

Jerry Wennstrom

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About the Proposed Book ~ Jerry Wennstrom's *A Second Wind: Art Resurrected*



The interest in Wennstrom's art and life is as much for the resonant universal story his personal journey represents as it is for the actual art. There are many contemporary books and visual representations of art in the world, yet few expressions as timely, complete, and archetypal as Wennstrom's new coffee table book, *A Second Wind*.

Featured in Wennstrom's *A Second Wind: Art Resurrected* are notables who, over the decades, have been impressed with Wennstrom's works: cultural anthropologists Margaret Mead and Jean Houston; Jungian analysts and scholars Marion Woodman, Claire Dunne, and Corwin Fergus; psychologists/drug researchers Ralph Metzner, Stanislav Grof, and Christopher Bache; storytellers Laura Simms and Vi Hilbert; poet David Whyte, artist Deborah Koff-Chapin (Touch



Drawing); visionary financier Charlie Hess; the Dalai Lama's Gyuto monks, and even legendary chanteuse Lotte Lenya (of *Threepenny Opera* fame).

Jerry Wennstrom's art and life journey are embraced by those adept at dream work, anthropology, mythology, Jungian psychology, consciousness, and spirituality. The Pacifica Graduate Institute is one of the many places where Jerry has lectured and offered slide shows of his art. The interest of these groups in Jerry's art and life is as much for the resonant universal story that his personal journey represents as it is for the several decades of artwork he has produced.

However, in spite of Wennstrom's numerous stellar endorsements, "art" is judged by gallery market activity, and Jerry Wennstrom's decades of work has not been exhibited extensively in commercial



galleries. This is because, unlike most artists, he does not sell his art. His thirty-plus seven-foot tall exotic sculptures are all housed as an unbroken unit in his enormous mural covered home exhibit hall, tucked in the woods of Whidbey Island, WA.

And ... few of Wennstrom's early paintings currently exist. The 1975 painting seen left was one of dozens destroyed (by his own hand) one night in 1979, as he had realized he had made "painting" his religion. He explains, "I think I was trying to paint my way to heaven until I realized you can't get there from here. A quantum leap in consciousness was required, and that is not achieved through will, intelligence, or good intention." By letting go of his identity as an artist, he set about finding out who he was, separate from the limitations of physical creation.

The stories of this early phase, and Wennstrom's many years self-exiled from an art career, were told in his colorful biographical book, *The Inspired Heart: An Artist's Journey of Transformation* with Foreword by *Care of the Soul* author Thomas Moore (Sentient Publications, 2002.) In 2000, a Parabola DVD documentary, *In*

the Hands of Alchemy, was released showing his early painting career, the destruction of his life's works, the story of his personal transformation, and his return to art through sculpture. Poet David Whyte and the Dalai Lama's Gyoto monks are just some who appear in this fascinating film.

Wennstrom's efforts over the past two years have been – not carving – but the writing and design of a unique, lavishly illustrated coffee table book, *A Second Wind: Art Resurrected*, which features studio photography by Andrew van Leeuwen and includes numerous transformational stories. This new book represents both the art left behind and the return to art with a lighter heart. Or, to use Wennstrom's own words, it represents art done “without compulsion, for no reason at all.”

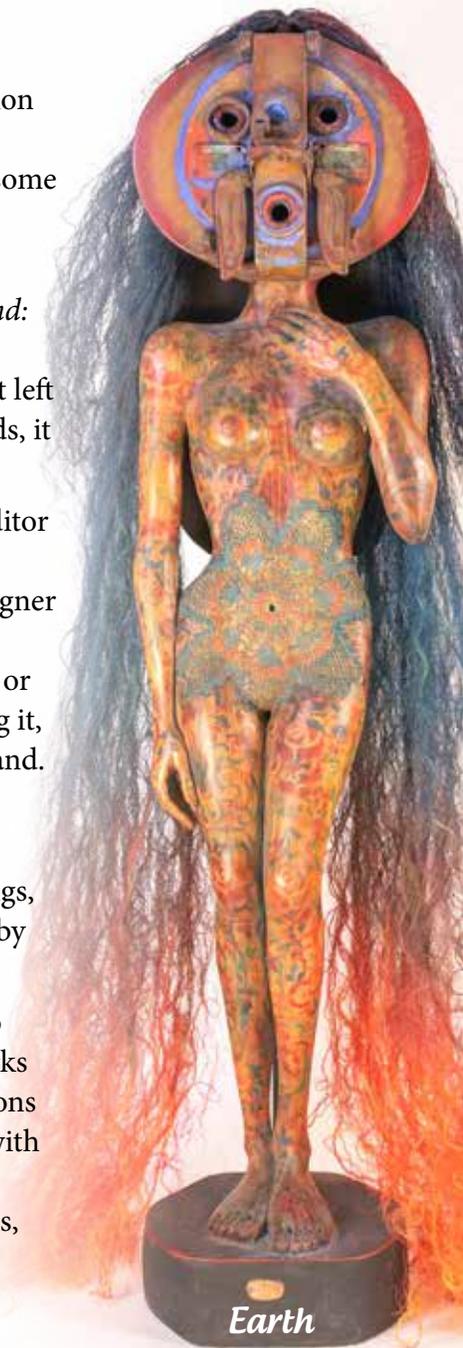
The 248-page *A Second Wind* was substantive edited by the former managing editor of a New Age trade magazine and designed in the publishing industry's standard, InDesign. “We did not start out to take the book to completion,” states editor/designer Carol Wright. “I have known Jerry for twenty years and offered to bring his rough, ten-month-long design project into InDesign, to offer sample chapters to an agent or publisher. That was December of 2019. When the pandemic hit, we kept improving it, then decided to ‘go the distance.’ Our design, editing, and writing went hand-in-hand. And when I sensed a gap, Jerry provided more photos, missing details, and entire stories. Some of them mind blowing, even to me!”

Wright notes that (luckily) there were almost fifty slides of his destroyed paintings, so those photographs were scanned, restored, and organized, chronologically and by styles. The resulting book spans Wennstrom's entire creative life.

Throughout the book are commentaries, poems, and other creative responses to his life and art by Wennstrom's associates. These highlight either individual artworks or the impact Wennstrom's art and life has had upon their lives. Several back sections focus on his wife and muse, Marilyn Strong, Wennstrom's delightful interactions with children, the building of a meditation tower (complete with blessing ceremony by Tibetan monks), their art-loaded home and garden, public installations and murals, and how the book was made.

Retired literary agent Ned Leavitt was impressed, “Your book is amazing – an artistic revelation full of rich and original ideas and images. I think it's an amazing project and was very intrigued.”

For More Information. Click on the web address to view pages: www.youtube.com/user/marjercom
The Inspired Heart book: www.handsofalchemy.com/media/writings/inspiredheart/default.htm
In the Hands of Alchemy DVD: www.handsofalchemy.com/media/film/handssofalchemy.htm



Earth
one of the
Four Elements
figures

TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE BOOK

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- Most articles cover two or four pages, and with entirely separate topics covered in sections at the back. To shorten the book, many could be removed without significantly altering the book's overall editorial flow.
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