



# BIM's Inspirations

images and words to light up your life

*"She finds beauty in unlikely places and sees the ordinary in unexpected ways"* Ria Strong

This uplifting collection of images and words grew out of a project titled Expressing The Voice Within funded by the City of Melbourne 2007 Community Development Arts Grants with additional support from Holding Redlich Lawyers , ARBIAS and Peace Music Community Projects.

Proceeds from the sale of this book will go to Brain Injury Matters Incorporated, widely known as BIM. The funds will be used to raise public awareness of ABI, acquired brain injury, through workshops, special events, and projects like this book. Such projects encourage people with ABI to connect in creative and productive ways with the wider community. You can find more information at [www.bim.org.au](http://www.bim.org.au).



Recommended retail price AU \$20.00

ISBN 978-0-146-47773-2

9 780646 477732



arbias



# BIM's Inspirations

Brain Injury Matters Inc  
Level 4, Ross House  
247 Flinders Lane  
Melbourne 3000  
Victoria Australia

Internet: [www.bim.org.au](http://www.bim.org.au)  
Email: [office@bim.org.au](mailto:office@bim.org.au)

Telephone: (03) 9639 7222  
Telephone International: +61 3 9639 7222

First published in Australia by Brain Injury Matters Inc, 2007

Copyright Brain Injury Matters Incorporated, 2007

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the publisher of this book.

Printed in Australia by Ferntree Print & Copy

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication data

Publisher: Brain Injury Matters Incorporated

Title: BIM's Inspirations: Images and Words to Light Up Your Life

ISBN: 978-0-646-47773-2

# Contents

Preface	8
Acknowledgements	9
You Can	Larissa MacFarlane
Dear Wobblees	Antony Riddell
Peeling Head	John Edney
Tree Meditation	Damien Melotte
Two Boys and Trees	Peta Ferguson
Windmills of My Mind	John Dique
She Finds Beauty	Ria Strong
Potted Plant	Ernst Schleicher
Our Truth	Paul Watt & Ravi with Nick Watt
Bim Group	19
Beyond Be Calmed	Jane Neubecker
Sprinkler	Larissa MacFarlane
Leaves, Grate & Mural	Ria Strong
Grow	Antony Riddell
Discovery 2	Lyn Macdonald
Radiance	Antoinette Williams
Duck In Pond	Neil Cameron
Jump	Peta Ferguson
Urban Tree	Damien Melotte
Rainbow Eye	John Edney
Tails?	Antony Riddell
Inner Peace	Lyn Macdonald
Lucky To Be Alive	Anat Bigos
Behind the Scenes	33
Contributors	34
A Letter	Jane Neubecker
	37

# P r e f a c e

## EXPRESSING THE VOICE WITHIN

This book is the culmination of a project called Expressing the Voice Within. It represents a very fruitful collaboration, in the field of community development and the arts, between Brain Injury Matters Incorporated (BIM) and Jarek Czechowicz (Peace Music). With initial funding from the City of Melbourne, BIM provided the venue, community support, catering and commissioned Jarek to deliver a range of creative and technical services.

Members and associates of BIM, the general public and guests participated in a series of sessions facilitated by Jarek. They shared insights into various creative practices, and music regularly accompanied the flow of artistic ideas. Periods of relaxation and meditation were used to rest the mind in preparation for more creativity. Group singing and chanting helped people to overcome inhibitions and encouraged a sense of community. Participants regularly discussed their ideas and visions for this book, and each session ended with the sharing of food and conversation.

### BRAIN INJURY MATTERS INCORPORATED

Brain Injury Matters (BIM) is a self-advocacy and community education group for people with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). All members of the BIM Committee of Management have an ABI.

BIM aims to support brain injury survivors to develop skills and self-confidence. Its activities raise community awareness about the issues faced by people with ABI. BIM promotes the involvement of people with ABI in the community to reduce isolation and marginalisation. Activities include creative workshops to increase skills and sessions that offer relaxation times using non-medical approaches. The group organises social activities and provides opportunities for people with ABI to discuss issues relevant to their situation. BIM also runs regional support groups and organises major events for Brain Injury Awareness Week. For more information about BIM please visit [www.bim.org.au](http://www.bim.org.au).

### JAREK CZECHOWICZ

Jarek is founder of Peace Music. He provides programs based around music, meditation and creativity for the evolution of human consciousness, and to encourage harmonious and productive relations among people. For more information about Jarek please visit [www.jarekc.com](http://www.jarekc.com).

# A c k n o w l e d g e m e n t s

## PROJECT CREDITS

The committee of Brain Injury Matters Incorporated would like to offer sincere thanks to the following people:

Jarek Czechowicz for his patience and professionalism when working with our group, and in particular for his special understanding of ABI.

Lyn Macdonald for her ongoing work behind the scenes in supporting BIM members and participants with acquired brain injury.

Paul Watt for his joyful tabla playing. Damien Melotte for sharing his creative insights. David James for his deeply relaxing alto flute improvisations. Steve Jay for his subtle sitar music. Ambika Taylor for singing her beautiful songs.

## PUBLICATION CREDITS

Jarek Czechowicz - Editor and Graphic Artist

David James - Editorial Consultant

Damien Melotte - Design Consultant

Larissa MacFarlane - Cover image

Lyn Macdonald - Project Assistant

## SPONORS

Thanks to The City of Melbourne 2007 Community Cultural Development Arts Grants Program for funding this project.

Thanks to Holding Redlich Lawyers, ARBIAS and Peace Music for additional support.

# LARISSA MACFARLANE



You can if you think you can, and if you think you can, you can,  
So if you can, think you can, and indeed you can!

Larissa '07

You can if you think you can, and if you think you can, you can,  
So if you can, think you can, and indeed you can!

Larissa '07

Y O U   C A N

DEAR WOBBLEES

Dear Wobblees,  
I recently had cause to  
visit hospital. Of course  
there was a boring wait. It  
was then that I realised  
that this was a perfect  
opportunity to meditate. So  
I did. Meditation can fill  
many sizeable dull gaps,  
like hospitals, dentists,  
doctors, etc...

The Wobbler

ANTONY RIDDELL

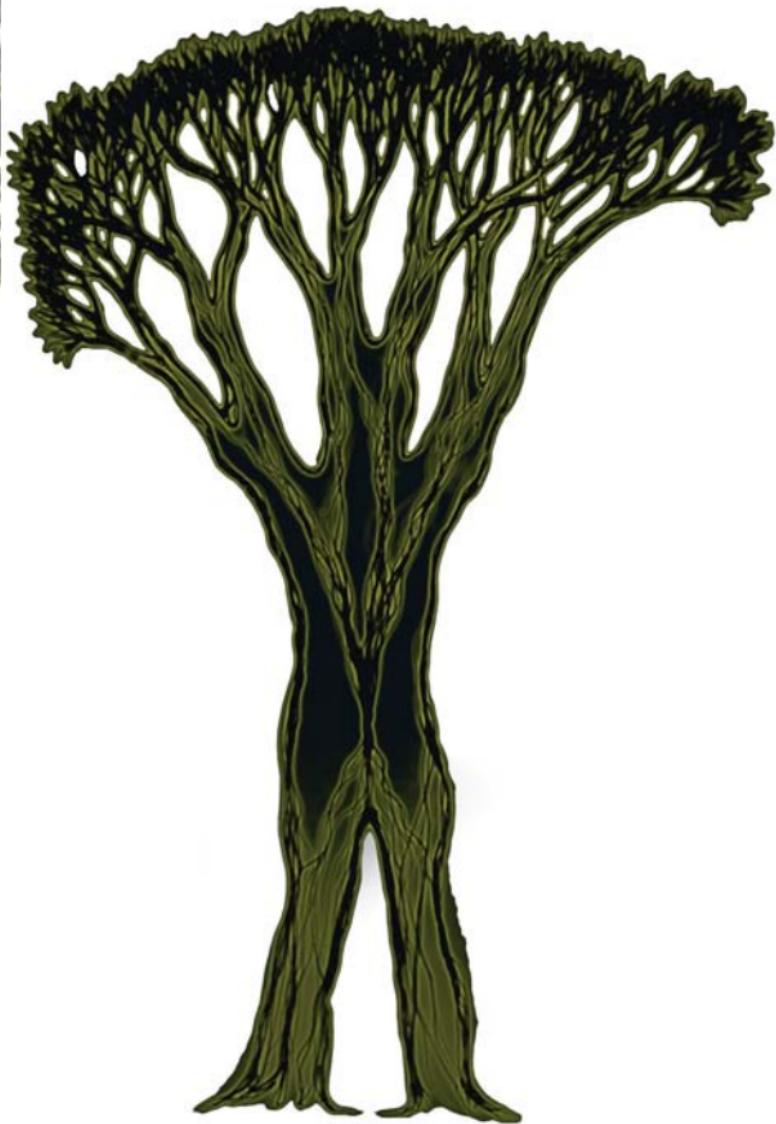
# PEELING HEAD

JOHN EDNEY



# TREE MEDITATION

DAMIEN MELOTTE



# P E T A F E R G U S O N

## T W O B O Y S A N D T R E E S

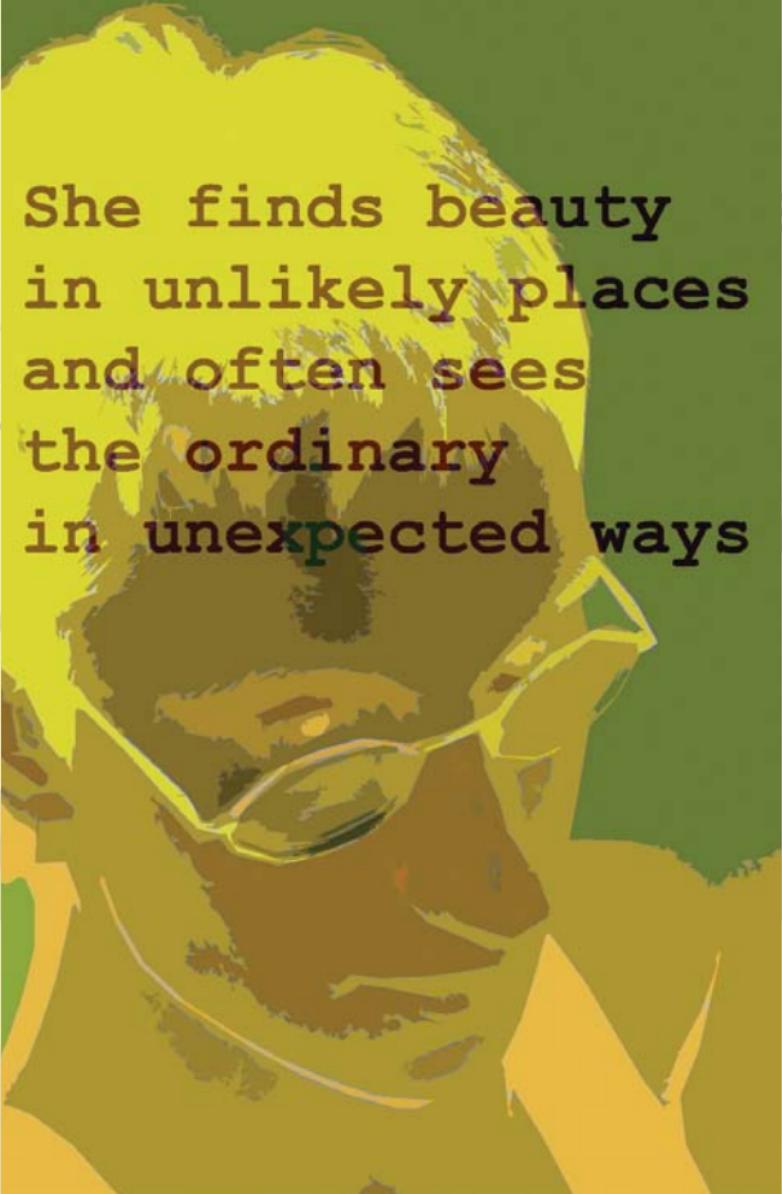


# WINDMILLS OF MY MIND



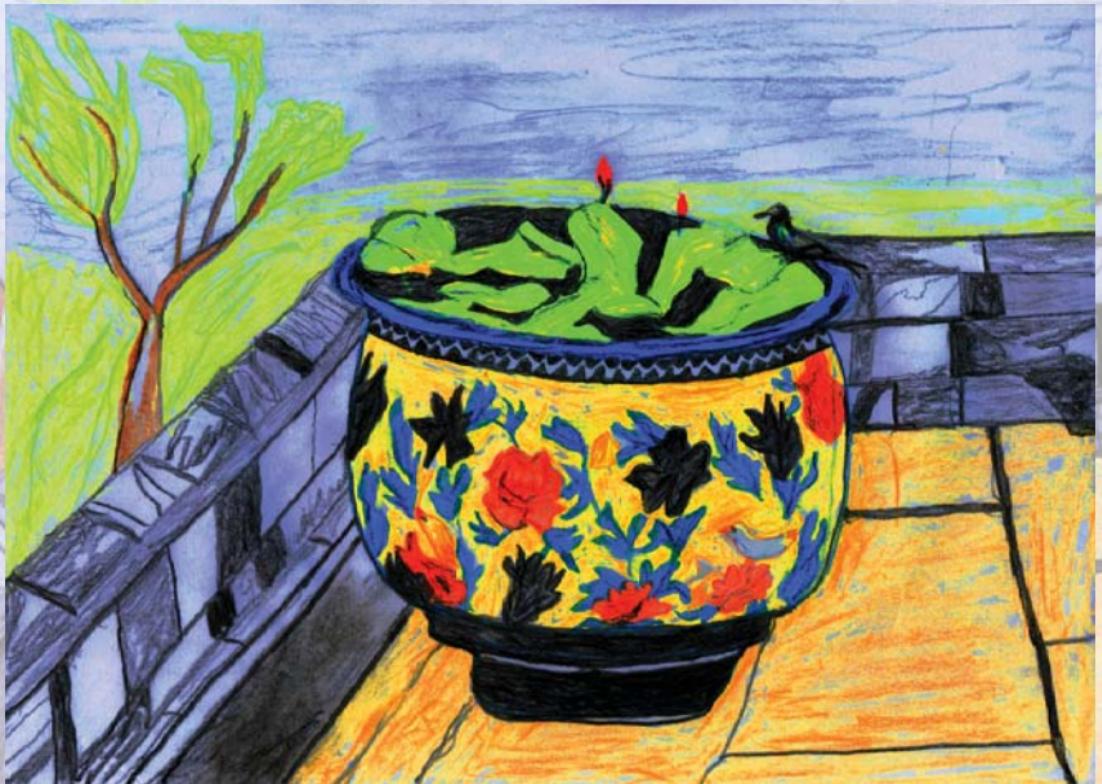
JOHN DIQUE

## SHE FINDS BEAUTY



She finds beauty  
in unlikely places  
and often sees  
the ordinary  
in unexpected ways

POTTED PLANT



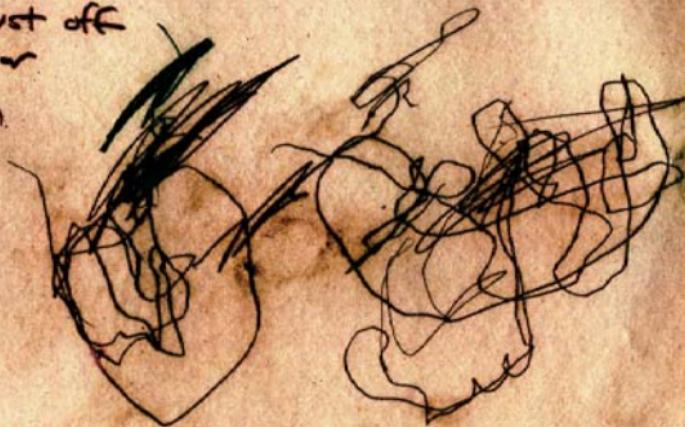
ERNST SCHLEICHER

PAUL & RAVI WATT

with a ;  
we cle  
the ho  
to see

with a good bhajan(song)  
we clean the dust off  
the heart mirror  
to see our Truth

Paul



OUR TRUTH

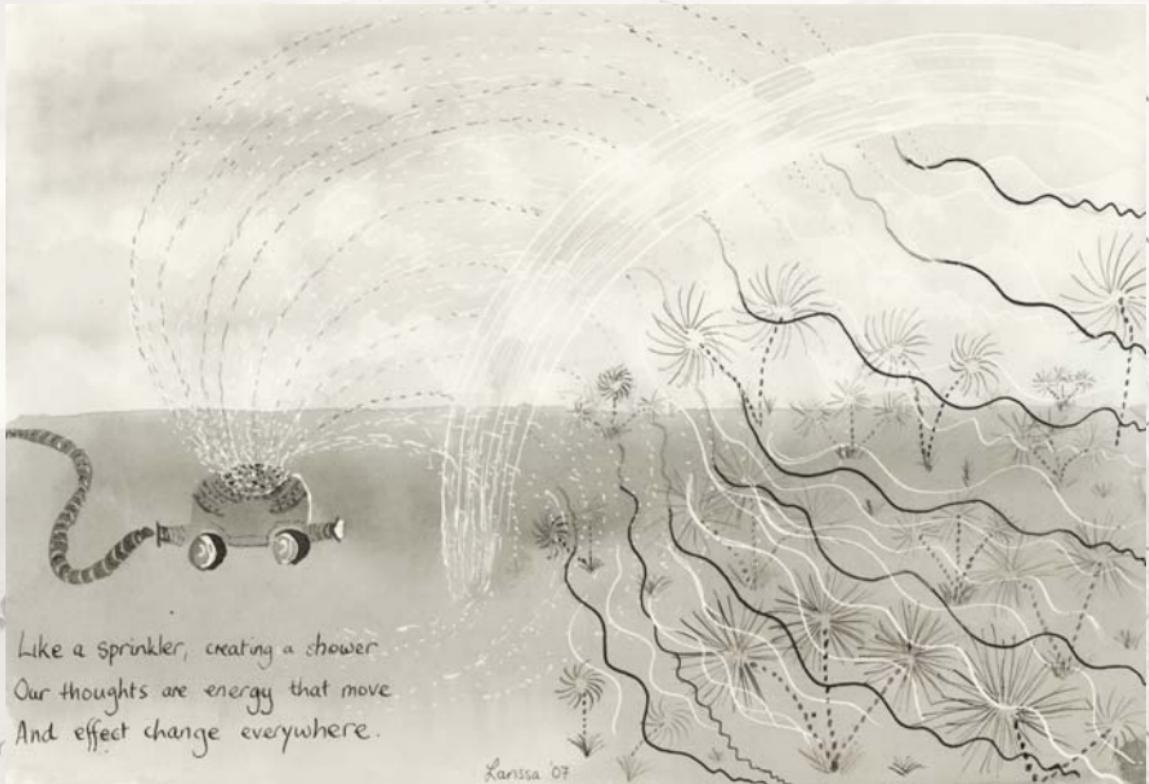


JANE NEUBECKER

B E Y O N D   B E C A L M E D



## SPRINKLER



Like a sprinkler, creating a shower  
Our thoughts are energy that move  
And effect change everywhere.

Like a Spr

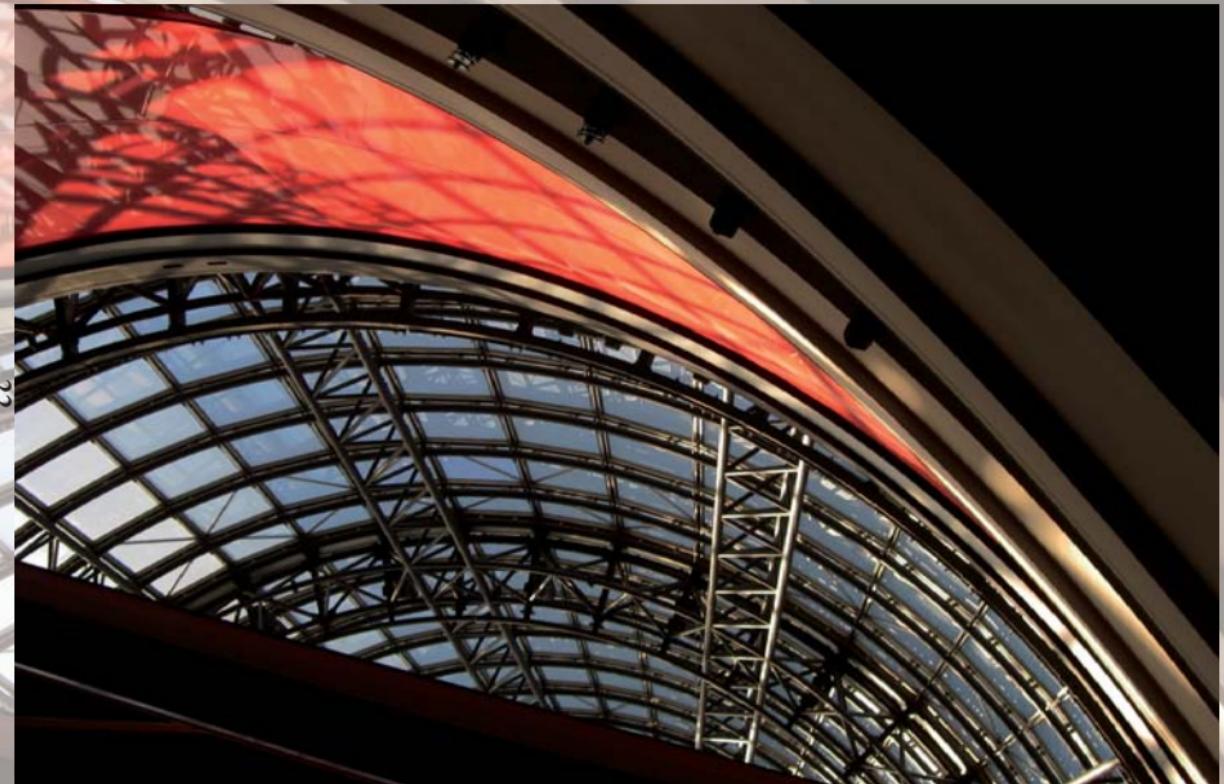
Our thoughts are energy that move  
And effect change everywhere.

Larissa '07

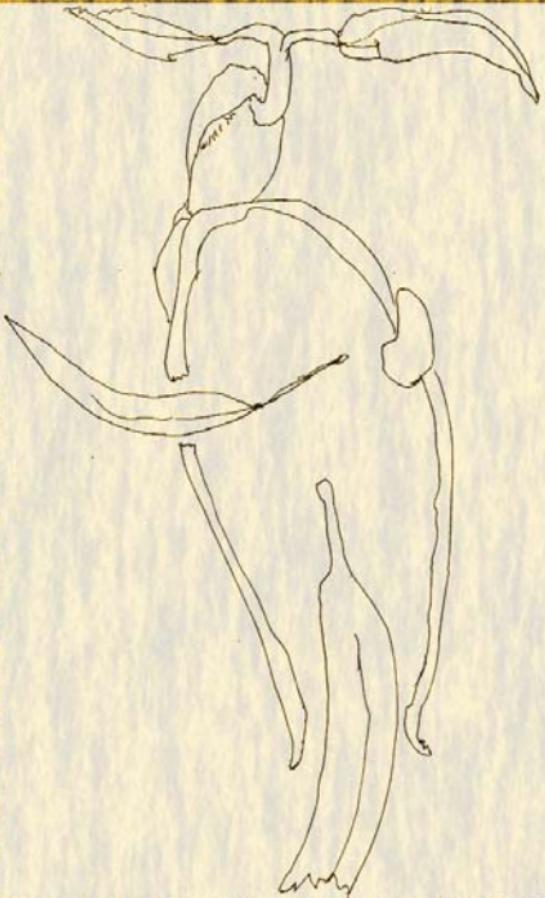
LARISSA MACFARLANE

RIA STRONG

TOWER



G R O W



ANTONY RIDDELL

LYN MACDONALD



## RADIANCE

The magnificent array  
... brown and yellow  
with ... life is meant to be embraced  
with all it's different perspectives

*The Radiance of the Sun  
is shining down on my face*

*Radiance of the Sun  
on my face".*

*As I walk along the sandy beach  
I am surrounded by such beauty*

ANTOINETTE WILLIAMS

# NEIL CAMERON

D U C K I N P O N D

Vision  
The visual  
system allows  
us  
to assimilate  
information  
from the  
environment.

What is the  
duck seeing?

What are you  
seeing?  
Reflections?  
or  
Density?

Density?

J U M P



PETA FERGUSON

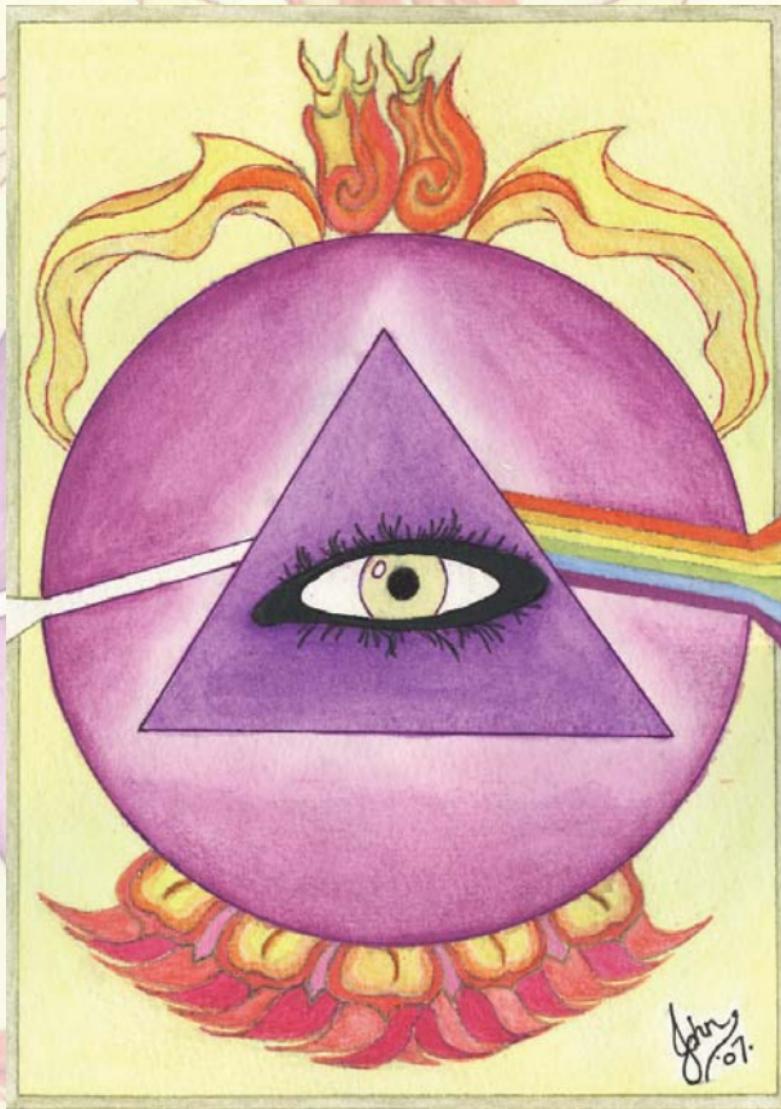
## DAMIEN MELOTTE



**Jarek's peace music enables me to feel grounded, to stand calm, strong and fresh in a city of fast shallow thoughts!**

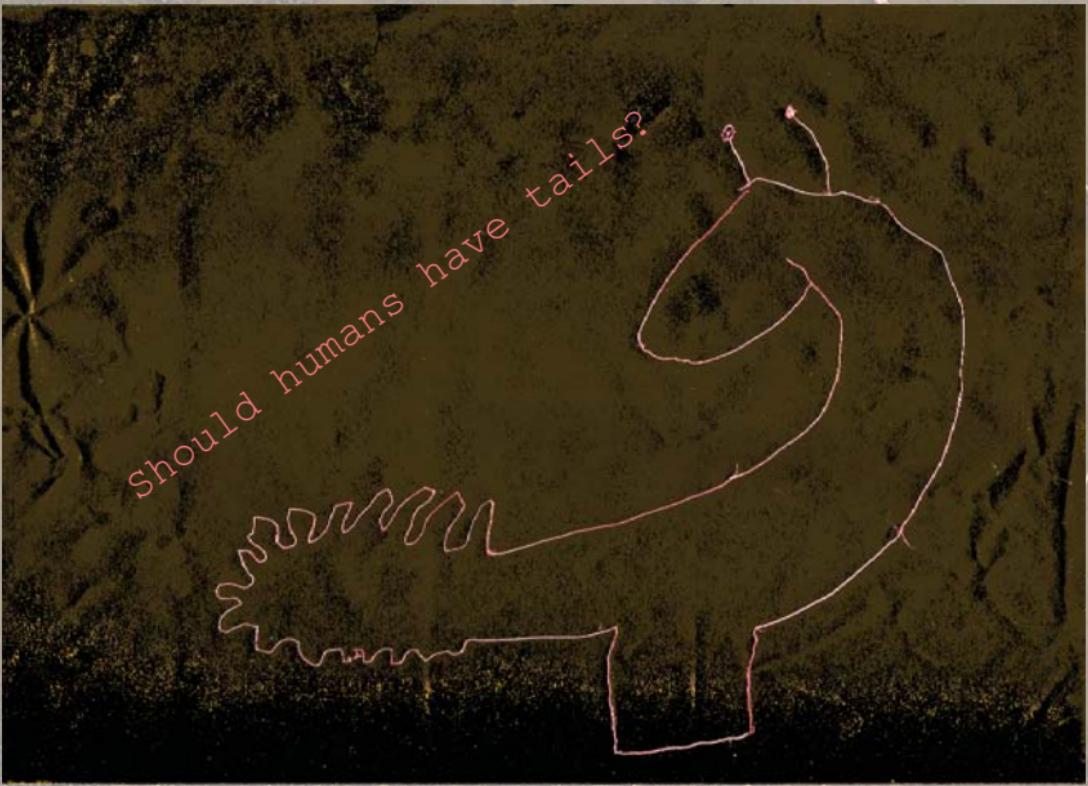
**Jarek's peace music enables me to feel grounded, to stand calm, strong and fresh in a city of fast shallow thoughts!**

# RAINBOW EYE



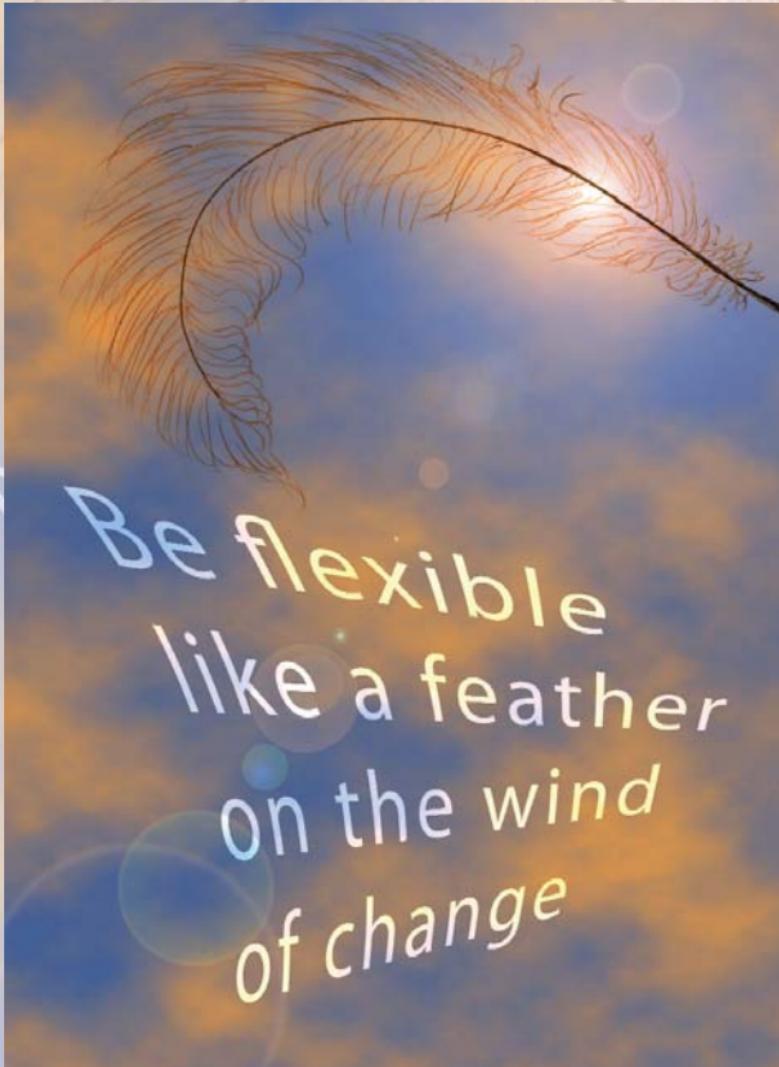
JOHN EDNEY

## ANTONY RIDDELL



TAILS?

# INNER PEACE



Be flexible  
like a feather  
on the wind  
of change

LYN MACDONALD

# A N A T B I G O S

## LUCKY TO BE ALIVE

I was locked in a coma for three months after the car accident. I felt like a prisoner in my own body. Friends, family and nurses were talking to me, yet I couldn't reply.

My acquired brain injury and post-traumatic amnesia were so frustrating that I repeatedly hit my arms and legs on the bed rail until I bled. The wounds refused to heal.

My brain heals slowly and there is a need for re-discovery. Many questions keep popping up, waiting for an immediate answer. There is a feeling of urgency tied with my obsessive fear of short-term memory loss, and my impatience gene. My near-death experience conceived a motivation to relearn.

I can't believe that my body is changing everyday!

Following the coma, my body was strapped to a wheelchair - to make sure that I'm not a run-away.

Now I'm on the move and becoming more and more independent every day. The question of whether I'll walk one day is answered with a definite assurance:  
YES!

I feel surprised and appreciative that my friends still have interest in me! They know how important they are, and they always return with love. It is an immense relief and inspiration to continue "giving", as I had before.

I now feel love for nearly everything and appreciate to be alive.

The universe heals itself, including me. My mind has transformed from a destructive wish to die, to feeling lucky to be alive.

## BEHIND THE SCENES



## C O N T R I B U T O R S

### **ANAT BIGOS**

Anat is a 27 year old who experienced a horrific car accident when she was 24. She is currently involved in a long rehabilitation process. Prior to the accident, Anat had completed an Arts & Marketing degree at Monash University. She speaks a few languages and is usually a very happy and positive girl who has many friends.

### **NEIL CAMERON**

Neil got an acquired brain injury in 1981. He was a passenger in a car that was hit by a semi-trailer driven at high speed by a driver exceeding 0.05% blood alcohol level. Neil's car was pushed through a barrier and down an embankment and Neil was struck by a heavy pallet. Neil often says that had the truck been transporting marshmallows, he would have come out of the encounter a bit better off. Before the accident Neil managed his family owned plant nursery. His interest now is working with people to help them expand their potential.

### **JOHN DIQUE**

John's formative years were spent in and around the Himalayas. He migrated to Australia and in later life he experienced an ABI caused by chemical poisoning. After attending a number of 'Expressing the Voice Within' sessions as an observer John was inspired to contribute an art piece for this book.

### **JOHN EDNEY**

John worked as an arborist for almost 20 years when in 1994 he fell some 30 feet out of a tree and landed headfirst on a fence post. This left him with an ABI and made him a bit more reclusive. John's accident caused some depression and anxiety but also revealed his creativity. In his art pieces John often merges eastern mandalas with western themes.

### **PETA FERGUSON**

Peta Ferguson had a brain hemorrhage 25 years ago that put her in a wheelchair for four years and made her mute for three years. She underwent intensive rehabilitation and can now walk and talk. Peta has a 12 year old son and does French polishing and furniture restoration. Peta's art pieces reflect her interests in photography and love of nature.

## **LYN MACDONALD**

Lyn is Volunteer Coordinator for Brain Injury Matters Inc. People with ABI have trained her about the needs of people with ABI. Some years ago Lyn suffered a severe vitamin B12 deficiency that caused some neurological dysfunction. Lyn's art and words are influenced by her love of symbolism in films, literature and in religious art, in particular Tibetan Buddhism. She has also felt inspired by Peace Music.

## **LARISSA MACFARLANE**

Larissa sustained an acquired brain injury in 1998 at the age of 29 when the bicycle she was riding was hit by a truck. It turned her life upside down for many years. Now Larissa says her ABI has given her a more creative link with the universe. Her ink drawings are a reflection of how she endeavors to travel her life journey. They are a culmination of meditations and experiments with ink created while trusting that the universe will point her in the direction she needs to travel.

## **DAMIEN MELOTTE**

Damien is an award winning Melbourne-based eco designer who explores the intersection of creativity, intuition, flow, collective thought, life-essence and nature. Damien founded Ecoresonance and coined the term "eco-emotional design" to describe his work. He has researched, consulted, lectured and exhibited in Europe for several years in eco design and strategy for sustainability and regeneration. His website is [www.ecoresonance.org](http://www.ecoresonance.org) and his email is [damien@ecoresonance.org](mailto:damien@ecoresonance.org).

## **JANE NEUBECKER**

Jane is currently President of Brain Injury Matters and is busy advocating on behalf of people with an ABI. She acquired a brain injury in 1987 after being hit by a car while on holidays in the USA. When Jane first joined this project she considered producing a work titled "damaged bird" to describe the way she viewed herself. However she noticed that many people with ABI become 'becalmed' through the habit of continuously repeating their personal story. Jane's artwork reflects her transcendence of this habit to a state she calls "beyond becalmed".

## **ANTONY RIDDELL**

Antony Riddell's brain injury was acquired when he was just 21. He now has to concentrate at all times in order to walk without falling. Antony is an author and performer who prefers to describe himself as maimed rather than disabled. He says that he was born in Adelaide, maimed in Sydney and lives in Melbourne. Antony has published a number of books and obtained a degree in visual arts since his ABI. Antony considers his ABI an extension of his creativity.

## **ERNST SCHLEICHER**

Ernst is a German Aussie who has a love of painting, especially the old European Masters. Ernst climbed 1,200 steps of a Thai temple one week before having a heart attack while jogging. It caused a lack of oxygen to his brain and led to his acquired brain injury. Being involved with 'Expressing the Voice Within' has given Ernst the inspiration to be creative again. This is his first artwork since September 2001, and he is very happy about it.

## **RIA STRONG**

Ria Strong acquired a brain injury when she was just three years old and has had further incidents caused by seizures. Ria is a well known disability and community sector self-advocate who likes to carry a camera everywhere to take photos of things she sees. Her writings have been published in anthologies, academic journals and research reports. As a spoken word artist, she has presented at events including the Melbourne Fringe, Midsumma and the Art of Difference. She says that she sits on a lot of fancy disability-related committees, and works in many ways to change the world.

## **NICK WATT**

Nick is aged 41 and acquired his brain injury at age 19 when the car he was driving hit a pot hole and rolled. He loves the outdoors, singing, music and dogs. He appeared as one of the stars of a film titled Remember Me, an educational video for health workers. He now lives successfully in Black Rock with some attendant care support.

## **PAUL WATT**

Paul is a professional physiotherapist and talented musician. He plays guitar, sings, and is currently writing music for children. Paul often often plays indian hand drums (tabla) to accompany relaxing chanting at Peace Music.

## **RAVI WATT-NERSEIAN**

Ravi is the three-year-old son of Paul Watt and Nephew of Nick Watt. Ravi first attended Peace Music as a baby and has attended many recent sessions for this project. He was the youngest participant and his positive interactions were appreciated by everyone. Ravi contributed to the Peace Music poster, and created a piece with his father.

## **ANTOINETTE WILLIAMS**

Antoinette joined the project as an interested guest. She had never before known a group of people who have an acquired brain injury. The experience moved her to contribute a piece for this book. Antoinette says that everyone can learn from people who have an acquired brain injury.

# A LETTER

from Jane Neubecker  
President, Brain Injury Matters Incorporated

Dear Reader,

On behalf of Brain Injury Matter's Committee of Management, and associates who participated in the 'Expressing the Voice Within' project, I would like to thank the City of Melbourne for providing funding for this very successful project.

People with ABI are usually shoved into the background but those of us involved in this project felt both accepted and valued. After each of the sessions I felt energised and relaxed. It was also a good time out.

It was fantastic seeing people with ABI being "given a go" and Jarek did a great job of playing music and getting us to use our voices when facilitating the groups. He also brought along other people, without ABI, to share their skills with us. Everyone mixed really well.

Most of us who have ABI have been clinically dead and had to learn to walk and/or talk again. Our ABI incidents changed our lives forever. Without help, we can easily get stuck in our stories about that journey - which sometimes takes many years. It is my belief, and this is supported by others at BIM also, that telling their personal story over and over again can becalm people with ABI.

'Expressing the Voice Within' took us beyond that becalmed state. Jarek encouraged us to be inspired, to go beyond telling our ABI stories and to use the music relaxation times to create something for this book. Sometimes I would get my inspiration on the train home and would then later create drawings. We all found different ways to express ourselves when creating our inspired works.

Most of us are hoping we can continue to grow from this experience and because BIM is a community education group hope we can be involved in new projects that help us to take our new style of ABI community education into the wider community. As we become more confident, we would like to encourage ABI service providers and workers to try our new inspired approach.

Yours Sincerely,

Jane Neubecker  
President  
Brain Injury Matters Incorporated

JANE NEUBECKER