



**Our Creative Brains: "Creativity Over Time"
Acadia Senior College Panel Discussion, April 28, 2010**

Bibliography: Titles selected by panelists and the ASC art show committee, listed alphabetically by author.

The Creative Brain: The Science of Genius by Nancy C. Andreasen (Paperback - Oct. 31, 2006, Plume.) "Neuroscientists, until recently, shied away from the big questions--such as 'what is consciousness, ' 'what is abstract thinking, ' or (the topic of this book) 'what is creativity'--as being empirically unapproachable. Nancy Andreasen's book comes as a welcome antidote to this inherent conservatism and shows us how creativity can be approached scientifically. In a market flooded with 'new age' books on creativity, Dr. Andreasen's meticulously researched contribution comes as a breath of fresh air. (V.S. Ramachandran, MD, Director of the Center for Brain and Cognition at the University of California-San Diego, and author of A Brief Tour of Human Consciousness.)

In Full Flower: Aging Women, Power, and Sexuality by Lois W. Banner (Paperback - Apr. 6, 1993, Vintage Books) This is a masterwork of scholarship and a milestone in our understanding of how Western civilization has demeaned the older woman. Banner (American Beauty) shows how, from antiquity on, stereotypes have restricted the power that knowledge and experience should naturally confer on older women. Like an archeologist, the author sifts through myth, literature and history--her Rosetta stone, the film Sunset Boulevard. About a faded movie star portrayed by silent-screen star Gloria Swanson, the movie contains manifest and latent cultural messages, lies and truth about older women. With this as model Banner scrutinizes text and subtext of the Odyssey ; the legends of Helen of Troy, Adonis and Sappho; and the story of the Wife of Bath. She also examines the life and work of Margaret Fuller and Colette. Other themes covered are menopause, older women and young men duos; Mother Goose and the Old Maid card game get a close look too. Banner turns to African American women for positive middle-aged and elder role models in a study that helps set the historical record straight. (Publishers Weekly.)

Celebrate Your Creative Self by [Mary Todd Beam](#) (Spiral-bound - Oct. 15, 2001, North Light Books) Artists and creatives of all kinds who are looking for new ways to liberate their artistic imagination will love this book. Readers are invited to playfully explore various aspects of visual art, such as light, color, texture and design through a series of imaginative art projects. Artists will experiment hands-on with dozens of techniques and mediums in new and unconventional ways including: * Capturing whites with crayon and wax resist * Glazing and floating colors * Portraying the patterns of nature with sedimentation and precipitation * Loosening up with gesso painting and printing with plastic * Constructing a new piece of art from old work * Experimenting with three-dimensional assemblage * Creating a street map In addition, artists are prompted to challenge their imaginations by building new painting surfaces, creating their own personal symbols and more.

Goddesses in Everywoman: Powerful Archetypes in Women's Lives by [Jean Shinoda Bolen](#) (Paperback - Mar. 2, 2004, Harper Paperbacks) Myths are fascinating stories that become even more intriguing when we realize that they can reveal intimate truths about ourselves and others. Esteemed Jungian analyst Jean Shinoda Bolen brings the Greek pantheon to life as our inner archetypes and applies the power of myth to our personal lives. Once we understand the natural progression from myth to archetype to personal psychology, and realize that positive gifts and negative tendencies are qualities associated with a particular goddess within, we gain powerful insights.

The Artist's Way by [Julia Cameron](#) (Hardcover - Feb. 28, 2002, Tarcher) With the basic principle that creative expression is the natural direction of life, Julia Cameron and Mark Bryan lead you through a comprehensive twelve-week program to recover your creativity from a variety of blocks, including limiting beliefs, fear, self-sabotage, jealousy, guilt, addictions, and other inhibiting forces, replacing them with artistic confidence and productivity.

The Creative Age: Awakening Human Potential in the Second Half of Life by [Gene D. Cohen](#), M.D., Ph.D. (Paperback - Jan. 23, 2001, Harper Paperbacks) A lot of books out now help baby boomers deal with how to slow the physical aging process or how to have a financially secure retirement. Cohen, however, chooses a unique direction: he shows how to be a creative individual well into old age. Replete with anecdotes of famous and not-so-famous people doing incredibly creative things (e.g., architect I.M. Pei designing the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum at 79), whether for the good of humanity or simply for their own families, this book is an inspiration. Cohen, director of the Center on Aging, Health, and Humanities at George Washington University, outlines different ways in which people can be creative and stimulating in the face of adversity, in the context of relationships, or with changing opportunities as one ages. (Library Journal.)

The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain by Gene D. Cohen, M.D. Ph.D. (Paperback - Jan. 30, 2007, Basic Books)

Never mind those "senior moments" in which a word slips away just as it's about to leave the lips. Cohen has good news for the over-40 set: older brains can learn new things, and they are actually better than younger brains at many types of intellectual tasks. Recent studies show that the brain and mental capacity continue to grow throughout life. This development takes advantage of a lifetime of experiences as well as the emotional mellowing that occurs with advancing age and eventuates in the older brain processing information in a manner quite different from and in no way inferior to the way a young brain performs. Cohen's own research establishes that both hemispheres of the brain are used more efficiently and that the brain becomes vastly more creative as life goes on. Contrary to the previous belief that new brain cells stop forming after adolescence, the former chief of the Center on Aging at the National Institutes of Health says that growing new brain cells is a lifelong phenomenon. He identifies four developmental phases of the mature brain—midlife reevaluation, liberation, summing up, and encore; cannily supplements his data with anecdotes; and all-in-all offers a shot in the arm to the hopes of millions who wish to remain vital to the end. (Booklist.)

Olivia by Ian Falconer (Paperback - Sept. 10, 2004, Simon and Schuster) Come one, come all for this extraordinary debut for both Falconer and his unforgettable porcine heroine. The author/artist begins this day-in-the-life tale with a kind of behind-the-scenes peek at Olivia. Articles from her wardrobe are strewn across the endpapers—red tights, red sunglasses, a red T-shirt and red tank top—until the title page reveals her selection: a red sailor dress with black-and-white striped tights. "This is Olivia./ She is good at lots of things," the narrator begins, like an emcee introducing the star of the show. The genius of the volume is its economy: the brief text brilliantly plays off the artwork, rendered only in shades of red and black with an occasional background setting; a deceptively simple design unifies each spread. For one such spread, demonstrating "She is very good at wearing people out." There's a little bit of Olivia in everyone. (Publishers Weekly.)

Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor E. Frankl (Paperback - June 15, 2006, Beacon Press) Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl's memoir has riveted generations of readers with its descriptions of life in Nazi death camps and its lessons for spiritual survival. Between 1942 and 1945 Frankl labored in four different camps, including Auschwitz, while his parents, brother, and pregnant wife perished. Based on his own experience and the experiences of those he treated in his practice, Frankl argues that we cannot avoid suffering but we can choose how to cope with it, find meaning in it, and move forward with renewed purpose. Frankl's theory—known as logotherapy, from the Greek word logos ("meaning")—holds that our primary drive in life is not pleasure, as Freud maintained, but the discovery and pursuit of what we personally

find meaningful.

[When Bad Things Happen to Good People](#) by **[Harold S. Kushner](#)** (Paperback - Aug. 24, 2004, Anchor) Rarely does a book come along that tackles a perennially difficult human issue with such clarity and intelligence. Harold Kushner, a Jewish rabbi facing his own child's fatal illness, deftly guides us through the inadequacies of the traditional answers to the problem of evil, then provides a uniquely practical and compassionate answer that has appealed to millions of readers across all religious creeds. Remarkable for its intensely relevant real-life examples and its fluid prose, this book cannot go unread by anyone who has ever been troubled by the question, "Why me?"

[Proust Was a Neuroscientist](#) by **[Jonah Lehrer](#)** (Paperback - Sept. 1, 2008, Mariner Books.) With impressively clear prose, Lehrer explores the oft-overlooked places in literary history where novelists, poets and the occasional cookbook writer predicted scientific breakthroughs with their artistic insights. The 25-year-old Columbia graduate draws from his diverse background in lab work, science writing and fine cuisine to explain how Cézanne anticipated breakthroughs in the understanding of human sight, how Walt Whitman intuited the biological basis of thoughts and, in the title essay, how Proust penetrated the mysteries of memory by immersing himself in childhood recollections. Lehrer's writing peaks in the essay about Auguste Escoffier, the chef who essentially invented modern French cooking. The author's obvious zeal for the subject of food preparation leads him into enjoyable discussions of the creation of MSG and the decidedly unappetizing history of 18th- and 19th-century culinary arts. (Publishers Weekly)

[King Solomon's Ring: New Light on Animal Ways \(Routledge Classics\)](#) by **[Konrad Z. Lorenz](#)** (Paperback - Aug. 9, 2002, Routledge) A delightful treasury of observations and insights into the lives of all sorts of creatures -- from jackdaws and water-shrews to dogs, cats and even wolves -- this is a wonderfully written introduction to the world of our furred and feathered friends!

[The Soul's Palette: Drawing on Art's Transformative Powers](#) by **[Cathy A. Malchiodi](#)** (Paperback - Oct. 8, 2002, Shambhala) Completed during the aftermath of September 11, art therapist Malchiodi's positive treatise promotes art-making and creative imagery as natural forms of holistic healing. Practical guidance combined with workbook-like projects such as creating a "safe box" and keeping a "feelings journal" are geared to help readers find their spiritual centers, and, in the process, experience the healing that flows from the joy of creation. (Booklist.)

Let Evening Come: Reflections on Aging by Mary Chase Morrison (Hardcover - Jan. 20, 1998, Doubleday) A daring, yet gently written reflection on one of life's most important periods, *Let Evening Come* has the sensitivity and humor that will appeal to readers of any age. Mary C. Morrison explores the changes that take place as one ages, the gradual movement away from the center of life--work, family, community--to the periphery. Without glossing over the negative and depressed feelings that this can cause, Morrison highlights the benefits of relaxation, pure enjoyment, and time for reflection that old age can bring. The author shows how finding gallantry, dignity, and a positive outlook amid the changes aging brings is possible and rewarding.

Phantoms in the Brain: Probing the Mysteries of the Human Mind by V. S. Ramachandran, Sandra Blakeslee, and Oliver Sacks (Paperback - Aug. 18, 1999, Harper Perennial) In these unsettling tales from a neuroscientist every bit as quirky as the more famous Oliver Sacks, Ramachandran sets out his beliefs that no matter how bizarre the case, empirical, strikingly simple testing can illuminate the ways brain circuitry establishes "self." In a chatty, nearly avuncular style, he (along with his coauthor, a New York Times science writer) snatches territory from philosophers on how we think we know what we know. In one experiment, stroking an amputee's cheek produces sensations in his "phantom limb" because the part of the brain's map that once related to the lost limb has "invaded" the adjacent brain area that relates to the cheek. Unafraid to speculate, Ramachandran then moves a step closer toward indicating that the brain is not only a busy lump of genetically deemed-and-dying hard-wiring but an organ that can continuously "re-map" in response to new sensory information from the outside. Equally fascinating are Ramachandran's "mirror tricks" on amputees and paralyzed patients that begin to reveal how much the brain relies on context and comparison as well as on "inside" neural connectivity to form self. Perhaps most disquieting are beginnings of proof that much brain activity, including what we like to think of as uniquely human behavior, happens unbidden. (Publishers Weekly.)

Juicy Pens, Thirsty Paper: Gifting the World with Your Words and Stories, and Creating the Time and Energy to Actually Do It by Sark (Paperback - Aug. 12, 2008, Three Rivers Press) SARK is a sparkler who jump-starts the creative process. Her ideas are user-friendly, innovative, and pragmatic. (Julia Cameron, author of *The Artist's Way*)

The Secret Life of the Grown-up Brain: The Surprising Talents of the Middle-Aged Mind by Barbara Strauch (Hardcover - Apr. 15, 2010, Viking) Upends the longstanding belief that the teenage brain is largely complete, concluding instead that it is undergoing dramatic changes that can help explain what appears to be a gap between intelligence and judgement. (The Hartford Courant)

Necessary Losses: The Loves, Illusions, Dependencies, and Impossible Expectations That All of Us Have to Give Up in Order to Grow by [Judith Viorst](#) (Paperback - Jan. 5, 1998, Free Press) Viorst, poet and Redbook contributor, is also a research graduate of the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute, and has worked in psychiatric settings. Her topic is loss because everyone must cope with it throughout life: childhood ends, we recognize that our expectations are unrealistic, friends and family members die, ultimately we die. Viorst offers a competent journalistic treatment of the subject, drawing upon psychoanalytic theory, interviews, and literature, and includes notes and a bibliography. (Library Journal.)