



Pamlico Rose Journal



“Healing Glass” : Sue Kammers Artist in residence culminating exhibit

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Sue agreed to be first and threw herself into the six-month residency holding true to the intent of the program – letting creativity be her guide, mentor and soulmate. She provided posts to help us follow her ½ year journey, and glimpses of that creativity coming to light.

The pummeling rain broke at 6 pm, the dark clouds scattered blown into corners of the sky, leaving tantalizing glimpses of early evening blue. We scurried about the Rose Haven Center of Healing Gardens directed by Pamlico Rose Institute’s (PRI) first artist-in-residence Sue Kammers hanging, planting and nestling her stained-glass art pieces preparing for the 630 pm opening of her culminating exhibit.

We completed the last placement of her exhibit, “Healing Glass” just as people arrived at the Center. Walkways led to sixteen pieces utilizing the beauty of the gardens as a natural gallery. Pieces of reclaimed wood from the renovation of the Haven House were upcycled as “title” signs and the intermittent rays of the sun streaming through the glass brought the artwork to life.

Sue was a nurse, retired three years ago from the Greenville VA Clinic Women’s Health Center and was only partially receptive when I approached her last fall with the offer of being our first artist-in-residence,



Not too long after the exhibit started, we brought folks together around the council ring complete with desserts and beverages and formally welcomed them to the first artist-in-residence. Sue briefly spoke about her experience as the first resident, “It was definitely healing experience,” she said. As she ended her remarks, she presented Pamlico Rose and Rose Haven with a stained-glass piece representing our Tree of Life which will be displayed in the gardens. Her work will join a growing number of artworks made by women and Veterans in our retreats and other programs that add to the collective identity of the landscape, making it a true “community gardens.”

“I am not a woman Veteran,” she told me, already one foot out the door of participation. I already knew that. It was our desire at PRI to advance creative expression, one of four pillars foundational to our wellness program, to benefit women artists who were healing from military experience. Research and narrative also bear out that the caregivers and those 1st responders of trauma-affected victims/survivors most likely will experience similar expressions of that trauma. Health care workers and caregivers of women Veterans are predominantly women.

“In our in-residence program, healing is a community effort, health care workers help heal and themselves need healing,” I replied.

In an in depth article I wrote on the positive influence of art therapy and art-making to Veterans, especially women Veterans, Sue was one of a few personal narratives of artists I explored. In her tenure as a VA nurse and her 2-year battle against what had become Stage 4 cancer a year after retiring I heard and saw how a hobby of stained glass art became a channel to heal.



With the break in the rain and partially clearing skies, all that was missing on Friday was a rainbow. For those who came to the exhibit, the colors of the rainbow were subtly on display through her glass. For Sue, 10 of her 16 works sold that evening sweetening the pot of her residency experience at the end of her own rainbow.



Note:

Sue Kammers' s artwork is on display for the next three weeks at Pamlico Rose Institute's online gallery. Work not sold at the exhibit can be purchased. Pamlico Rose is now taking applications from women Veterans, active, reserve or National Guard women and women health care workers who work/worked with women Veterans the next artist-in-residency, deadline for applications is July 23. Application can be found here and you can learn about artist-in-residence program here.

https://www.pamlicorose.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Artist-in-Residence-Program-_compressed.pdf

To Visit the Exhibit

<https://artspaces.kunstmatrix.com/en/exhibition/7121099/sue-kammers-artist-in-residence>

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About Us

Pamlico Rose Institute (PRI) is a Washington, NC, nonprofit 501(c)(3) with a primary mission to advance wellness and resilience-building (Total Life Fitness/TLF) programs for women Veterans promoting healthy living and positive prevention strategies. TLF involves meaningful and persistent attention to daily activities that rest on the intersection of nature, creative expression, movement and building community. Living fit also utilizes behavioral and interpersonal skills to build and engage a supportive community. Finally, TLF includes self- transcendence – connecting to others, a cause or beliefs beyond self – as an important element in living fit.

PRI's home is the Rose Haven Center of Healing and includes a renovated 1892 farmhouse, an adjacent historic barn soon to be renovated as a multipurpose support facility, and 1/2 block of healing landscape composed of the Betty Ann Sands Artful and Healing Gardens, with a meditation area, garden labyrinth and the raised bed produce gardens. The Center hosts retreats and day programs and is home for woodworking and gardening programs for Veterans and community members. PRI's efforts also involve virtual and online wellness and resilience programming to help reach a greater audience and hosting events and activities to raise awareness of issues affecting women Veterans and other Veteran populations.



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