

INK NEWS

Volume 43 Issue 02, February 2022



- **Bricologue:** a note from new Executive Director Leslie Castellano
- DreamMaker spotlight: **Christine Driscoll** of **California Center for Financial Education**
- **Taylor Snowberger** on curating the “Gestation Project”
- Introducing new Ink People staff member **Brandi Hoyt**



Bricologue: Assembling a Name

In this month's column, I want to share a little about the inspirations behind the naming of this column. "Bricologue" is a hybrid word derived from "bricolage" and "-logue". The term bricolage comes from the French verb bricoleur, meaning "to tinker". Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss first used the term in his writings about the construction of artifacts and myths. Years later, Jacques Derrida argued that we are all bricoleurs in that we creatively use the tools around us to make and remake the world. In the other half of the column's title, "-logue" refers to "discourse of a specific type" and is derived from the Greek "logos", meaning "the divine wisdom manifest in the creation, government, and redemption of the world" (Miriam Webster). By assembling "bricolage" + "-logue" into "bricologue" I am interested in referencing the wisdom that comes from the practice of making, while also pointing toward the ways in which one another's creative acts inform and shape what is possible.

Through the artists, programs, projects, and cultural expressions that take place through the Ink People, I am repeatedly reminded about the ways artists and cultural practitioners contribute to the wellbeing of the community. Artists have a unique capacity to envision new ways of being in the world while creating webs of meaning that have tangible effects on our everyday lives. I believe that art and cultural practices nourish our capacity to heal, to transform, to celebrate, and to creatively address humanity's challenges.

Through this column and through working with all of you, I hope to lift up the ways we make and remake the world, while acknowledging that we must work together steadily to create a more just society. As Angela Davis wisely said, "You have to act as if it is possible to radically transform the world, and you have to do it all the time." May we support and be inspired by one another as we undertake this visionary work.



FEBRUARY 2022

FEATURES



2: **Bricologue:** Assembling a Name

5: DreamMaker spotlight: **Christine Driscoll** of **California Center for Financial Education**

6: State of the Art: **Taylor Snowberger**, curator of "The Gestation Project"

9: Introducing new Ink People staff member **Brandi Hoyt**

11: Photo credits and captions
Workshops and classes

Mission Statement

The Ink People changes lives by connecting our communities with resources for cultural development. We encourage people to exercise their humanity, build civic discourse, and engage their creative potential.

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DreamMaker spotlight:

Christine Driscoll, California Center for Financial Education



Christine Driscoll's motivation to start a DreamMaker Project was prompted by her recognition of need. Driscoll, a licensed mortgage broker formerly with Redwood Community Action Agency, recently founded the California Center for Financial Education, a DreamMaker project of the Ink People Center for the Arts, with the goal of providing Californians with free information to help them foster financial literacy and gain control over their financial lives.

The need, she said, is undeniable. "The lack of financial education in the country, and even around the world, is ridiculously high right now. We are in this situation where people do not understand money, not even the simplest financial concepts. They're not being taught in the schools. So, I'd like to do something about that."

Driscoll, who held a realtor's license in Massachusetts prior to moving to California, acquired a California realtor's license and mortgage license soon after arriving in Humboldt County, and began counseling prospective homeowners. This work, she says, "opened my eyes to the scale of the problem. I was doing residential mortgages with one- to four-family residences, and I started to see that the people who were coming to me to buy a home hadn't really prepared their finances for that purpose. Economic status didn't matter: I had people with six-figure incomes coming to me who were just not ready. Some people didn't handle credit well, or they didn't save enough when they could have. Or they could make it happen, but if they had just done something differently, a year prior, they could have really improved their situation. Then I started working with Redwood Community Action Agency on an economic empowerment program, and started working a lot with low- to middle-income households, and I began to really see the struggles people were going through. Just living day to day, getting by paycheck to paycheck, one month to the next, and having nowhere to turn."

As a remedy, Driscoll envisions a multi-pronged approach that provides a varied portfolio of financial education services, free of charge. "There will be a phone number you can call to connect with a financial counselor, and also a portal where you can log in and email somebody with your financial questions. You can attend an online class, or an in-person class in your area, or do a self-paced study course. It's going to have to

Continued on p. 10.

STATE OF THE ART:

Taylor Snowberger, *curator of* “The Gestation Project”

Taylor Snowberger is the curator of “Gestation Project,” an art exhibition that went on view last fall at the Ink People’s Brenda Tuxford Gallery, made possible by a 2020 grant from the Ink People’s FAR (Funds for Artists’ Resilience) program. A painter and social practice artist who resides in Humboldt County, Snowberger attended Cal Poly Humboldt, received her BA in Art Education in 2018, and now works as an art teacher for young students. She paints in watercolor and oil. Performance art is sometimes part of her social practice, as is organizing and advising. This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

• *How did you develop the idea to organize a group art exhibition in which the period of the artworks’ creation would parallel a baby’s nine-month gestation?*



“I’m as much an art educator as I am a curator or artist. I think a lot about children, and I think a lot about the future. And sometimes my job feels futile, both because of the climate crisis I know my students are inheriting, and also because I’m almost 30, thinking about having a kid, and realizing that the feelings that I have around my students’ future indicate that it’s maybe not the best idea. I really wanted to create a space to talk to other people about that. The FAR grant came up, and I put out a call to see if anyone else out there in the community was thinking the same things. I got eight responses. Working on an art project for nine months is, obviously, really different from gestating a baby and giving birth to one. For one



thing, the responsibility afterwards was not looming! I know that I'll never go through the actual gestation process in my physical body. But at the outset of the pandemic, I knew that we were going to be home for a long time. So I thought, 'Maybe I could make an art gestation,' and that could be the next closest thing."

• *What was the gestation process like?*

"I'm kind of a masochist, so I wanted this to be a bit of a painful process. I did work on something that I hated making—it was a sculpture, and usually, I paint. So it was a difficult and unpleasant labor. This was at the beginning of the pandemic, and at first I was



trying to work myself to the point that I didn't think or feel anything. But as nine months went by, it became harder to sustain that work ethic. So my work ethic around art changed, and I discovered that I like working with a group."

• *What did you learn through participating in regular conversations with other exhibiting artists throughout the nine months prior to the show opening?*

"One thing I've learned is that, if you're not white, you have a really different perspective on the future, and on how the environment has implications for the future. As a white person, I doubt that my ancestors have had to contend with this level of uncertainty about the future before. I've learned from indigenous people's relationship to the earth. On a more general level, I think everybody that participated felt, as I did, that it was really healthy to be able to talk to people in a group about climate change and the future. I don't think we have enough spaces where we can talk about that stuff.

Continued on p. 8

“The Gestation Project”

cont. from p. 7

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- *What inspired your recent decision to stay and work in Humboldt County, as opposed to pursuing a future in a creative field elsewhere?*

“I think that the place you live as an artist has a large bearing on your identity as an artist. I have definitely had to contend with the limits of what’s possible here. And that has been, in some ways, disappointing. But also, living and working here can be the opposite of disappointing—it can be really fulfilling, because there’s community. When I was living in San Francisco and Los Angeles, I had a harder time meeting other people who thought the way I did.

“I recently got a grant to go to Art Basel, so I gained perspective on what it means to work in a rural place. I know what happens here (in Humboldt), and now, I also know what Art Basel is like. Art there is fueled by a level of asset management that is non-existent here, because we’re not a tech hub, and we just don’t have that kind of money.

“I have two opposing wants. One is to succeed, and be really ambitious and work hard and make projects. The other is to have a community of people that are genuine and really care. Humboldt definitely has that. Sometimes, I want to live somewhere else. But then things pop up, like the FAR Grant, that allow me to feel such a sense of accomplishment and belonging. I don’t know another group that I would like to be around as much as the group of artists who live here. All of us are constantly

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challenged to contend creatively with the limitations and the benefits.”

- *How can the art scene develop?*

“Having a regular art festival could be exciting. We need an artists’ compound. We need more residencies. There are a lot of new little DIY punk art galleries popping up. I notice some of them sell a lot of sacred geometry art, I’m assuming because that’s what growers want to buy. I think this represents a large sector of the Humboldt art market, and I’m cool with that! The Morris Graves Museum of Art has been putting up work that has been really interesting to me this past year. Also, Leslie (Castellano, Ink People Executive Director) organized the first Outer Roominations festival this past year, and I’m excited to see that continue.”



Introducing **Brandi Hoyt**

Brandi Hoyt, an art and art education student at Cal Poly Humboldt who hails from Chico, begins an internship with the Ink People this month. Her involvement with art dates from much earlier. “I grew up always loving art making, and appreciating the creative outlet there.” When she enrolled in her first painting class at College of the Redwoods, she realized that sharing that passion for creation with others could become a career path. Now, she’s looking at a potential career at the intersection of art and social practice.

Hoyt says that she’s inspired by artists who make art out of “ordinary experience, if that makes sense. I like making beauty from what we have around us.” She relates to the creative disruptors associated with the paradigm-shifting 1960s movements that sought to eliminate the distance between art and life, and she’s inspired by the idea of an art comprised of small gestures and deliberately humble materials, one that remains close to life’s homely surfaces.

“I want to help people make art that brings them into that state of mindfulness, and helps them to have a restored relationship with the world of objects out there. Especially in a world that sometimes feels like it trashes all the little pieces, it’s nice to feel that you’re taking every little bit of existence into consideration, and trying to be more engaged with what we have around us.”



Hoyt is looking forward to learning more about grassroots organizing and community outreach during the course of her internship this spring. “Ink People is into assisting people, but you’re empowering people within the conversation and building reciprocal relationships, which I think is really cool. I’m excited to learn how to do that within an art context.”

In her own work, Hoyt enjoys painting and drawing the most, but says she’s still figuring out the media and themes she wants to share. “I’m driven towards education, and being involved with art in any capacity that I can.”



California Center for Financial Literacy

cont. from p. 5

be a little bit of everything. I named this project California Center for Financial Education for a reason: access to these services is needed across the entire state, especially in northern California.”

Driscoll hopes to eventually be able to offer free in-person classes at locations around the county and beyond, augmenting that instruction by providing access to self-paced, online financial literacy courses. “We’re rural and remote; we’re spread out here, from Hoopa and Orleans all the way to Bridgeville and the far reaches of southern Humboldt. So you can’t say, ‘Well, I’m going to hold an in-person class in Eureka, and if you want to attend from Willow Creek, come on down.’ You have to bring the program to the people. In addition, offering a self-paced online course will be important for those people who can’t travel, but who may have internet access, or at least a cell phone. People will hopefully be able to get their children down to sleep and find time—even if it’s midnight or 1 a.m.—to log on, do a self-paced course, and follow up with a counselor.”

The questions Driscoll fielded in her prior work, she recalls, could be about almost anything. “It could be about something on a client’s credit report—or accessing their credit report, and helping them read and understand their credit report, so we could fix what was going on. It might be providing tips on how to deal with that creditor who was harassing them. The information is out there, but sometimes you need somebody to walk you through a few steps, so that you feel more comfortable on that path. I’m not there to tell people what to do, but I am there to show them their options and their choices. Then, based on their life, their lifestyle, and their values, people are able to determine what is the best choice for them.

“I’ve worked with people who—once they figured out why their credit rating was so poor—were able to get their scores up rapidly. And then, next thing you know, I’m getting phone calls: ‘My score’s in the 700s, and I just got an apartment, and I’m so excited.’ Or, ‘Hey, I finally got that economic impact payment, and I was able to get a car, and I paid off some debts.’ You know, small but life-changing things,” Driscoll muses.

“Just being able to learn a little bit about personal finance is very empowering. And then, once they have the knowledge, people are empowered to take it forward for themselves.”

To learn more about the California Center for Financial Literacy or get involved, email ccfe@inkpeople.org.

CREDITS & CAPTIONS: *Cover: Surrealist painter Laura Corsiglia at work. Corsiglia completed the painting live during the party held in honor of outgoing Executive Director Libby Maynard at Synapsis, Jan. 21, 2022. P. 3: Outgoing Ink People Executive Director Libby Maynard speaks at the party held in her honor at Synapsis, Jan. 21, 2022. P. 5: Photo courtesy of Christine Driscoll. P. 6-7: Pregnant Plastic, by Violet Crabtree. Found plastic, nails, glue, acrylic, pipe cleaners, wire, wool, and paper on found plywood, 30 x 30 in., 2021. Serving Platter, by Eva Nebenzahl. Soda fired ceramic, 12 x 12 x 3 in., 2021. Forest Fire, by Patrick Garcia, oil on paper, 7 x 9 in., 2021. All artworks pictured on pp. 6-7 were recently on view in “The Gestation Project” at the Brenda Tuxford Gallery, in Eureka.*

www.inkpeople.org/tuxford-gallery-archive. P. 9: photo courtesy of Brandi Hoyt.

THANK YOU!

to our friends in the community who helped us raise over \$8,000 this January by rounding up receipts in the North Coast Co-Op's Seeds for Change event.

Thanks to the Co-Op's generous sponsorship of this program, your roundup donations support our core missions: promoting public art, creating opportunities for community artists and cultural practitioners, creating arts programming for youth and the differently-abled, and helping more than 100 arts and culture organizations to thrive.

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is published monthly by
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