

Betsy Cole Finds Herself Again in Art

Originally online at:

<https://www.healing-power-of-art.org/betsy-cole-finds-herself-again-in-art/>

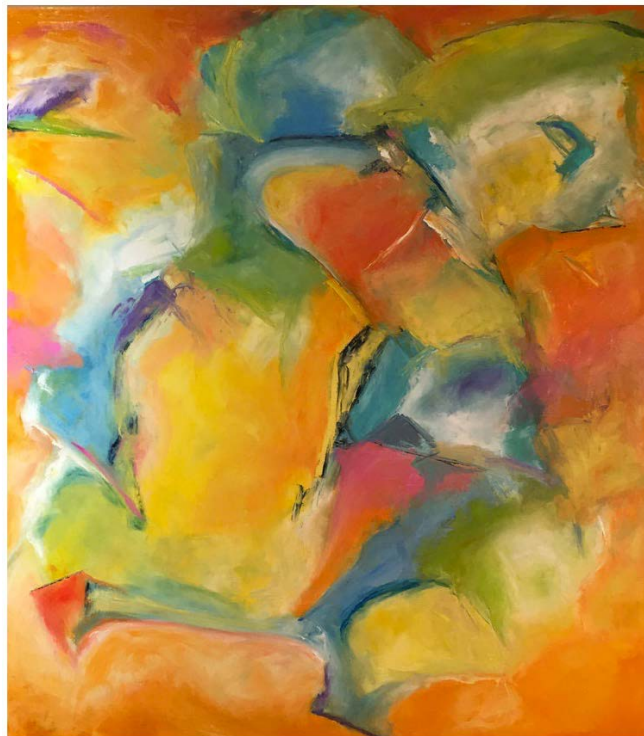
By Guest Writer 2 Comments

Betsy Cole is an artist who expresses her feelings in free-flowing colorful abstract paintings. She reminds us of the importance of letting go and states, "I meditate and there is no planning or thinking, no judgment and no expectations." After experiencing a series of traumas and challenges, she finally found the joy in art that she once knew as a child. In this article she shares her experience about finding her way back to her childhood freedom in the world of color. During the past five years she has had numerous exhibitions in national and local shows in the Rocky Mountain region. She participates in many community events and teaches painting in her studio in Boulder, Colorado. Visit her website at www.betsycoleart.com. ~ Renée Phillips

Betsy Cole's Story

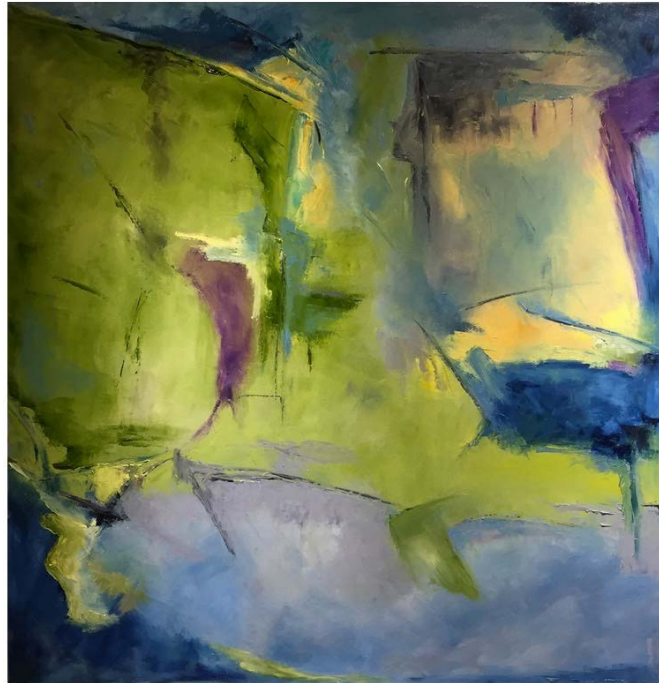
One of my earliest childhood memories was playing with crayons and paint. There was joy and excitement in the world of color. It was a time of innocence.

The sexual abuse tore it apart. I shut down, walls went up. The world became a terrifying place. Suddenly, I was no longer good and certainly not good enough. Emotionally paralyzed, I managed to survive over the years because an inner determination grew stronger as new challenges came my way family alcoholism, a serious bike accident, divorce, breast cancer.



Betsy Cole, #8655, oil on canvas, 40" x 36".

At each turn, I confronted inner demons and the constant fear of failing. So much work was needed to build trust and self-confidence. If we can see the challenges through, we know they will make us stronger but that isn't always an easy task. I had amazing support. Slowly a belief in myself and trust in others began to appear.



Betsy Cole, #8672, oil on canvas, 36" x 36".

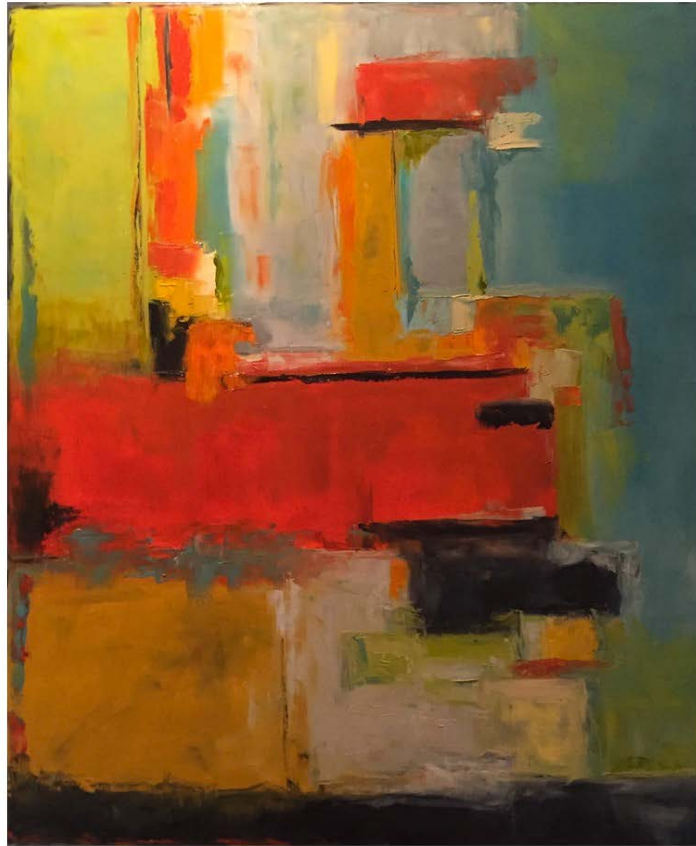
Artists always intrigued me. I observed them and their mysterious artworks with trepidation. I wanted to be like them. To paint and feel free seemed impossible. I never “fit in.” Instead, I became an interior designer which meant creating the visions of others. I loved it — but it was empty. I wanted to create visions of my own.

I knew it would be tragic and difficult to confront death without ever embracing what I always wanted to do. It took all of that my strength and determination to make even the slightest attempt. The fear was overwhelming.

First, there were childlike swirly paintings. Then I tried figurative painting; that triggered my crippling perfectionism. Simple circles and squares came next. Nothing worked, nothing felt “right.” Art classes ended in failure and tears — the teacher’s tyrannical “musts” and “shoulds.”

On a trip to Bali I met an artist who became my mentor. Three more trips followed. Life was serene there. I felt safe, my fears melted away and my body relaxed. I discovered freedom and realized that there was no right way and whatever I did was just fine. I learned to paint what spilled out honestly with no expectations and to paint with a new feeling which I now call a connection to spirit, something beyond me and my world.

I gained confidence and became as happy and joyful as I could remember. My life changed completely.



Betsy Cole, #8648, oil on canvas, 36" x 30".

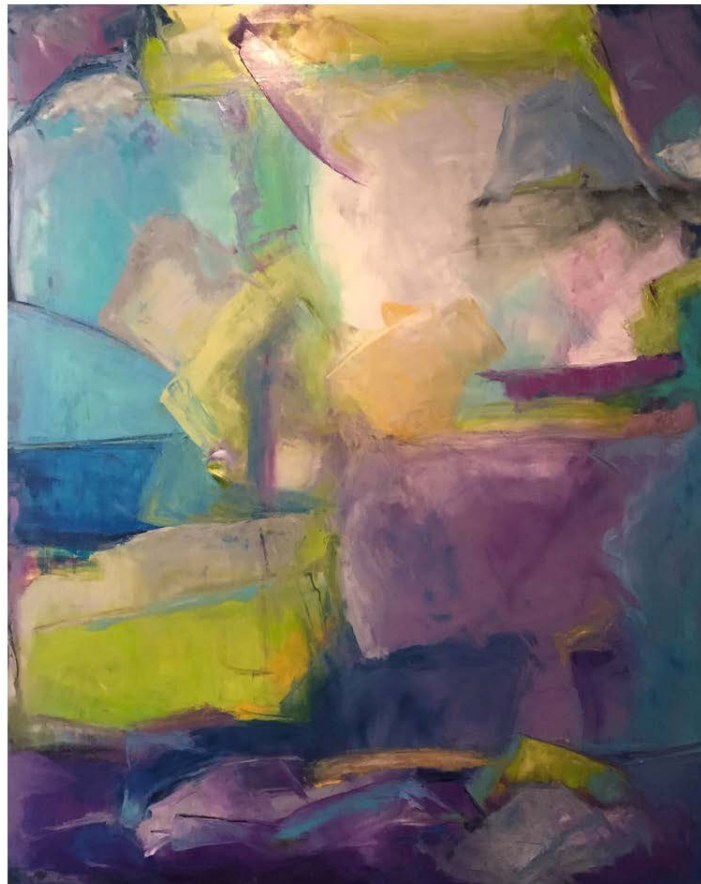
I continue to paint my feelings. I meditate and there is no planning or thinking, no judgment and no expectations. My arm movements and the colors I select represent my feelings at that moment.

Painting becomes play! I never know what's coming next. Often, I turn the canvas, and everything changes. My love of bright colors came out of nowhere — or maybe, just maybe, it came from that little girl I once was, so giddy and carefree with her finger paints and crayons.

When I try to force an idea or concept, the painting never feels right. Only by letting go does it everything begin to flow. With more awareness and discovery of self, I realize that art brings my insides out and destroys the darkness and pain. It gives me energy, healing energy, which I love to share.

My life is shared, and the pain is eased out of my soul. This was what I was meant to do. This is who I am meant to be.

Wonderful things have already occurred in my short career as an artist: events and exhibits have brought me closer to others, and this has led me to teach — something I would never have dreamed of!



Betsy Cole, #8671, oil on canvas, 60" x 48".

The rewards are tremendous. When my students and I are stuck, we close our eyes and paint. What appears is amazing because the art is coming from the inside out. We honor and accept these “blind” paintings without judgment, for they honestly represent what we felt at that moment.

I am truly grateful: Grateful for the courage which allowed me to embrace my long-lost passion and grateful for the ways in which I can use it to help others. Even on the most difficult days, a piece of my life is shared, and the pain is eased out of my soul. Life is a baffling, scary, and miraculous journey.

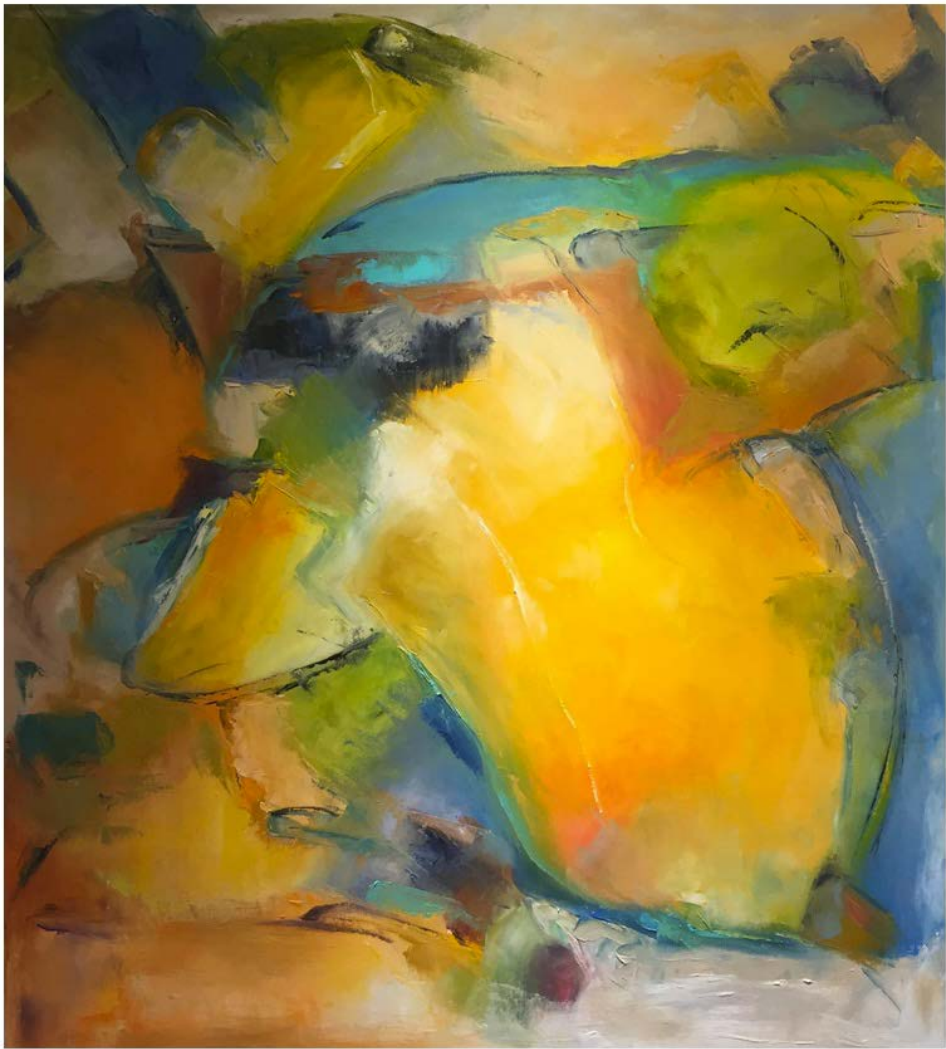
How fortunate that I believed that it is never too late to try.

Visit Betsy Cole’s website: <https://www.betsycoleart.com>

Join Betsy Cole on social Media

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/betsycole6>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/betsycoleart/>



Betsy Cole, #8661, oil on canvas, 40" x 36".