



## **One Grateful Girl** Marilyn Traeger

### **art**

Art has always been my thing. I got my love of art from my father, Samuel Traeger and learned about gratitude, learning, & entertaining myself from my mother, Buddy Wolfson Traeger, their gentle influence has remained with me to this day. Forever thanks.

My work began with incessant drawing and grew through the years as I explored various media including lithography, oils, acrylics, photography, mixed media, Photoshop, and most recently Procreate. Each medium beckoned me and allowed me to explore it with open arms. "You can do this, you might not do me as well as you would like, but you will learn something from me."

You could see my work in publications, art shows, and private collections in Florida and North Carolina. But most of my creative time has been spent with kids. I graduated from the Miami-Dade County Public Schools after thirty-seven years of PLORKING\*! during that time I was honored to receive many awards, speak at conferences, publish, and share my love of art & life with some of my favorite people - both kids and non-kids.

### **gratitude**

I am deeply grateful for the people and places in my life – both past and present. The health that supports my life is essential to my ability to feel gratitude and make and live in art. I've most recently arrived at a startling conclusion, which fills me an intense sense of gratitude,- Art it has influenced and shaped the whole of my life. Think about it, sadly, some of the people I have loved only exist in spirit and in my heart. Some places are only located in blurred feelings and memories, but art is a constant. I don't have to be making it for it to be with me. Art helps me see the world as a kinder and gentler



place. It leads me to do and to help. And when dark events overwhelm and disgust me, art saves me.

### **sad girl series**

This series began 11/9, not coincidentally the day after the 2016 American presidential election. I find it numerically ironic that the digits reflect the emergency response phone number and of course the 9/11 disasters.

The Sad Girls began with A Piece of My Heart, followed by Merchandise & Broken Ladders.

The Paris Accord soon followed and since that time there has unfortunately been no shortage of awful, mind-blowing behavior coming from the idiot-in-chief. The Parkland killings, the gun violence, the children in cages the separation of families all speak to me, no, scream requiring me to paint for the sake of sanity and the need to voice my disgust.

The portraits are reimagined females that I either know or have seen in print. They are wrapped in imagery and/or text to help others have a clue of my intent.

### **grateful girls**

This series began 11/2, not coincidentally only days before the American 2020 presidential election. Now the Sad Girls, amidst the pandemic and the election, are becoming more positive. My Sad Girls will be repurposed and reimagined. They will morph from sad to grateful. You can see how Merchandise has been reimagined into Ownership.

The concept of reworking art is nothing new. A pentimento in painting, is the presence or emergence of earlier images, forms, or strokes that have been changed and painted over. Artists have been doing it for centuries. Reimagined artworks with altered images can lead to new meanings. Because I use Photoshop or



Procreate, my pentimenti do not destroy the original paintings. After importing a digital image of my painting, I add layers of color texture, and photographic images to change the mood and meaning of the work. It's a win win!

## The Quest

So why Art and Gratitude? I'm not really sure. I guess this is a need-to-know issue for me. Am I naïve to think that this clear but very subjective connection is not at the forefront of many discussions? When I looked on the Internet, I was blown away by the complete and utter lack of information on A&G. I couldn't Google it and get any sense of satisfaction from the 223,000,000 results that poured in. No, I didn't look at all of them. Some of the sites I visited came close but mostly skirted the issue. Lots of information about art of course, and information about gratitude, but no strong discussion about how the two connect.

I was so very happy to discover Amy Oestreicher's inspiring story of how creativity gave her the means to manage obstacles in her life at [amyoes.com](http://amyoes.com). Her words and her works compelled me to want to find out more.

So, if this thing is not present and not all over the place, must I then imagine it into reality? Would you help me?

Since I began this quest, I've been grateful to:

- connect and reconnect with many people
- read stories of how writers understand art and gratitude
- see and feel artworks filled with gratitude
- build a website to better organize information
- share it with other like-minded searchers

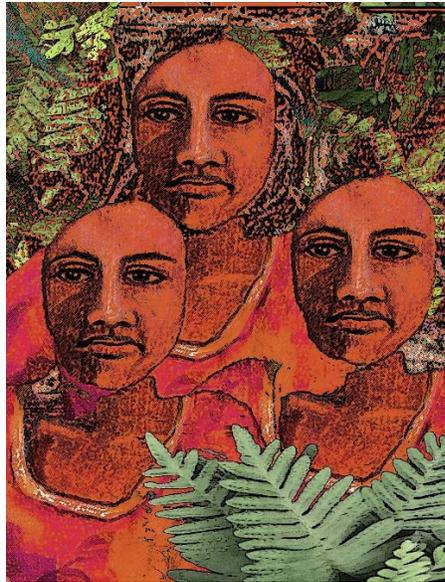
In this short time, I've begun to understand:



- there is no one answer
- everyone has a different story to tell or make
- it's difficult to pin down subjective information
- that art, when mixed with gratitude, is so much richer for both makers and viewers

Thank you for taking the time to read through my ramblings. I am more an artist than a writer.

art & GRATITUDE



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