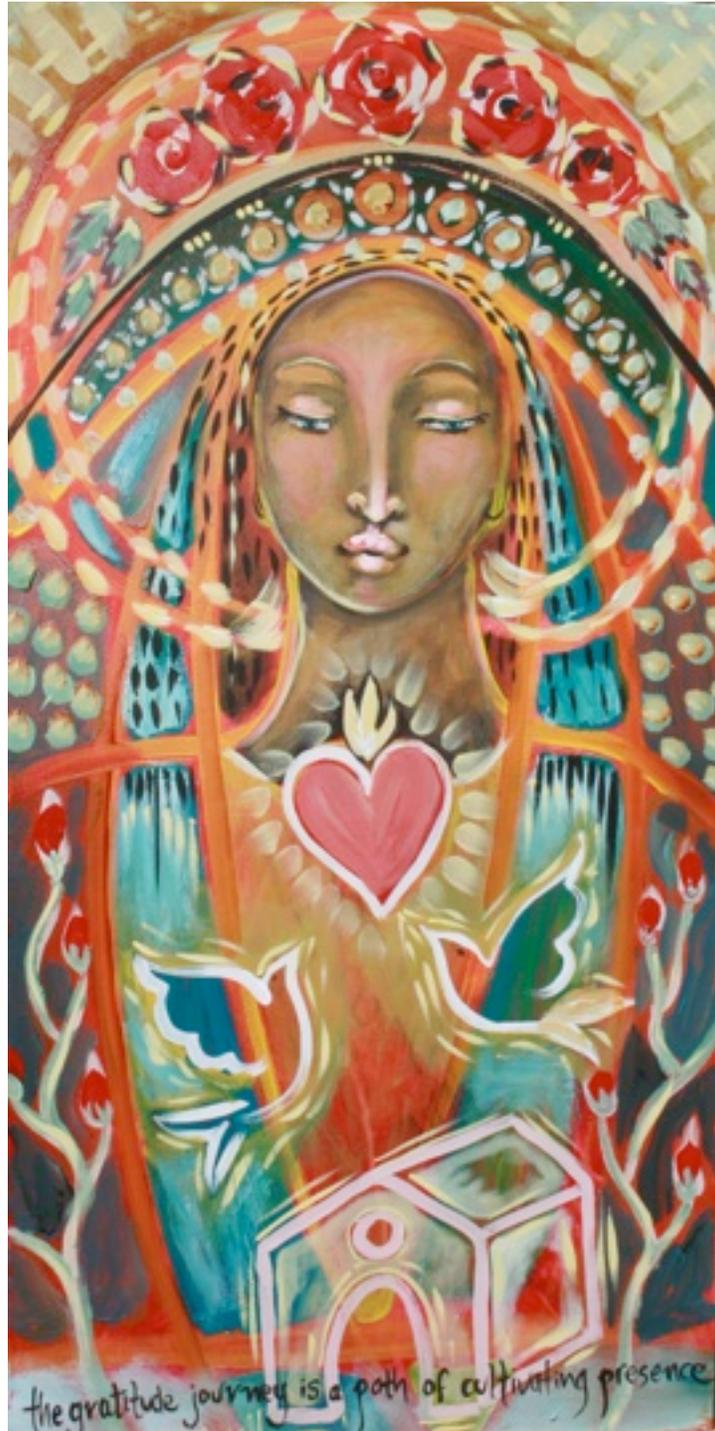


OUR LADY OF THE DIVINE SPARK
PAINTING AS SACRED PRACTICE WITH SHILOH SOPHIA



OUR LADY OF THE DIVINE SPARK - OPENING PRAYER

*Our Lady of the Divine Spark
Keeper of the Red Thread
According to thy Wisdom
Open the doors that need to open.
Close the doors that need to close.
Mend that which needs mending.
And let loose what needs letting loose.
Show us the pathway through the tangle.
And lead us not to where we need not go.
Remind us to keep opening our hearts.
And to keep them open during hard times.
Make faith to shine like a light in our minds.
And keep us from stumbling, too long, in darkness.
Oh Blessed Lady
Call us towards the purpose for which we were born.
And let us not shut our ears to the radiant calling.
Cause us to long for that which is uniquely ours to do.
And let our divine purpose not pass us by.
Lead us, Precious Lady.
Amen*

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DEAR ARTISTS - A LETTER FROM SHILOH SOPHIA

I am excited to work with you in the Our Lady of the Divine Spark course!

The concept of the Lady of the Divine Spark is inspired by connecting with a presence, a focal point of light and spirit inside the portal of your canvas. I like to pretend the canvas is a door and when I paint I am opening it to another dimension. The Divine Spark is that part of us which has been lit since we were in our mother's womb - a spark off the old spark' so to speak. I like to think that each of us us LIT from the original spark and holds that within us and when we practice creative arts we are re-lighting and strengthening that flame.

For me art and painting is a sacred practice, a prayer, a way of being in connection with spirit and all of life. I hope it can support you in your journey of art as sacred practice for you. For me, art is a calling from the universe - and my response is painting images that bring healing and possibility. I believe creating art and writing poems and dancing our prayers and baking our bread is significant and equal to planting carrots, marching for peace or other forms of service. Some of us are called to create in this manner, and those who can, I think should. I think artists, writers, poets and dancers balance the scales of the universe through contributing the profound medicine of beauty. Sometimes I feel our work, especially that work which includes the feminine, is the antidote.

My work stems from my desire to ease suffering. When I was younger I thought that would be serving in crisis shelters, that kind of front line work. Now it has turned out to the shelter I work is the one that shelters artists, and those who have been wounded, and are healing their own self image and identity. I truly believe that working with the female image is one of the PROFOUND tools we can use to bring healing to ourselves and others when we use it with intention. So when we create with INTENTION, what I call Intentional Creativity, our own journey of self discovery is powerfully informed, as well as our ability to translate this work into a blessing for others if we are called.

Remember: The most important thing as you work through the videos is to be patient with yourself. Trust that there is nothing you can really do wrong that you cannot paint over and solve. I invite you to practice tenderness towards your painting and yourself. I encourage you to make the connection to your source, your own divine spark before you connect to your canvas for a painting session.

The style I am sharing with you is based off of my own style, which is sort of like a recipe. You can follow it, and don't worry about "copying", that is what it is there for - as a guide. If you keep painting my style will eventually drop off. Or you can diverge from it and add what you want or take away what you want. I invite you not to THINK too much about it. I KNOW the steps work if you will trust and follow along and continue to bring your mindfulness and presence back into the painting. Whenever you get lost just bring your heart and mind back and make a connection your lady again. If this painting looks a lot like mine, your next one most likely won't. So use and lean on my style as much as you need to in order to get started, it is HERE to make it easier for you to paint. And in truth, it was a gift from Our Lady of the Divine Spark, and she did indeed tell

me I had to give it to you. I believe every single one of us is an artist - not just the talented or gifted ones of us. Don't think about talent, or even skill, and technique, well don't think too much about that either for now. YOU can always do one painting and then another!



Before I paint I often make myself a cup of tea, light a candle and meditate and get in touch with my body and spirit. Especially when using intuitive painting techniques, dialing into the “channel” of creativity that you want to tune to helps eliminate static like things the come from the critic. So before you can begin...fine tune your space. And read through this whole book at least once so you can see what is in here, like the Heart of Gold Meditation which is good to do before you begin. I also often like to do a reading, sort of like an opening prayer to set the mood and I have included several here.

Whatever your faith or spiritual practice, you can interpret Our Lady of the Divine Spark for yourself. She can be whoever you need her to be. You can put your intention into her form and allow the painting itself to be a journey towards lighting your own divine spark. In case you don't know me, I have included a bio at the end so you can learn a little bit more. Suffice to say that I have been a full time artist for over 16 years, have been teaching painting almost as long as that and that I have my own gallery.

I am honored to paint with you and serve you through this form. We can touch the divine spark of SPIRIT at the center of our lives when we commit ourselves to creativity. We can discover our totems and our symbols. We can lean into the sharp edges of our lives and bring beauty into the rough spots.

We can reach towards the glistening particles of our dream and destination every day and touch it. We can take an old memory and transform into into a tool that we can live with and when we touch it, the cold lead is hot from the process of alchemy just completing her cycle. I am talking about defining and knowing our journey in language and spirit well enough that you can reach out and TOUCH that way of thinking and loving at any tiny moment in your day. Being close to the concepts and hopes and dreams of what you have set before you to DO and create. There is really no reason we cannot be in contact with that lusciousness daily.

In closing I want to give honor to my own teachers, my Mother Caron McCloud and Sue Hoya Sellars for putting the brush into my hand, so that I in turn can put it into yours. There is nothing you can do wrong. Nothing you cannot fix. And nothing but goodness that awaits you no matter what your skill level is.

Just paint.

~ Shiloh Sophia from the Red Thread Cafe

p.s. This course and this e-book, like life, is in process. Please know that I know there are typos and boobos both here and in the videos. That remind us that we are all so human. I love for things to be fabulous, that doesn't mean it is perfect. Perfection is over-rated. So enjoy but leave the critic in the back yard during this course.

suggested supply list

All you need to for this painting process is acrylic paint (any colors you want to use), a canvas, water and brushes. That said, here are some suggestions.

MATERIALS COST: Depending on what brands you get and what you have, your set up cost could be as low as \$35 and as high as \$200.

ACRYLIC PAINT: My recommendation is Golden Brand in the Fluid or Heavy Body style. Golden is high quality, and great color and easy to work with. The heavy body is a fine choice, it is simply thicker. AND you can use any quality of paint or any brand you want, I often use liquitex as well. The Golden Brand paints are between \$3.50 and \$25 per tube depending on color and type and quantity. The SPECIFIC color I use, is not the specific color you need to use. This is not a paint by number, you can USE whatever you feel inspired to use. I do suggest purchasing the colors have a * next to them if you want to glaze/tint your painting, they are the best colors - and my personal favorites. You can find other brands of paint at MICHAELS or other craft supply stores for as little as \$1.50 per tube.

You only need one shade of each color to set up your studio, and I don't use every single color listed below in the video series. This is not a paint by number so you can use any color that you a drawn to for each step. These are just suggestions to get your paint studio set up. I have listed the GOLDEN brand colors, but again, just get one of each color in all the colors of the rainbow. Choose a variety based on your budget and the draw of what looks good to you. Colors marked * are good important for glazing.

quinacridone nickel azo gold*
transparent red iron oxide*
white titanium & bone black
raw umber
burnt sienna
cadmium red or quinacridone crimson
quinacridone magenta
pyrrole orange
hansa yellow light
ultramarine blue
permanent violet dark
turquoise phthalo
cobalt turquoise
phthalo green
iridescent bright gold fine (or copper, silver, bronze)

SKETCH PAD - and BLACK CHARCOAL PENCIL

WATER: Spray bottle and jar for water



EASEL - You can use an upright easel or work flat on a table.

CAMERA - Optional: in case you want to take photos of your work at each phase.

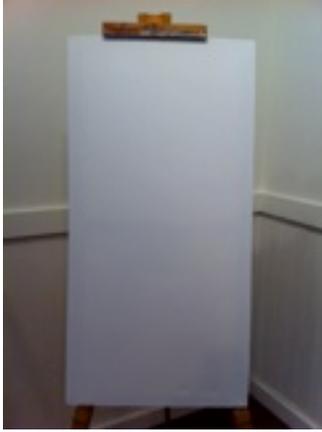
BRUSHES: 5-15 assorted sizes: medium sized hard-bristle, usually hog, rounds, a handful of rounds, a medium sized Filbert, short filberts, a liner or two, and a small Flat sash, fan, and other sizes that look good according to your budget.

You are going to pay very different prices depending on where you shop with brushes you DO get what you pay for so be mindful to check pricing.

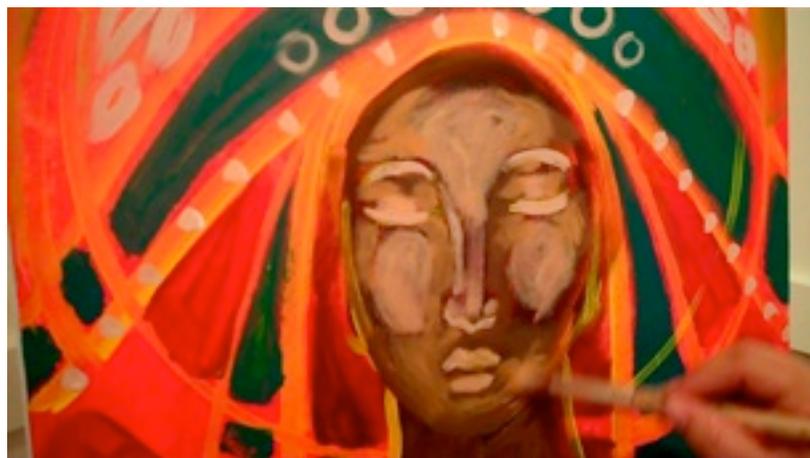
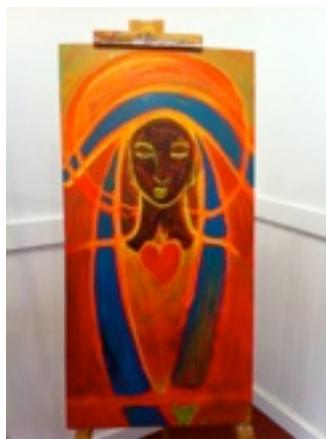
SURFACES: 1 to 2 ratio canvas. Suggestion: 15X30 canvas - gallery wrap, deeper style holds up better.

ADDITIONAL STUDIO SUPPLIES for Home

- Do you have a place set up where you are going to paint at home? Make that a priority - clear a guest room or dining room or whatever you have to do to create a space to create!
- A table - covered with paper or plastic
- Drop cloth or rug for the floor, Rags/paper towels for clean up,
- Staywet hand palette (or paper plates) or huggies palette
- Painter clothes that you LIKE to wear AND are willing to get paint on!
- A Plant or two, a Candle, a Mirror, a little Altar, and Light - direct and indirect



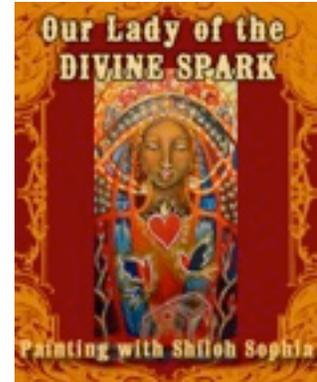
PAINTING CLOSE UP SHOTS



9. Our Lady of the Divine Spark With Shiloh Sophia - 2011 All Rights Reserved

Our Lady of the Divine Spark Video List

In each step you are invited to connect with your intention as it relates to that step. For example making connection between the painting content and your emotional spiritual experience. This is a way to bring mindfulness and intuition into your creative practice.



(Part One) The Invitation - Materials
Getting set up and knowing what we are working with.

(Part Two) Intentional Creativity - The Context
The premise for intentional creativity and setting our dreams desires into the painting.

(Part Three) Step One - Intention: Visioning/Connecting
Using active imagination to gather our information and image and connect the sparks.

(Part Four) Step Two - Blessing: Environment/Background
Bring 3 colors of paint in the background to create the space where she appears.

(Part Five) Step Three - Presence - Design/Form
Sketching our image and lining out her basic shape and symbols.

(Part Six) Step Three Cont'd: Form

(Part Seven) Step Four - Vitality - Color/Blocking
Adding color and dimensions into the shapes, this is continued background.

(Part Eight) Step Five - Nurturing: Detail/Pattern
Adding your symbol, designs and details over the blocking to complete your form.

(Part Nine) Step Six - Focus: Color/Lights/Darks/Skin
Bringing dimension and shading and the palette you want into the painting.

(Part Ten) Step Six Cont'd - Shading/Layers

(Part Eleven) Step Six Cont'd - Glazing
Bonus step - optional - showing how to integrate the colors into a more consistent look.

(Part Twelve) Step Seven - Integration Writing on the painting, adding light and bring finishing touches anywhere that calls you.

(Part Thirteen) - Step Seven cont'd - Finishing Touches
Completion! Sign your painting and celebrate!

To go deeper into the work - you can repeat steps four through seven

ART DOCTOR PAINTING TIPS ACRYLIC

One of the things I love about working with acrylic is the knowledge that I can always paint over it. That said, there is a sense of not always being able to make our hand do what our mind sees. Got that. Here are a few tips I have gathered that might be helpful on your journey.

Drying Time:

Acrylic paint dries fast depending on where you live and how hot or cold it is, so be sure to keep your brushes in water and you can keep spraying your palette to keep the paints wet. If you want to get a STAY WET palette that works quite well, but you can also cover your paints and put them in the refrigerator to keep them wet for a while. In light of this you might want to just squeeze out as much paint as you are going to use. You can also continue to spray your paint palette which will keep it moist longer.

Tips on Brushes

Size Matters: Choose the right size brush for the right area. Small area, Small brush. Large area, large brush.

Type Matters: Choose a brush that suited for the task at hand. Filling an area with color? Use a round scrubby kind of brush like hot hair. Doing detail? Choose a pointed brush so you can make lines of varying width.

Pressure Matters: Brushes have points and tips and barrels, and pressure will change the shape of the brush. Experiment with making a line while making pressure and letting up, and alternating to get the feel for the different possibilities of the brush.

Tips on Wet Dry & Spray Techniques

Dry Technique: Painting with a dry brush is the one we use MOST in our course. This technique has the most variation-pressure and curve and amount of paint will create different results. When blending use only as much paint as you need for an area, and best to kind of “run out” because then it gets lighter and lighter and allows you to fade at the edges. When you fill your brush you can even dab it on a rag or paper towel before applying.

Wet Technique: Painting with a wet brush allows for more flow. Best when you want fluid lines or are doing detail so the brush is not filled with a glob of paint– or when you want to do a wash over an area of color, then add water. Water moves paint around.

Spray Technique: Painting and using a Spray bottle creates watery appearance. Use when you are doing a thin wash or a glaze or want it run down and make driplets.

Wet Paper Towel - A wet paper towel next to you so you are ready to wipe and rub as needed is always a good idea.

tips on style and paint application

Stroking: When creating the shape of an area with color, fill it with the strokes that match that area and the texture. For example if you are adding color to a cheek, follow the shape of the cheek shapes and think 'cheek' and also have sense that you know what cheek feels and looks like because you have a couple of them yourself.

Loops Open: Resist the temptation to complete every line and make them solid and close every loop and connection. The more you close every connection the more tight and cartoon like it becomes.

Line Quality: When doing detail or adding highlight lines, use a small brush with liquid or water mixture and experiment before adding to the canvas – use a light but focused stroke.

Layering: Each time you add a new layer – leave a little of the previous layer showing to build dimension and depth.

Tinting: You can change any color by adding water to another color and doing a light wash over the top. This will make for more interesting color than if you just paint over a section.

Adding Shadows & Highlights with Darks Lights and Mediums: Darks– Remember that shadows happen when something is in front of something else or it goes back in to space in perspective. When painting a face, the shadow is in all of the indented places. Lights – Lights are the top roundy places that you want to show as forward from the background. Mediums – Everything in between. Create smooth transitions from light to dark areas for a consistent shape.

Texture: Only add thick paint for texture when you are sure it is where you want it otherwise if you do have to paint over it then you will have to deal with the thick shape underneath. Add texture at the end when you know where it goes. Exception would be if you are making an intentionally textured background to put your image over but it cause difficulties and unintended shapes.

Glow: You can always take out the glow at any time – but challenge yourself to leave it there for a while so you can see what it does when you add each layer and see how it makes a nice glow around your shapes. You don't need to keep it on both sides of the line however, so you can choose that as you go forward.

Tips on Mistakes Mistakes do happen: Keep a wet paper towel next to you at all times so you can wipe immediately if you make a stroke you do not like. And you almost always know if you do not like it and it is GOOD to just wipe it off and start again. If you make a correction and you need to use a white or coppery color, which are good to mix with for corrections, then duplicate that "new" color you had to introduce in two other places to make it consistent.

TIPS ON PROCESS

Boldness: Fluidity and Courage over accuracy. When making strokes, better to be courageous and make strong sure strokes than be timid. You can always wipe it off if you get to it soon enough.

Consistency: Make an attempt to continue to work on each area of the painting, not leaving a whole place with not attention to the end. That way the energy stays consistent throughout and you can always see the painting as it unfolds. Use a light hand almost always – be mindful of beginnings and endings, where you put your brush down and where you lift it up.

Perspective: At least once an hour step back, 6-12 feet and get perspective and listen as you do. Sit with her and let her speak to you. Shh....you will find what is next this way.

Perfectionist: The more the perfectionist sets in the more she requires. So leave her toward the end and resist the need to get it right - leave some areas unresolved. You will have to challenge yourself to do this as the temptation will hardly ever leave you to “fix it.”

Listening: Practice listening to the canvas as if it is a gentle speaker. As you paint, listen for the voice of the painting. Ask, what color, what next?

Intention: As you move to each section of your painting, and of course before you begin, and each time you approach your canvas you have to TUNE to the channel of your painting so you can be assisted by your muse. You don't have to rely on your strength and insight alone.

Brush Care - Wash your brushes with soap and water when you are done. Don't leave them in the jar of water too long before washing. Not all the color will be gone but the water will run clear. Then dry them out and lay them FLAT to dry. For brushes with a tip or a liner, be sure re-shape them.

Happy Painting!

*I would rather be ashes than dust!
I would rather that my spark should burn out
in a brilliant blaze than it should be stifled by dry-rot.
I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom
of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet.
The function of man/woman is to live, not to exist.
I shall not waste my days trying to prolong them.
I shall use my time.
Jack London*

A BLANK CANVAS IS A DOOR - A READING

An Initiation in Paint - Approaching the Canvas

When approaching the blank canvas imagine that it is a door.
A portal of possibility in which only you hold the key
and the magic words which grant access.
A cosmic opening which is beckoning you to enter.
Consider that what lies just beyond that white space
might just be the stuff of miracles.

The empty canvas is used by the Muse
to terrify, entice, compel, repel and shake us out our boots!
And often, faced with it's blank face, we turn back. But not today.

Today we choose to enter the unknown,
to answer the call which silently and powerfully
transports us from this present reality into non-ordinary reality.
Now be brave and lay aside:
what we think we know
what we are sure we don't
and we might just experience something close to bliss.
We may find that, Yes, mind can quiet,
even without being a yogi or meditating for years...

Pick up a paintbrush and empty your fears into a palette of infinite possibility.
Postpone inviting that familiar critic to tea,
(the muse won't have any use for her rough medicine today.)
Tears may come...and if they do let them fall onto the canvas.
Terror may come...and if it does choose it's color carefully and watch
as each stroke transforms and moves.
Love may come, and if she does, let her have her way with you,
don't hold back, or shield your heart from her powerful strokes.

How long has it been since we burned with passion?
How long have we waited to make our mark on canvas or page,
holding oh so many stories inside.
Today approach that blank canvas
remembering it is not about being good or pretty.
Today be a willing fool for creativity.
And at each moment surrender.
surrender. breathe. surrender. breathe.
Self expression is the key to unlocking a life,
not just the white door of your canvas.
Self expression is the you that lives inside
being invited into the world of form...
Just see what will happen, if you let yourself out in full color.
Unconcerned with blend, contrast, perspective or perfection.
Let this be one of the places in your life where your fear
and your magic mix – POW!
That giant brush in your hand wreaking havoc on your old ideas –
WHOOSH! And creating space for something entirely new to emerge:
YOU, in living color.

By Shiloh Sophia

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The Our Lady of the Divine Spark Course objective is to provide you with the practices and the tools that empower you to use creativity as a tool for self illumination, as well as a personal practice, connect with the Divine Spark in Life and make a super cool painting that you want to hang up! Painting, when we choose for it to be, can be a vision quest to our interior world, and an opportunity to awaken our intuition from the heart, connected with the right and left brain. The core teachings are based in intentional creativity, passionate self expression and developing a creative practice. You will explore three primary categories of creativity as a sacred practice:

1. Creative Practice – Students will learn and practice the intentional creativity method. They will practice using image and personal story/myth to inform and inspire.

2. Painting - Students will learn a very basic acrylic overview of painting techniques: color application, brush control, layering, glazing, scrubbing, paint application, detail, material handling - and most of all, how to use paint to articulate a vision, without formal painting education or knowledge of in-depth technique.

3. Visioning - Students will learn how to journey with a set intention, to access our internal wisdom, using image and guidance techniques - and then to verbalize, articulate, paint and write that vision. The painting I teach is a journey to painting within. A journey to the sacred interior of ourselves. Where we have contact with our deep inner knowing and our intuitive selves.

When I paint I work with a muse – an female archetype that is at once me, and at the same time she is every woman, and she embodies Our Lady of the Divine Spark. She is who Clarissa Pinkola Estes calls the wild woman. When I connect with her instead of rely on my own knowing and skill alone, then the bliss flows from my brush. Here is a writing about her that might spark your own relationship with this powerful guide who lives inside of each woman. I invite you too call upon your own visionary woman as you embark on this painting journey.

Visionary woman - meeting your muse

She is the visionary muse that lives within each one of us who listen to us, knows us and continually invites us to express ourselves. Legendary Woman has the ability to see between the worlds. She is an inventor of possibilities. She is not governed by reason and rule, but by a sense within herself that there is something she is called to do – and indeed must do. She refers to a way of being, a space held within all women where seeing what is possible, has more power than our limitations. That which has not been created yet can be seen by our legendary, visionary Woman. This very ‘seeing’ inspires a woman to develop the skills and tools she needs in order to move her life in a direction that is in alignment with her vision, and who she is. The visionary screen within us gives us glimpses of “calling”, that which we are moving toward and participating in our entire lives, seen and unseen. She grants us access to our seventh sense, the sacred art of intentional creativity.

Visionary Woman is the name for a way of seeing, that can and does inform and altar the course of our lives from “existing” to “being. At the heart of her function, is the work of personal identity. We are not just made up of who we have been, or where we came from or what our future looks to hold right now. That we can have an active part in the unfolding of our personal future, that we can be a co-designer of our own identity is a revelation of grand proportion. And much of the world, for various reasons, are not able to ask these questions, and have not asked them – so busy are we in the business of survival, that the business of “being” seems a luxury, instead of an essential. But it is an essential – to our very core – it is essential that we wake up to who we are and what we want and refuse to think the thoughts others are thinking, and think our own thoughts.

Visionary Woman has been there since we were lit as a divine spark in our mother’s womb, but she is ever changing and renewing how she sees and what she chooses to show to us. Her function is to illuminate, literally to shed light upon. To open us to clear seeing. Seeing forward without hindrance or limitation, she sees through spaces human eyes cannot begin to decode. She lives both in the mystical realm, and in the physical because our generative actions are inspired by her presence within us. Her primary purpose is to encourage towards that which we are here on earth to create or fulfill. She is our view finder. Our “aha!” moment maker. Our waker upper. Every single woman has the visionary woman within her – we just may not have called upon her services yet.

Visionary Woman is alchemist and housewife. She is cowgirl and business tycoon. She is the checkout girl and the scientist. She is the politician and the housekeeper. She is active in all women, a function of all our psyche, residing in the imagination our hearts – and now, we need to call on her. Her time has come, and we who activate her presence - will have the benefit of her wisdom, which in a magical way is connected to the wisdom of women who have gone before us. Visionary woman is the mystical red thread that continues to link us one to another throughout out time. She is a truth teller, legend maker – she is visionary. She calls us to teach. To share. To see. To dream.

HEART OF GOLD: MEDITATION PRACTICE

This is a 3-5 minute meditation to do first thing in the morning or at sunset or right before you begin painting. It only takes a couple of minutes, and it makes a world of difference and you can do it as many times as you want adding new things as you are inspired.



One: Waking up your heart

First in your imagination – Hello Heart

- The first thing is to connect with your own source, God, light. Just make a connection. Could just be saying, Hello. And as you do this become present to your breath, allowing your breath to just breath you.
- Imagine light and shape from your feet at an anchor point below the ground, making the bottom point of the heart.
- Imagine the heart to arcs up on both sides and as it does it is activating both sides of your body and brain.
- The heart is reaching up to heaven and then coming down to your crown the top of your head making the middle point of your heart.
- See yourself and imagine you are surrounded by a golden heart.
- Draw the light down from the heart middle to your own heart and up from the ground so that they meet in the middle of your own heart.
- When they meet, allow light to come out in all directions from your heart.
- Imagine your heart waking up.
- Imagine the GREAT DIVINE SPARK of life with all of our collective sparks in it, glowing and radiating love and grace from within this heart.
- See your own unique Spark, floating out and coming to land in your heart, lighting the path before you each day.

Two: Waking up your body

Second in the physical – Hello Body

- Gently Squat or bend down touching the earth.
Start from your feet at an anchor point below the ground making the bottom point of the heart.
- Raise your arms up and out in tandem as if you are drawing the heart from the tips of your fingers, reaching up and up as if in praise and stretch!
- Allow the heart to arc up on both sides and as it does it is activating both sides of your body and brain.
- As the heart is reaching up to heaven and then coming down to your crown the top of your head making the middle point of your heart your hands are making the same motion coming into prayer pose at your forehead.

- See yourself, your body and whole being surrounded the golden heart of the Divine.
- Move your hands still in prayer pose to your heart. Draw the light down from the heart middle to your own heart.
- Open your palms, drawing the light and strength up from the ground so that they meet in the middle of your own heart where your hands are still in prayer pose, but now open as if holding light between them.
- Allow light to come out in all directions from your heart to your whole body, waking your body up.

Three: Waking up your Spirit

Third in the spiritual realm - Hello Spirit

- Repeat steps one and two with presence, allowing yourself to feel connected to the Divine. This time when your hands come to hover in in front of your heart
- Put your hands in the middle on your spiritual heart in the center on your own body or cross your arms over your chest.
- First feel for your heartbeat. Imagine you are surrounded and radiating with the warm golden heart of the divine.
- Outloud say Shhhhhhhhh.....Shhhhhh.....Shhhhhhhh or Ahhhhhhhhhh Ahhhhhhhh Ahhhhhh.
- Listen in sweetness and quiet and invite your heart to speak to you.

A PRAYER FOR ARTISTS TO OUR LADY

Our Lady, Mother of All Good Things

We artists are a complex weaving

Our beauty and our pain seek us

Through brush and pen

Through hand and foot

Through drum and flute

Through paper and scissor

Through image and word

Through life and death

Through our desire to be self expressed.

While we are at once struck with joy

at sudden inspiration, we are also

sometimes stuck with a strange halting fear

Fear enough to stay the brush

or halt the tambourine.

Is it worth it to make art?

Am I good enough? Can I sell it?

What will others think?

I should be doing accounting,

become a lawyer, a doctor or politician,

or clean my house after all,

instead of getting myself to studio or notebook.

We all know, poets and artists

are of no value here...there are mouths to feed!

And so we chatter on in this way

Poisoning our ideas with lack of Faith.



You have heard all of our complaints I am sure.

For many thousands of years,

and as a form of medicine,

have given yourself, Lady, your own image and heart,

To millions of painters,

poets and songwriters to keep them

Going. To keep them company in the dark night.

For this we thank you.

For this I thank you beyond measure.

You are the most painted Lady in the world!

The most sung about Lady in all the world!

Lady I beseech you on our behalf!

I call to you for the artists, whose creative

mind and hand is set to something which is

LIFE GIVING. To self or others, but it is

for LIFE, something which adds light and

does not seek to extinguish it.

Only the artist, not the viewer, really knows

what is truly life giving.

And we must create!

Blessed Lady! Mother of All Good Things!

I cry to you on the behalf of Artists everywhere!

Hail, Holy Lady, look upon our tribe today!

Call us to the studio to light the candle!
Call us to the paintbrush filled with red paint!
Call us to the piano filled with unsaid songs!
And the anvil and the forging fire and crucible,
And the garden beds of red beet,
gold plums and greens.
Call us to the creative kitchen
where healing soups mend the world.
Call us to the streets for spontaneous soul theater
Call the poets to the café's for readings again!
Call the writers to the desks
and set their pens and keys on fire!
Call us to the blank canvases,
to find the messages within.
Call us to the uncarved block to roll away the rock.
Call us to the camera
to capture children laughing and light of day!

Patroness of Artists! Lady of a million paintings!
I call on you to call on us and
to keep the Artists creating!
Lady they have taken the art out of so many schools,
This great gift given by God to man and woman
which since time began we have used to express the
inexpressible! Our job has been to chronicle the soul
of humankind, and they have taken it from our
children!
Call on these children mother -
give them notebooks and
Artist friends and a desire for the guitar and the quill.
Lady, the world is torn with pain and grief and greed!
Tell the artists that it is our job to weave our golden and
red threads through the dense matter of oppression

Through the dark fog of injustice and the
tyranny of images sold which do not represent life
but the worst kind of death, the needless kind.
Our creations are an antidote to the violence.
Artists are the monks and nuns of revolution,
the visionaries who record what 'they' do not want
us to record - our work is the work of truth telling.
BUT LADY! We struggle with worth and will!
TODAY light the flame on our hearts and hearths
and cause an idea - that blessed spark of light
all artists see - to happen within us.
TODAY if the we do not see the spark, or never feel
Inspired at all, *STILL* - *CALL US TO*
THE STUDIO!
Let us not wait for inspiration to know,
to make art is to make life.
It does not have to be good looking to be art.
We can get so hung up on our worth!
Call us *BLESSED MOTHER* to remember who
We are - visionaries of the ages - whose work
is needed. Energetically needed.
We keep the balance in the unseen realms.
Our paintings count as prayers
when we choose for them too.
Hail, Full of Grace, hear my prayer.

Shiloh Sophia
www.ourladyoftheredthread.com

ABOUT THE ARTIST SHILOH SOPHIA



Shiloh Sophia McCloud who was born in Marin County, California in 1970. Shiloh started painting and working in clay as soon as she could walk. At an early age Shiloh was trained by her mother, the poet Caron McCloud in literature and poetry, and she was chastened not to watch TV, but to learn the poetry of T.S. Eliot, study the work Herman Hesse, look at the artwork of Michelangelo and sketch in her notebook.

At the tender age of 23 she rendered her first one woman show under the tutelage of American Master Painter and sculptor Sue Hoya Sellars whom she has studied with most of her life. This resulted in a sold out show featuring her paintings, combined with photography, writings, sculpture and pottery. In 1997 she opened her first gallery, Color or Woman in Port Townsend, Washington, followed by a gallery on the Plaza in Sonoma, on Princess Street in Sausalito, on Sutter Street in San Francisco and then on the coastal village of Mendocino with her gallery, Wisdom House where she painted plien air on the cliffs for over five years. From the beginning, Shiloh not only represented her own work, but that of over 100 California Artists.

In 2008 Shiloh resettled to the world famous village of Healdsburg, California and opened a second gallery. In December 2010 she celebrated her 16 Year Artist's Retrospective with a one woman show. Collectors flew in from around the world to purchase her work, and view the artist's private collection.

Wanting to start a new chapter in her life Shiloh took a 6 month sabbatical and closed both galleries. That didn't last long however, the retrospective was such a success, that it inspired the vision for Shiloh Sophia Gallery, which features only her own fine art paintings. The artist was so low on inventory, that even on opening day she was busy adding finishing touches to the new show, La Vie en Rose, featuring only works from the past six months.

The inspiration for her work is to provide images that inspire, and that promote well being and peace in the viewer. Her original creative spark was lit in a desire to support the end of violence against women and children which prompted her to form Palm of Her Hand, a 501c3 working in art, education and publishing.

Shiloh has authored and illustrated 5 books and she is the founder of Cosmic Cowgirls University, which teaches courses both online and in person with an emphasis on the Intentional Creativity Movement. Shiloh's work is often published in books and online, including in the Women's United Nations Network, with her poems and images going

out to hundreds of thousands of viewers. Shiloh also teaches painting, and visionary entrepreneurship in college courses.

Shiloh Sophia McCloud's training as an artist included the Academy of Art, and she studied with renowned Byzantine Russian Iconographer, Pavel Tikhimov. While Shiloh Sophia is authentically American, she has developed her own style and has been influenced by European Symbolist movement in the tradition of Klimt, Redon, Modigliani, Chagall, Surrealist Frida Kahlo and Impressionist Mary Cassatt.

Shiloh Sophia's artwork is collected worldwide with collectors in the United States, Europe, Asia, South Africa, Africa and Canada. Her work is in the private collection of many renowned collectors including Alice Walker, Bishop Tutu, Kristine Carlson and Jim Barrett of Chateau Montelena.

At the young age of less than 40 years old, she has produced over 1200 original paintings, and sold over 2 million dollars in art in the past 10 years. Shiloh Sophia McCloud is emerging as one of the most popular and collected artists in her genre. Experts and collectors say that her work embodies the traditions of the Contemporary Symbolist Movement.

Shiloh teamed up long time friend and collector, former New York Art Dealer Roberto Gomez de Perdomo to produce her 16 Year Retrospective and documentary, A Legendary Life. The duo decided to collaborate to open Shiloh Sophia Gallery in June of 2011, where de Perdomo is the Impresario and Gallery Co-Director.

The gallery also serves as the artist's studio, and if you are lucky you might find her in the early morning, painting. When the doors open for the day, the smell of wet paint often lingers.

Shiloh offers classes on intentional creativity online and in person through Cosmic Cowgirls University including The Black Madonna, The Big Dream Cafe, Her Evolution, The Color of Woman - Teacher's Training and Leading A Legendary Life.

www.shilohsophia.com - About Shiloh

www.shilohsophiagallery.com - About the gallery and Shiloh's Art

www.ourladyofthredthread.com - Shiloh's blog and devotional writings

<http://www.facebook.com/shiloh.mccloud>

www.cosmiccowgirlsuniversity.com - Courses and Classes with the Cosmic Cowgirls