

Introducing the IEATA February 2023 Member Spotlight:

Fyre Jean Graveline



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Clowning at LIFE as Medicine OnLine Immersion Studio, Summer 2020. Background Image is Ripped Collage called Dearest Darling Divine FairyGoodMother.

Biography

fyrejean (Pronouns: We) is a Two Spirited Métis, a visionary, a prolific artist, a social justice and environmental activist. We are a Resilient Survivor of childhood sexual trauma and Day School in Northern Manitoba, Canada and an intergenerational descendent of survivors of Residential Schooling. We served as a support worker during unfolding of Indian Residential School Settlement process, was on National Counselling Team for Truth and Reconciliation Commission events, and supported many through horrific revealings of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls and TwoSpirited Inquiry

We are keenly interested in healing deep wounds of EmBodied, Intergenerational, Collective and Ecological Traumas. We remain continuously curious about how our Traumas and our Resiliencies can become more visible within our soCalled Personal Stories when we name, acknowledge and resist painful historical, current and still evolving structures of colonial patriarchal domination, violation and extractivism. As Ceremonial leader, therapist, artist, activist, and educator we work, play and pray on a daily basis to Challenge Domination in all forms by ReWeaving Connections between Spirituality, Healing, Arts, Mother Earth, and Social Change. We are committed to: ReEstablishing our Sacred Powers as Two Spirited, and as WomenBodied; Inspiring Reconcili-Actions between Indigenous and Settler Nations; Enhancing a more Sustainable Relationship for and with Mother Earth; and Insisting on Rights of All Our Relations to Be, Believe, Belong and Become.

fyrejean is an author of several books, Circle Works: Transforming Eurocentric Consciousness (Fernwood 1998) Healing Wounded Hearts (Fernwood 2004), and Circle Works: Transforming Aboriginal Literacy, Ningwakwe 2012). We are a prolific writer and have published and performed many chapters, articles and poems, including: "HeARTfull Interdependence: An Indigenous Path to Restoring Peace" in Art Therapy as an Instrument of Peace. Edited by Jacqueline and William Fehlner, Peaceful View Publishing, Nelson BC, 2014; and "Soul Printing: Opening to Spiritual Resilience" and "Exploring Resiliency through Mother Earth: A Natural Artist" in Resiliency, Recovery and Art Therapy. A collection of Articles 36th Canadian Art Therapy Association Conference, Halifax, NS. Edited by Pattie Ann Pryma, Fyre Jean Graveline, and Tzafi Weinberg, 2015. We are currently completing a still emerging manuscript on powers of Healing Arts, potentially entitled LIFE as Medicine (2023), which brings together radical transformative theories and practices from within the intersection and overlap of Lived, Indigenous, Feminist, and Ecological frameworks.

What drew you to the field of expressive arts?

i have always been an expressive artist, as a child i loved to create with natural materials—mud, sticks, stones and flowers and sing songs i heard from Birds, Frogs, and Trees. i studied puppetry and psychodrama as i moved through training as a social worker, and soon realized that traumatic events could be surfaced and expressed with more ease through Expressive Arts. Once i became an adult educator for Indigenous therapists, i worked tirelessly to bring ecological knowledges into our practices and returned more deeply to study ecoArts, and then art therapy, and now to naturally integrate all forms of healing arts into a heARTivist practice that brings individual healing together with social justice, and environmental activism.



Experiencing Me as Tree: We as Forest Embodied Meditation at Ancient Redwood Forest in California, Summer 2017

How are you implementing multimodal expressive arts in the domains of therapeutic work, artistic practice, consultation, education, and activism?

Framework of practice we implement and teach is named LIFE as Medicine. We bring together Lived Experience, Indigenous Spirituality, Feminist Relations, and Ecological InterDependence to heal, transform and empower collaboratively with individuals, families, groups and communities. We acknowledge multiple interwoven and interactive traumas within our shared context of social structures of dominant and still dominating colonialism, heteropatriarchy, capitalism and extractivism—all of which are more visible than ever during these times of systems crashing and bashing. We work and play and pray to reAwaken our Ancestral Resiliencies and reStory our capAbilities and responseAbilities as Beings to love and care for Earth Mother while raising consciousness of ever present and ever deepening climate catastrophe.



Creating EcoArt Bricolage and Offerings at Ancient Spirals Retreat Center, Saskatchewan, Summer 2019

How do you envision your work and artistic practice moving forward?

We are currently collaborating with a Circle of Indigenous Creatives and Allies to launch a new School that focuses on LIFE as Medicine teachings. We are Offering holistic Indigenous Healing Arts—which, flowing with Ancestral Wisdom, will be multimodal including song, dance, story, poetry, and visual rePresentations (Images), along with eco and embodied medicinal Arts like Tree Communication and Herbalism. We are currently designing and delivering professional development as well as land based workshops for community healing. Some of our recent past Offerings are included in this article in CATA's Envisage

<https://www.canadianarttherapy.org/envisage/envisage-fall-2022-montgomery>. Our upcoming offerings are listed at the end of the article, and we will be offering Collaborative EagleVision on an ongoing basis for those working with or aspiring to work and play with Indigenous Peoples through Healing Arts. <https://lifeasmedicine.ca/workshops-events/>.

We are also preparing to release a new book that shares thoughts and practices, art and poetic inquiry generated with in LIFE as Medicine processes. Future Offerings will flow from what interest that release will bring. For 40 years we have had a practice focus on healing individual and intergenerational trauma, and am now deeply engaged with thought leaders and teachers in working on healing Ancestral and Collective Trauma through larger community and collaborative processes. We extend this analysis to include Ecological Trauma and continuously work and play and pray to envision how and when to weave these evolving knowledges with in arts based healing and transformational processes.

Artistic practices include being a storyteller, a poet, a singer, a clown/performer, and a visual artist. We understand Arts as vitally linked to social transformation and have continuously and consciously woven understandings of power structures impacting and confining humanity with in all forms of Creation. My artistic work and play over the last number of decades emphasizes ReMatriation, bringing attention to particular ways in which heteropatriarchal domination, and in particular sexual violence has impacted me and my relatives over lifetimes and intergenerationally. Within the last 10 years we have been even more consciously committed to speaking for and with, arting up, and showing up for and with Earth Mother, GrandMother Moon and All Our Relations. More recently we have been emerging ways to balance Divine Feminine and Divine Masculine energies through ceremony, song, movement and play. Since COVID19 we began to engage more exclusively in EcoArts, interacting with materials with less carbon footprint, that can be accessible without capital exchange. This includes ecoArts techniques now Offered in Sessions, Circles and Gatherings, including EcoBricolage, MultiMedia Ripped Collage, and Play.Pray with Foods.

What are your thoughts on the current role of expressive arts in your region and internationally?

Currently, expressive arts is emerging from the colonial shadow and being renamed and reclaimed as an inherent birthright and Ancestral practice for us as Indigenous peoples in Canada. More broadly defined Indigenous Healing Arts is inclusive of Expressive Arts. Art Therapy, which tends to be more visual and more psychoanalytical, is also being reframed and renamed, decolonized and Indigenized. LIFE as Medicine is currently actively engaged on the front lines of this emergence Nationally and given expressed interest from Europe, America, and South America we believe we will soon be much more actively involved in emerging internationally.

How does being a part of IEATA impact your work in expressive arts?

IEATA has had a huge role in launching the first Canadian program our LIFE as Medicine Indigenous Leadership Team initiated at WHEAT Institute in 2019. Many of us met at IEATA Gathering in 2017 called Indigenous Roots of Expressive Arts Therapy where several Indigenous keynote speakers and presenters, including myself were invited to share.

Many of our Indigenous Collaborators were speakers, presenters and attendees at the 2017 IEATA Gathering and we have fond memories of our time there. Post gathering we began to plan for the Indigenized programs that are still evolving and will soon be reemerging and running through LIFE as Medicine. Soon we will be Offering a Certificate in Indigenous Healing Arts for practitioners, and a Diploma which will allow practitioners to qualify in both Art Therapy and Expressive Arts. We have been a presenter at a membership forum for IEATA, and have attended several sessions with members, and have enjoyed, especially since COVID, opportunities to connect with like minded creative engaged Beings. As a person deeply committed to arts for social change i have particularly enjoyed opportunities to connect with members also dedicated to bringing healing arts to these more radical and transformative spaces and places.

We definitely are committed to keeping connected to IEATA, and IEATA Canada networks and hope that any Indigenous and Ally members will contact us with Offerings and Asks.



Closing heART Show: LIFE as Medicine Immersion Studio, Summer of 2019

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