

ART 105



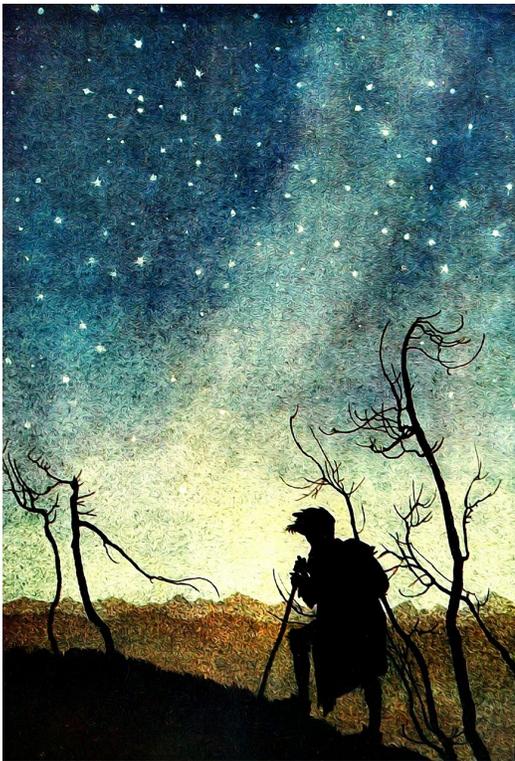
THE POWER OF STORY:
In a time of isolation



BRINGING IT BACK HOME:
An interview with
Doug Hammett

ART NEWS

The Power of Story: in a time of isolation



Story is an essential component of our lives. It is one of the ways we communicate and carry into the future our experiences, ideas and feelings. Humanity's ancient stories have many forms, some presented through images and word while others are through movement and sound. They can be literal and scientific on one end of the spectrum and mystical and metaphoric on the other.

A story can describe what happened to us that day or hold a narrative of our epic life's journey. It serves as a vehicle to share our discoveries and moments of transformations. This said, there are times we might not know the full narrative, fiction or non-fiction. Story is what gives you that distance needed to see the larger picture for ourselves and others.

Our basic need to understand, "Where am I from?, What just happened?, What am I doing?, and Where is this all going?", is why stories continue to be an important part of our lives. Mythologies, religious beliefs, and sacred texts hold the answers to these questions for separate communities around the world. These stories are a big part of what makes a community. The myths and commonly held images and stories are what hold the community together.

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As time continues, the stories and their meanings shift. Ultimately the sense of control through understanding gives way to other future narratives and their reasoning. Overall, the very nature of our story is almost as ephemeral as things that it attempts to describe.

Sitting around a fire, cooking a meal, huddling in community are basic settings for the sharing of stories. It is an opportunity to be seen, heard and add to the mix. How a story is received is up for grabs. Will people be interested? Will it carry meaning or have longevity? Who knows? What is important is that people have the opportunity to share their stories and that those stories may inspire others in their life’s journey.



BRINGING IT BACK HOME: an interview with Doug Hammett



Doug Hammett is a painter, sculptor, and performance artist. Received an MFA from Art Center in Pasadena. His art studio is based in the Arts District of Los Angeles. He serves as Director of Art 105 and publisher for Brush to Pen Publications. A lifetime of art making and the exploration of many disciplines continues to influence his current works and new entrepreneurial endeavors.

The Covid pandemic has forced the closure of Art 105’s doors, and with that his creative direction has shifted. We take this time to interview Doug and see what has been brewing behind closed doors.

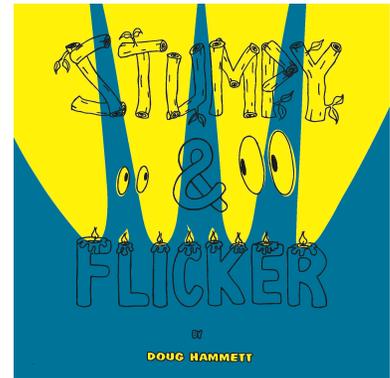
During this time of social distancing and the closed doors of ART 105, what is happening behind the scenes for you?

During the pandemic and the threat of death right around the corner, there are some basic questions that have come up. “If I were to die tomorrow, what do I need to do to feel complete? What projects need to be finished, what stories need to be told?”

As I have experienced the death of both parents recently and sort through their belongings I am hit with the question, “How do I want to be remembered?, What is my legacy? Are the things that I am holding onto important? Where do I want to put my time and energy these days?”

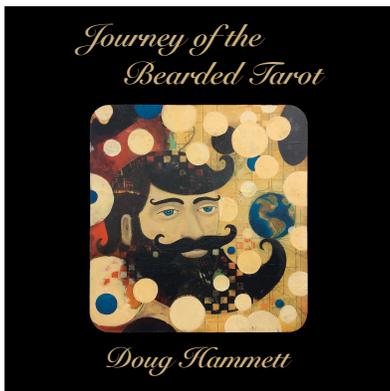
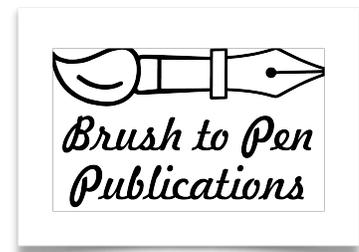
What did you discover during this re-evaluation?

There was an unfinished illustrated book I created 27 years ago, that came into my hands when reorganizing things in my parents home. This book was called "Stumpy and Flicker". Most of the work had been done, yet it needed some TLC to take it to the next level for publishing. The story about a relationship between a candle and a stump came to life again as I refined the illustrations and text. That feeling of accomplishment fueled a handful of other illustrated books and sparked the formation of my own book publication business called Brush to Pen.



What drew you to creating books?

I have had this love for stories told through image. This may be due to the fact that I had a wandering eye and the task of reading was physically a challenge. Graphic novels, comics, and children books would win me over even into my adulthood. There was something about illustrations that allowed my mind to dive deep into a story, and even encourage my imagination to journey beyond the storyline.



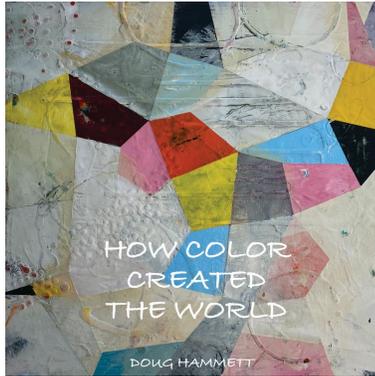
What is your process in creating illustrated books?

My process is the opposite of how most illustrated books are made. I start with the illustration first and the text comes later. An image, shape, or character may spark my interest. In an attempt to understand them I create more paintings until a linear narrative starts to unfold before me. More characters emerge and eventually a larger story develops. Text enters my process at this point to help support the narrative, often in a playful manner. This is an exciting intuitive process of discovery where the unknown becomes known.

How has this process of creation served you as an artist?

There are times, in creating an abstract painting, that I become disinterested. This is often due to the fact that there is no story associated with the work. The moment I find a character or narration that carries meaning beyond the solo piece, my energy comes back. I always feel better when I am working on a series that has purpose beyond the individual pieces. There may be an analogy to life here...something like: "It is important to find a purpose and place in a community for a fulfilling life."





What are some of the books you have created?

After creating my book, “Stumpy and Flicker” I moved right into another illustrated book called “How Color Created the World”. This is a creation story using my “I Candy” series paintings created over the past 2 years. The “Men Rrrr Dogs” book playfully presents my Man Dogs paintings in an Adults Only story with a very happy ending. I now have two versions of the Bearded Journey Tarot card decks, one full color painted illustrations and the other in stark black and white. Both now have book versions to show off the linear storyline of the deck. Currently Brad Davis and I are documenting and presenting local artwork in a 3 volume set called “Los Angeles Street Art”

Is there anything else you would like to share?

It is reassuring that even with the amount of time I have spent on each of these books, from creating the art and writing the text to designing the books on the computer, I still have the drive to make more. Somehow it works.

Creative projects come and go. Hopefully this phase of my life will continue for some time. As far as Art 105 goes, I've never been interested in running a gallery that is just putting up one art show after another. One thing I naturally do in life is hold space for creativity and play where stories that we hold deep in our soul can come out organically in many forms. This can be through paintings, sculpture, music, theater, books, movement, etc. Maybe, we're not the ones telling the story, it's the story that is telling us.



For more information about Doug:

DougHammett.gallery

BrushtoPen.com

BeardedJourney.net

JourneyoftheBeardedTarot.com



ART105 is a center for hosting and presenting art, music, films, theater, performances, spoken word, educational lectures and workshops.

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