

FND Together Presents:



Welcome to FND Together's LIGHT & SHADE virtual art exhibit, featuring the artwork of several FND Warriors across Canada, who present their art to spread awareness about Functional Neurological Disorder (FND).

Special Thanks

FND Together would like to extend its gratitude to Lourdes Behen, the sponsor of this art exhibit. This event would not have been possible without her generosity, support, and encouragement.

Special thanks also go out to Katherine Parthimos, owner of Somewhere Gallery, for curating the exhibit, and to Anaïs Favier, graphic designer/art director specializing in branding and experiential design, for her graphics to promote the exhibit.

First Place



Mandrakes are so hard to do

18.00” x 24.00”

Rebecca Piazza

\$145.00

In this piece, the common loneliness and difficulty of being a new mother is reflected by the screams of her baby Mandrake. Excessive details express the confusion and fullness of the mother's overwhelming emotion, combining my own first-time experience of motherhood with a well-known magical theme.

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Alberta based artist Rebecca Piazza has developed her technique as a creative through her life experiences over the past 20 years. Honing her ability through her BFA from Alberta University of the Arts, she has always been drawn to the human form and its evolution.

Piazza's pieces are inspired from stories, novels, and movies. They vary across the genres, although most often they take off from her own writing and that of others that she finds most gripping or memorable. The subjects, all human forms, display a fine balance of beauty and pain. Diagnosed formally in December 2021, Piazza's FND symptoms started in 2018.

Second Place



Femme Renard (Female Fox)

14.00” x 11.00”

Marie-Kim Dion

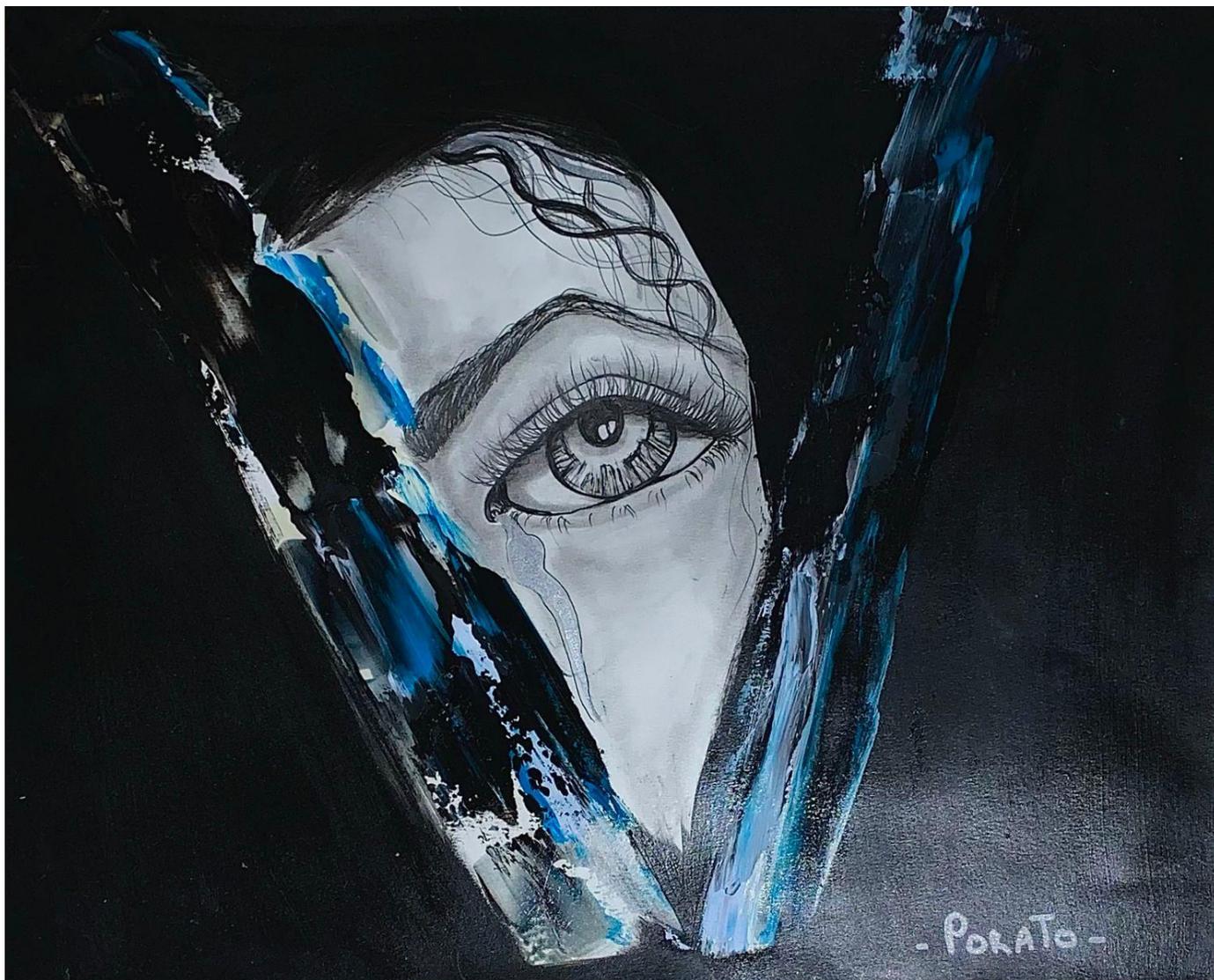
\$250.00

“It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important” quote from The Little Prince.

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In the summer of 2017, her life changed. After more than a year of medical wandering she was diagnosed with functional neurological disorder. She felt her brain was broken...a fog settled in. She experienced facial dystonia and convulsive seizures...her masks and her social roles fell one by one...saying goodbye to her nursing colleagues, to the active and enthusiastic mother that she was, to love, and certain friendships. but life gave her a gift, it gave her a refuge through art, allowing her to reinvent herself.

Third Place



V pour Vive (L for Life)

14.00" x 17.00"

Tania Porato

\$120.00

"V pour Vivre" represents shadow and light with these dark and luminous colors like my life which has been turned upside down since the arrival of FND! Its grey complexion trenches between the extremes. I walk these three areas in everything I undertake and life for me is the search for balance.

Tania is an artist who has lived with FND for almost 4 years. Born into an artistic family, she has been passionate about art since childhood, she paints in oil and other mediums, she follows in the footsteps of her mother who guides her to improve. She requires a wheelchair for mobility. FND put brakes on a lot of things she loves but fortunately art is still very present for her! Her life with FND is far from being a quiet river, but she has and continues to try various treatments and approaches with continuous determination to improve her situation. (Instagram : t4npo / Facebook: tan's art for fun)



Bald Eagle in Pine Tree

30.00" x 24"

Kenna Smith CHt

\$700.00

When I am really having an off day with my FND and all of my senses are on overload, my first line of defense is to take off my shoes and put my bare feet on the earth, look at the trees and breathe in the fresh pine needles. Connecting with the earth's energy seems to calm the misfires in my brain. This eagle represents the serenity I experience at these times.

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Kenna Smith CHt is a renowned Canadian Artist who lives and works in the Comox Valley. Her colourful paintings pay homage to her beloved west coast upbringing. Her distinctive personal style emanates joy and peace and expresses the vibrant spirit and atmosphere of her Canadian culture and First Nations influences.

As a child Kenna had a vivid imagination. From a young age. She earned a degree as a Clinical Hypnotherapist, she is a published Author, sought after public speaker and entrepreneur. She was diagnosed with FND in 2019.



War Canoe

16.00" x 20.00"

Kenna Smith CHt

\$450.00

In Haida Gwaii, there is a park where long-forgotten war canoes are left on the shores to slowly fall into disrepair and become one with nature again. When I think of this place it brings to me so many images of FND and learning to not try to fight and steer my own canoe but to let go of the paddles and allow it to lead me. Eventually, the fighting will stop, and my body will rest.

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Island Chakra

30.00” x 24.00”

Kenna Smith CHt

\$750.00

Vancouver Island is one of the very few islands in the world that is symmetrical in its' dimensions. It also has some very interesting Ley Lines crossing and dissecting it. I read an article about the energy of Ley lines and the spirituality associated with these special lines, from that the inspiration for Cha

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Doux Loup (Gentle Wolf)

14.00" x 11.00"

Marie-Kim Dion

\$225.00

Solitary like some... I have faith to find a pack to howl my heart out.

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Lionne (Lionesse)

14.00” x 11.00”

Marie-Kim Dion

\$200.00

Inspired by the Prayer to Marie Untier of Knots. I hope in me a fortress of your fragile forces, mediator of your miseries... I would go into the pit.

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She started 2 years ago, learning on her own with the medium of alcohol ink. At first she did a lot of simple self-portraits, expressing her sadness. Over time, she began to express feelings through different animals...their beauty, their singularities, as well as the strengths specific to each transported her elsewhere.



Vibrante Rubix Cube

40.00" x 33.60"

Belinda Sydenham

Rubix Cube reminds her of 3D dimensional art which I enjoy. She likes playing with different colours.

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Belinda Sydenham, age 47, she resides in Calgary Alberta.

Last year she was diagnosed with aphasia and FND (Functional Neurological Disorder).

Belinda is also a person with intellectual developmental disabilities.

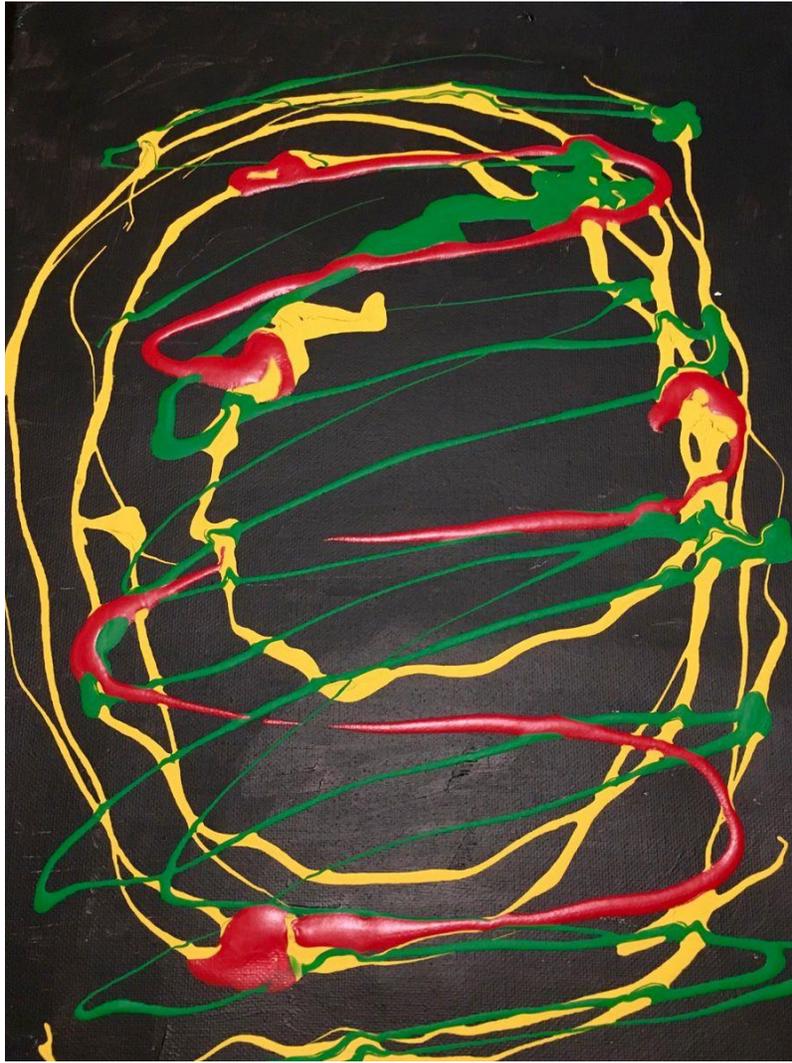
She enjoys painting on canvas to reduce stress.

She knows she is not an expert in painting but still finds it therapeutic.

Belinda has written a book that is on amazon called Road To Mental Wellness (<https://www.amazon.ca/Mental-Wellness-Belinda-Tamara-Sydenham/dp/B09R3DJW1S>) She is in the process of writing a sequel.

She partakes in the Special Olympics in 5 pin bowling and bocce ball and enjoys volunteering for the Special Olympics.

In her free time she likes doing photography work creating photo calendars for charity.



Colorful Drip Art

40.00" x 32.50"

Belinda Sydenham

Drip Art reminds her of having FND. "It's like how the computer software of our system needs fixing" She likes abstract art because it makes her use her imagination.

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Rings Are Cool

40.00” x 33.40”

Belinda Sydenham

Rings are cool...Simple, fun and stimulates imagination.

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Poem from Charlene Maskell

FND Sucks

Life was good before I got sick

No depression at all not even a hint

Trying hard as I can with all of my might

I don't want to lose this vicious fight

My children are grown but still want their mom

I want to be there for them healthy and strong

I want to live for myself and for my girls

Want to see them get older with wrinkles and pearls

There is no magic potion or no magic pill

There are limited treatments to try and get well

My brain and body are both perplexed

With a disorder that medicine leaves out on the fence

So what can I do when I've tried all there is

And nothing is working to fix what it is

It needs research and treatment of its own accord

How I wish the doctors would just get on board

My quality of life is worse than the pits

I want to live my life and not just exist

FND Sucks

Charlene Maskell



Damn, Those Legs.

24.00" x 18.00"

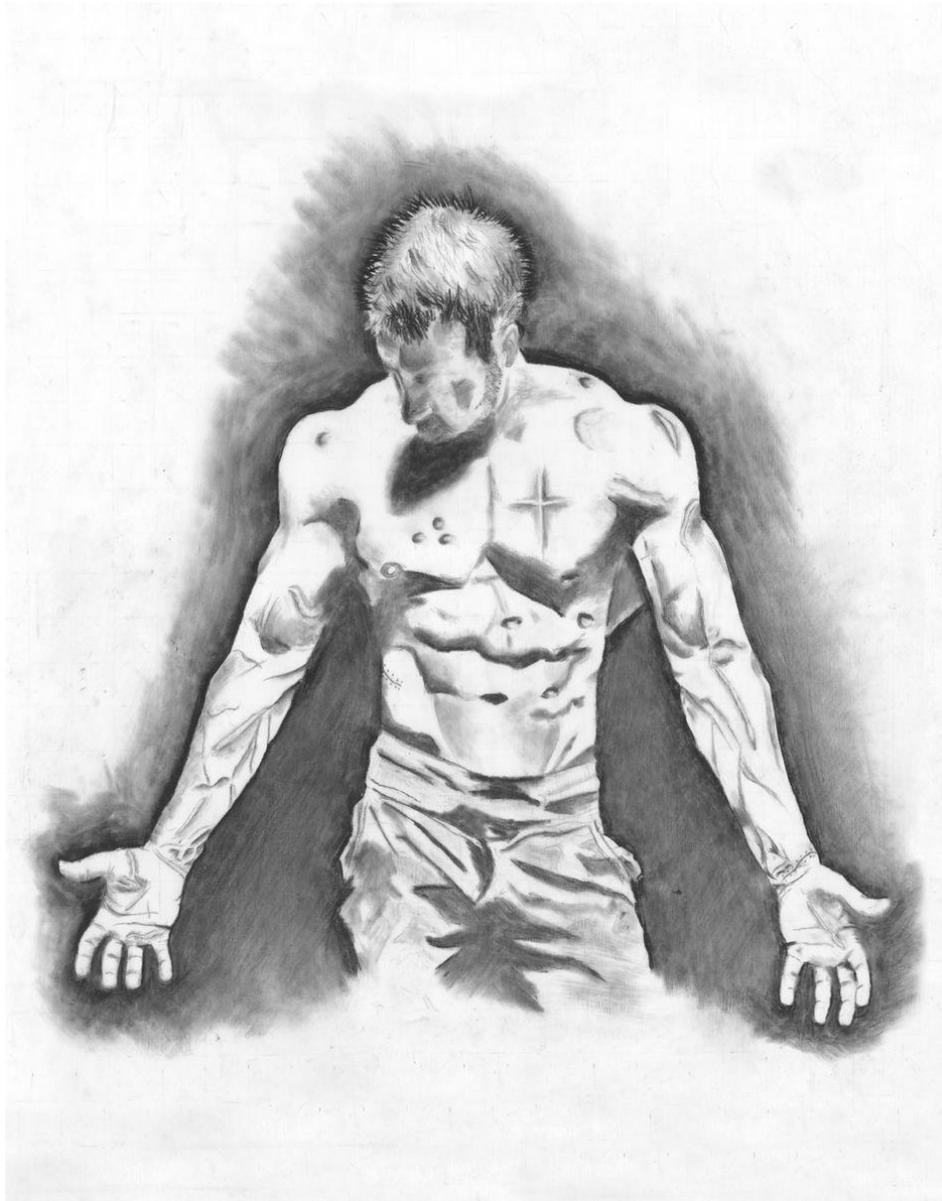
Rebecca Piazza

\$395.00

Drawing the written word into a visual image helps to ground myself in the emotions of the piece and in the character's attributes. This piece is based on a scene from my own book, *Life's Inception* (written under the pen name Rebekah Raymond). *Damn, Those Legs* shows the sultry movement of Catherine's legs crossing one another, her high heels and thigh highs driving StPatrick crazy. <https://books2read.com/u/31MLQv>. This piece is sold with its frame.

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Alberta based artist Rebecca Piazza has developed her technique as a creative through her life experiences over the past 20 years.

Piazza's pieces are inspired from stories, novels, and movies. They vary across the genres, although most often they take off from her own writing and that of others that she finds most gripping or memorable. The subjects, all human forms, display a fine balance of beauty and pain. Although their wounds and scars are sometimes visible, beauty exists in the lines of their limbs and expressions.



Arkem

Rebecca Piazza

24.00" x 18.00"

\$125.00

This piece is based on a scene from my book "Life's Legacy" (written under the pen name Rebekah Raymond), of Arkem contemplating his new, scarred body and the events that led to it. Arkem Ryder is the son of two legendary soldiers. But being in the shadow of greats also puts a target on his back. This piece reflects the horror of Arkem's physical change with the despondence that his life will go on, regardless.

<https://books2read.com/u/4NyByG>

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Love of my Life

48.00" x 36.00"

Tania Porato

\$500.00

Love of my life represents the love and exceptional union I have the privilege to live with my wife. A love like no other, the strength of our union is represented by the trees embraced and welded together! The two bodies of women are one because we are all moon for the other! Without the other we are certainly whole and fulfilled but together we form a better version of ourselves!

Tania is an artist who has lived with FND for almost 4 years. Born into an artistic family, she has been passionate about art since childhood, She follows in the footsteps of her mother who guides her to improve. She requires a wheelchair for mobility. FND put brakes on a lot of things she loves but fortunately art is still very present for her! Her life with FND is far from being a quiet river, but she has and continues to try various treatments and with continuous hope and determination to improve her situation. (Instagram : t4npo / facebook tan's art for fun)



Éphémère (Ephemeral)

18.00” x 24.00”

Tania Porato

\$350.00

Ephemeral because I try to see sadness and tears as having only a tiny lifespan! We dry our tears and we continue to move forward and grow. A tear has only a short lifespan in mine. A tear is ephemeral.

Tania is an artist who has lived with FND for almost 4 years. Born into an artistic family, she has been passionate about art since childhood, She paints in oil and other mediums, she follows in the footsteps of her mother who guides her to improve. She requires a wheelchair to get around. FND put many brakes on a lot of things she loves but fortunately art is still very present for her! Her life with FND is far from being a quiet river, but she has and continues to try various treatments and approaches with determination and hope of improving her situation.(Instagram : t4np0 / facebook tan's art for fun)



New Connections

20.00" x 28.30"

Anita Mandic

Anita Mandic lives in BC and works full time from home as a Property Accountant. She has had FND for 11 years and long Covid for 17 months...both conditions have and continue to put her through the wringer. She found a new meaning in the FND Together Support Group and fights the system for trying to sweep both conditions under the rug. She is an active volunteer of FND Together, she spends much of her spare time reviewing scientific research articles with rigorous determination. She has suspected the existence of a link between FND and neuro divergence (autism spectrum disorder) for some time now. A very recent preliminary study is confirming her hunch.



Perseverance

20.00" x 28.80"

Anita Mandic

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Journey for the cure...

*There's an urgency about
coming to therapy. As if we
should be performing
surgery or going to war.*

*The expectation is to come
out bruised and dirty,
wiping the mud from my
face bracing my body for the
second round.*

*Then an element of
desperateness. Like all life's
answers are just a fingertip
away.*

*If I could just...hold on a
little longer...the clouds will
part and I will walk into
Eden.*

*Craving enlightenment the
"glass half full" not only
positive but an acceptance of
the cycle, the glass empties
and will be refilled again.*

*Where is the purpose, the
reasons for this journey.
Have we learned and how
have we evolved?*

*Without it there is pity. Grief
for that little girl, the one
who looks back at me in my
mothers photo albums.*

*Her eyes full of life, no idea
of what lies ahead. How do
I protect her, shield her, I
cant. The pain is a part of
the journey.*

*So perhaps there is wisdom.
But how does it grow into
something beautiful?
Absorbed by the cycle,
contributing and valuable.*

*Does it become worth
something, worth it?*

*So therapy, I sit in therapy
desperate and eager to
learn. The evolution.*

R. Letellier

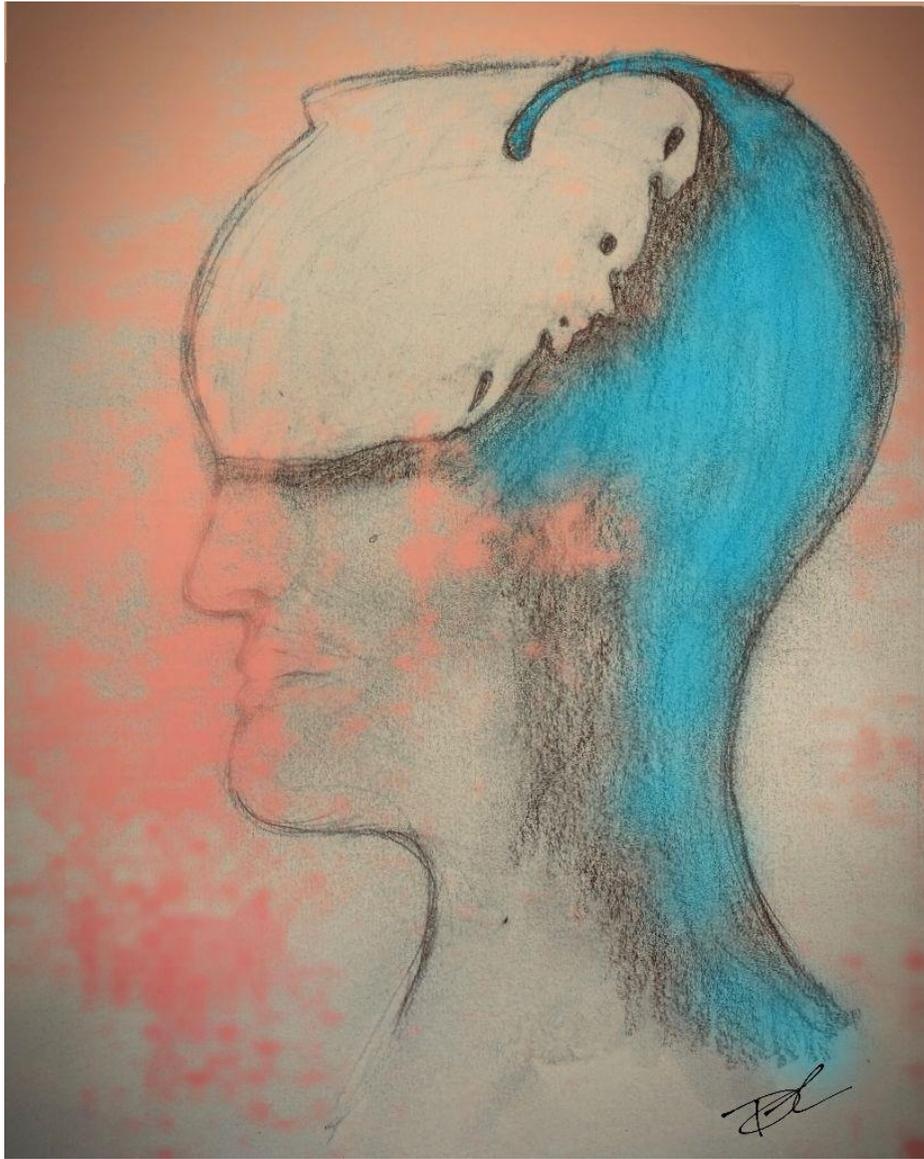
Journey for the cure

Robin Letellier

Written in 2017 after first being diagnosed with Functional Neurological Disorder. It expresses the desperation of finding a cure and returning to normal. There is reference to how much is already lost and hints at the feeling of guilt as the onus appears to fall on them responsible for their own health and expected to "get better".

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Robin is a military veteran residing in rural Alberta. Having spent most her life volunteering with various organizations it was a natural shift after becoming ill that she turned her focus toward advocacy and awareness for the disorder that severely debilitated her. She is cofounder of FND together and an active peer support outreach volunteer. She finds purpose in expressing and exploring emotion whether through art, written words, or shared experiences.



It's all in your head

20.00" x 16.00"

Robin Letellier

Created in 2022 it looks to illustrate a debilitating symptom of Functional Neurological Disorder. The head has become a fishbowl, ruled by the sloshing of water side to side with every movement. The eyes and ears are muted; everything else has been drowned out as the wave cascades through the body. There is stillness, awareness as well as a fierce determination not to allow the symptom to cascade any further. Everything begins in the head

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Is this it...

Sadness creeps from nowhere
frustration, I just can't sleep
as I come to realize
those goals are now a dream

Heating pad included
pillows from head to toe
They are my only friends now
I'm secluded and alone

It's "groundhog day" again
watch the sun behind the sheers
it makes its way across the ceiling
and night time reappears

Any attempt to perform a habit
perhaps shower maybe dress
the punishment swiftly follows
left tearful in a mess

My voice is trapped inside my head
hands aching try to write
stuttering and feeling dull
I'm slipping out of sight

The obsession to try and research
images flicker across my eyes
desperately I'm searching
for a seizure just like mine

I've stopped visiting the doctor
inquiring how to cope
he said he'd rather defer
I wish he'd give me hope

People disappoint me
where is the accessibility
the consideration any evidence
that my limitations don't define me

I'm asking is this forever,
where are the others like me
Is this all I am now,
my disability...

R. Letellier

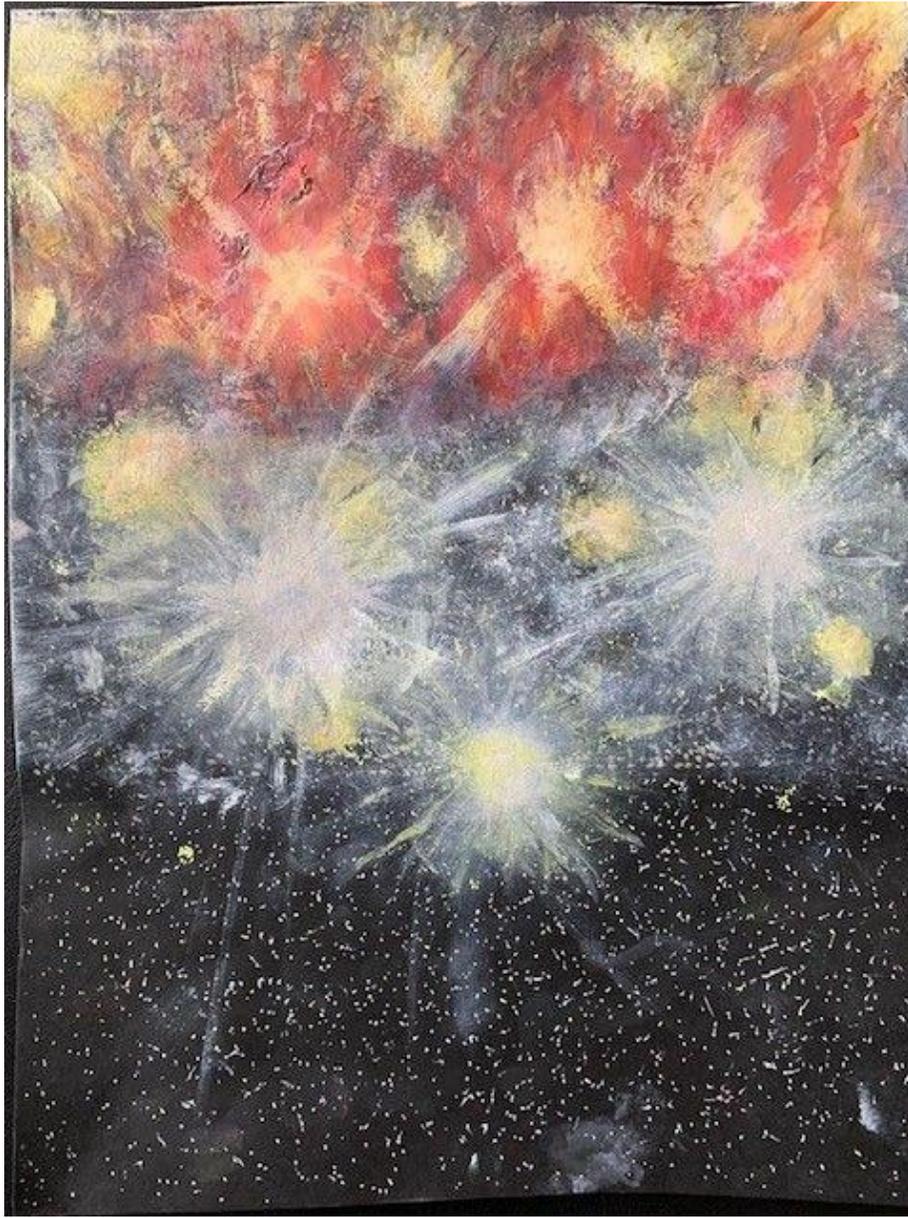
Is this it...

Robin Letellier

Written in 2018 the journey of chronic illness has now landed heavily in grief. There is a realization that the world is not designed nor considerate of disabled people. It has become apparent that this is a journey not many will understand and not many will join you on.

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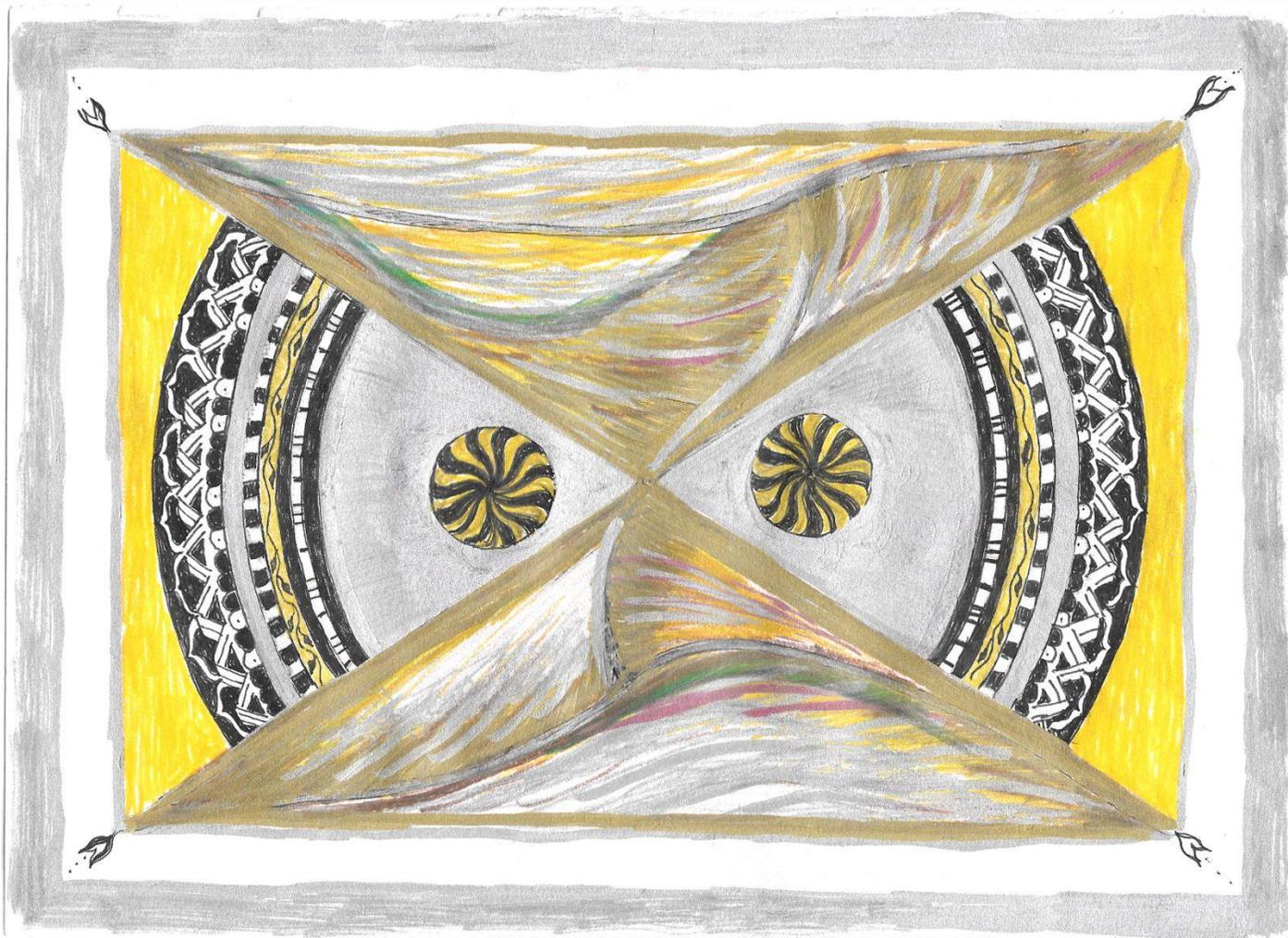
The Veil

24.00” x 18.00”

Susan “Susi” Brown

FND has affected my ability to process visual and auditory information. Not only is light brighter and sound much louder, my brain translates sound and light into kinesthetic imprints ranging from vibrations, waves, or electric shocks. Everything I see is veiled with a visual static. Even in complete darkness I see tiny shimmering points of light. The veil can be a gentle static or blinding, At times painful requiring me to keep my eyes closed for long periods.

Susi's FND was triggered following being hit by a car in 2013. She consulted with many specialists for several years following the onset of her FND with the hope of finding treatment for debilitating symptoms which ended her career as an accountant specializing in Estates and Trusts. She was finally diagnosed in 2019. As one of the co-founders of FND Together, she is passionate about strengthening the FND community and improving the support, treatment, and quality of life of FND patients in Canada.



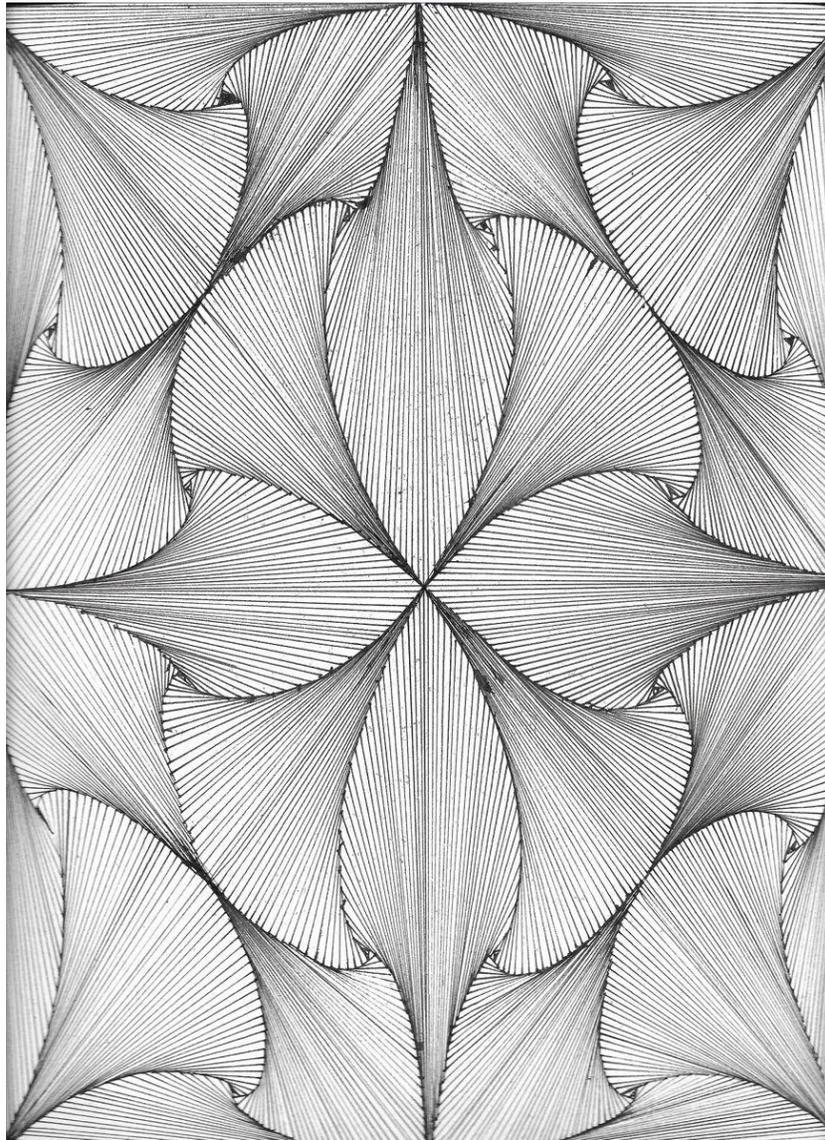
Ancient Wisdom

18.00” x 24.00”

Susan “Susi” Brown

Anchored in silence, stillness and space, the wise ones gently and patiently await.

Susi's FND was triggered following being hit by a car in 2013. She consulted with many clinicians and specialists for several years following the onset of her FND with the hope of finding treatment for debilitating symptoms which ended her career as an accountant specializing in Estates and Trusts. She was finally diagnosed in 2019. As one of the co-founders of FND Together, she is passionate about strengthening the FND community and improving the support, treatment, and quality of life of FND patients in Canada. She uses art as a form of rehabilitation and relaxation.



The Shift

24.00" x 18.00"

Susan "Susi" Brown

The artificial concept of a frontier between mind and body is a decoy which has led us astray.

The fMRI (Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) provides visual proof of the illness not being imagined, but the retraining of clinicians takes much longer than one can fathom. In name and in class, FND has shifted before, with new technology, it is shifting once more.

3,000 years of theories, debates, accusations and controversy...FND is the new name to eradicate a long list of invalid theories previously embraced. Even though no one can answer where the mind ends and the body begins, classification of medical codes (mental vs organic), which are subject to philosophy & technology over time, continue to take center stage...The shocking history of FND requires a new page.

Susi Brown has had FND since 2013. It took 6 years of consultations with many specialists to receive her diagnosis.