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"Healing Dreamscapes"

Digital photomontages employed as tributes, ice-breakers and heart-menders

Digital artist, Nancy Gershman of Art For Your Sake (www.artforyoursake.com) creates therapeutic photomontages from client photos to deal with grief and loss, illness and distress.

Chicago, IL August 1, 2007 – Thanks to the transformative power of digital photo manipulation, Nancy Gershman's *healing dreamscapes* feel like a snapshot of a dream. Seamless, true to scale, with shadow play and witty effects, these photomontages conjure up a wishful reality, filled with as many alternate endings in the past as there are in the future. Almost any scan-able image can find itself in a *healing dreamscape*, including people, pets, objects or landscapes from cherished photos, but also memorabilia, personal artwork, as well as meaningful objects and backdrops from Nancy's own vast image library. The final output is typically a photographic print.

Nancy founded her digital design studio (aptly called **Art For Your Sake**) in response to the multitudes of digital camera owners who lack the know-how or time for creating composite photos. Gradually, in response to the deeper need of families to mark not just milestones and death anniversaries, but also the unspoken or unrealized aspirations and anxieties of loved ones at a crossroads — Nancy began specifically applying this new form of photo therapy to therapeutic recovery, reconciliation and self-discovery. In the words of one client, Anne H:

"Nancy sat down with me and reviewed family albums to pick photos for a collage. She has tremendous empathy and a true artist's eye for patterns ... During our talk, I felt the burden of the past begin to shift as [she] re-visioned it for me ... Just working with her on the selection began to break up my old, locked-in ways of relating to the photos, and thus to the past."

Nancy's first therapeutic commission was for a talking piece meant to reconcile the client's shattered family. That photomontage consisted of 13 images and spoke volumes to her five siblings. Today, Nancy collaborates with therapists, chaplains and social workers to assist individuals, couples and families in a wide range of circumstances, ranging from adoption and emotional growth, bereavement, faith and gender, recovery and end-of-life care. At various times, her dreamscapes have acted as a peace offering, a reward for positive thinking and a stimulus to jog memory. Nancy also encourages her clients to interpret their own dreamscapes in the form of narrative, prose or poetry as part of the healing process.

Viewing the *healing dreamscape* works in the same way as replaying a healing dream. It lavishes attention on a subject, slowing down time (especially valuable when grieving cannot be rushed along). It physically separates or commingles images into a new hierarchy that safely removes negative associations and returns control to the individual. Lastly, the humor Nancy infuses in each piece is liberating.

In Nancy's own words: "from tears of sadness come tears of joy."

Visit her gallery site, <http://www.artforyoursake.com/healingdreamscapes.html> or her blog, www.artforyoursake.blogspot.com.

Nancy takes on commissions on a sliding scale. Her wish is to make this medium available to anyone who comes seeking a *healing dreamscape*.

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