Pain in Art: A New Bulletin Feature

Joan Wilentz, MA

With this issue of APS Bulletin, we are launching a new series, "Pain in Art." From time to time, we have asked Bulletin readers to check their files for interesting examples of pain in art, rendered by established artists or by pain patients. John Heil, PhD, a psychologist at the Lewis Gate Clinic in Roanoke, VA, and I have worked on this project for some time and have assembled a varied slide collection.

Figure 1 is a black and white print of a vivid painting by Grace Kent, a former patient at the Lewis Gate Clinic. The picture, which Kent painted in 1996, is entitled, Double Exposure.

Kent suffered a whiplash injury in a motor vehicle accident and subsequently experienced chronic pain in her left ventral forearm and fingers as sequelae of her cervical spine injury. She writes, "Nothing in life prepared me to deal with chronic pain. However, the process of visually expressing myself has offered unexpected benefits—from the relief of expressing myself to the control over image and therefore, to a certain degree, perception."

"Pain in Art" will also appear on the APS Web site in full color. Once again, we invite APS Bulletin readers to comb their files and help us build a Pain in Art archive.

News from NIH continued from page 1

Because of the varied aspects of pain, diverse communities of researchers at NIH are involved, including those concerned with fundamental biological research, clinical science, and behavioral research. Considerations of gender and the perspectives of alternative medicine are also important. We hope that the symposium will be an opportunity for the larger community to hear about the best research on pain from a number of points of view.

Extramural research on pain sponsored by the different institutes and centers will be coordinated through regular meetings of the program officers of the institutes with significant research portfolios in pain research. There is now an informal working group among program officers that will be expanded and formalized. The group will exchange information about research portfolios, sources of information, and opportunities for collaborative activities. A parallel interest group, bringing together intramural scientists and other NIH staff in the field of pain research, has been formed under the leadership of M.A. Ruda, PhD, of the National Institute of Dental Research (NIDR).

Finally, there is an opportunity for a new initiative in pain research within the Intramural Research Program of NIH. NIDR has now embarked on a search for a distinguished scientist to head the Pain and Neurosensory Mechanisms Branch of its Division of Intramural Research. To ensure that the branch becomes a resource for the entire NIH, NIDR has enlisted the help of other institutes in providing ideas about the directions in which this new initiative might go. To help define some of these possibilities, a small working group will meet this spring at NIH.

Pain is thus in the news at NIH and will continue to be, through the activities of the Pain Research Consortium. We look forward to working with you, the members of the American Pain Society, and with other research and patient groups in our effort to increase the awareness of and commitment to research on pain and its treatment.

NIH Pain Research Consortium

Division of Research Grants
National Cancer Institute
National Center for Research Resources
National Institute on Aging
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
National Institute of Arthritis, Musculoskeletal, and Skin Diseases
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
National Institute on Drug Abuse
National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders
National Institute of Dental Research
National Institute of General Medical Sciences

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
National Institute of Mental Health
National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
National Institute of Nursing Research
Warren G. Magnuson Clinical Center
Office of Alternative Medicine
Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research
Office of Medical Applications of Research
Office of Rare Disease Research
Office of Research on Women's Health