

# A DAY IN THE ARTS

## Making art accessible to all

May 6, 2009 ADA0054 [www.adayinthearts.com](http://www.adayinthearts.com)

## RELAX AND DRAW!

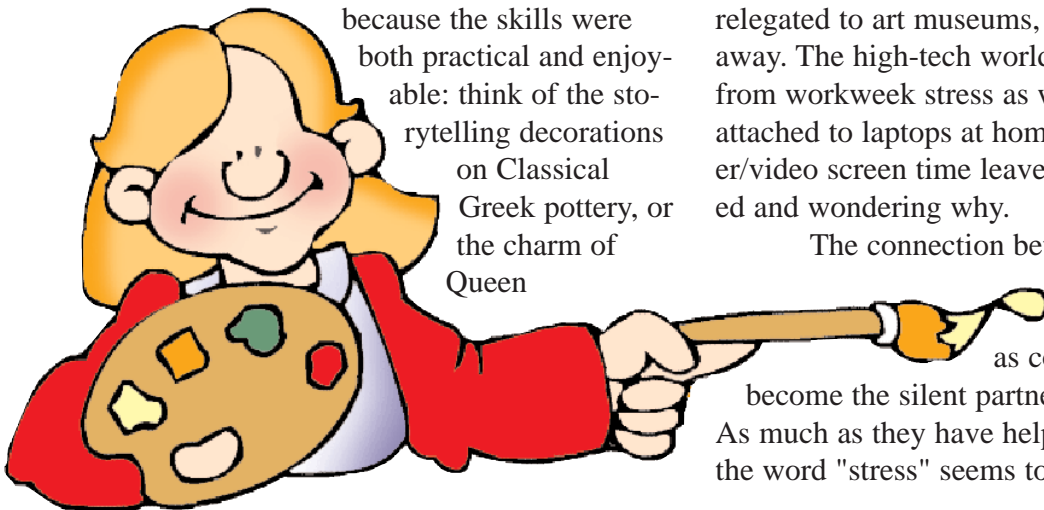
### ART, THE SECRET STRESS BUSTER!

By J. Staffier

Once upon a time, before computers and even typewriters (OK, the Dark Ages), children learned to write, draw, and were practicing this hand-eye coordination continually, as both were taught subjects from the mid-1800's on in America.

For centuries, the civilized world had itself been defined by what you could express by hand, and excellence in writing meant you could get a position in society, a job. Our ancestors never lost their ability to express themselves graphically

because the skills were both practical and enjoyable: think of the storytelling decorations on Classical Greek pottery, or the charm of Queen



Victoria's Sketchbooks.

Fast forward to today. A mere 100 years later, how many people can read even their own handwriting, let alone make a simple sketch if they had to? Conversely, stress, anger and rudeness are everywhere in our high-tech, impersonal world.

Art, and the emphasis and value of drawing has gone the way of the dinosaur as pre-schoolers grow up on computers, text on hand-holds, and take photos with cell phones. In the crush of time, a fine "hand" and seems relegated to art museums, and seem worlds away. The high-tech world gives us no break from workweek stress as we are increasingly attached to laptops at home. Hours of computer/video screen time leave us stressed, frustrated and wondering why.

The connection between daily hand-creations and daily work has been lost as computers have become the silent partner of everyone's job. As much as they have helped progress, even the word "stress" seems to have entered our

### WORD OF THE DAY

#### PIGMENT

Finely powdered color material which produces the color of any medium. Made either from natural substances or synthetically, pigment becomes paint, ink, or dye when mixed with oil, water or another fluid (also called vehicle). When pressed into wax it becomes a crayon, pencil or chalk. Source: [www.artlex.com/](http://www.artlex.com/)



“ When you're curious you find lots of interesting things to do. And one thing it takes to accomplish something is courage.”

- Walt Disney

### ART AEROBICS

Practice you drawing skills

Pencil sketch of a rock star breaking a guitar on stage. Fifteen minutes. 🎸

vocabulary holding hands with the computer, whose "downtime" and "glitches" are part of universal parlance.

In search of peace and individual meaning, our computer generation has run themselves ragged with jogging, thrown out their backs with yoga, bicycled until they are gaunt, etc., but, until now, ignored the complete and perfect mind/body enhancement which was the delight and accomplishment of our ancestors.

### **WANT TO STOP THE WORLD AND GET OFF FOR AWHILE?**

My suggestion is to try what has worked for 20+ years in my evening courses for adults: take a drawing class! A class extends the brief vacation you feel when doodling during a lecture. A good class will encourage you, will take you wherever you are in your art journey and make the most of your unique self-expression. It can help in other ways. Students have experienced major life transitions: widowhood, moving, etc. and have told me that the class was a real brick for them during this time.

Connecting to your own creativity has huge and lasting benefits which won't leave you exhausted and reaching for aspirin:

1. You will reconnect with your own ability to create. Always wanted to do a collage that matched your dining room decor? Do a portrait? Create a children's book?

2. You will see how focusing on drawing a simple flower or seashell is immensely calming

and stimulating at once.

3. He who teaches, learns twice. Have you ever visited someone, perhaps in the hospital, but didn't know what to say? Take your sketchbook along and have a laugh as you both create pictures.

4. Finally, see how stress shrinks and goes away when your interest in creating takes over. You are taking control, doing something new and positive, and having fun doing it.

See how one drawing leads to another. Soon you're thinking and planning your own projects, whether it's designing a family tree, a mural, or exhibiting at the library. Take that first step with an art class, pick up a pencil and you'll forget Stress! 🖌️

*J.S. Staffier, M.L.S., M.F.A., is an artist and teacher in the Boston area. Her new DVD, "Jane's Drawing Studio" is available from her site:*

*<http://www.BostonArtBoutique.com>*

*Article Source:*

*<http://EzineArticles.com/>*



### **ARTIST TO WATCH**

### **VERA ARUTYUNYAN**

<http://www.veraarts.com/index.html>

"Full of Life", Watercolor, 40 X 30"