

SAILING IN THE WIND'S EYE

*...celebrating art created by people who
have had direct experience of mental illness.*

When my family was brainstorming to suggest a title for this show, we looked for inspiration to the writings of people whose lives were affected by mental illness. This word image stood out from the pages of Kay Jamison's book, "Touched With Fire". It's a book that explores, in writers, the influence of their manic-depressive temperament in their creative work.

On the dedication page is a quote:

*To those who, by the dint of glass and vapour,
Discover stars, and sail in the wind's eye –
–Byron*

To me, regarding my own artistic temperament - which is, I'm sure, tied into my own manic depressive nature - the most positive, exciting moments in my life are when I'm in the throes of making the elements of my abilities and my chosen medium come together to create something that's new, unique - that exercises that strong drive to express myself creatively.

That drive isn't always with me. Sometimes I'm swamped by the drudgery and complexity of this world, - or tossed about in its emotion and craziness, - or weary, worrying in the doldrums of low energy, times when I can't get behind anything.

But those wonderful creative times when I'm doing my art are somewhat like a ship sailing smoothly through a calm mellow place, having overcome the perils of this often tumultuous existence.

One should be careful interpreting this metaphor for others contributing to this show. People have created these things in all different moods and for many different reasons - some in the full blast of their particular storms - some in a shelter - some in the peace of practicing their craft - some exorcising demons - some simply enjoying creating something beautiful. We might all have a different idea of what it is to "sail in the wind's eye".

All the artists participating in this show have dealt with mental illness. They are survivors. This collection of work is an exciting contribution to the richness and diversity of our human condition. It's a credit to the hopefulness and resilience of the human spirit.

I hope it will not only entertain and provoke artistic thought but educate and influence people about mental illness, focusing on the positive creative work so many are doing. Especially I hope it will feed back well-deserved praise to the contributors - to nourish that part of their egos that cares so much to create these things.

Bruce Saunders October 1, 1995