



Monique Bourgeois' Portfolio

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Welcome to my portfolio!

I invite you to sit back and enjoy a selection of articles that share a glimpse of the topics and interests I've had the pleasure writing about. Earning my Certificate in Freelance Writing and Certificate in Corporate Communications has created a well-rounded foundation in writing. That education was invaluable as I worked to become a writing coach, as well as, the VP of Professional Development for the Toronto Chapter of the Professional Writers' Association of Canada.

While my specialty is Content and Copywriting, no matter what the writing task is my focus remains squarely on the topic, audience, and supporting the business' brand. I always hope to leave readers with a little something to take away with them. Experience has shown me that there's no better way to do that than by mixing together information with a touch of wit. Don't take my word for it though take my portfolio's!

Many thanks!

Monique

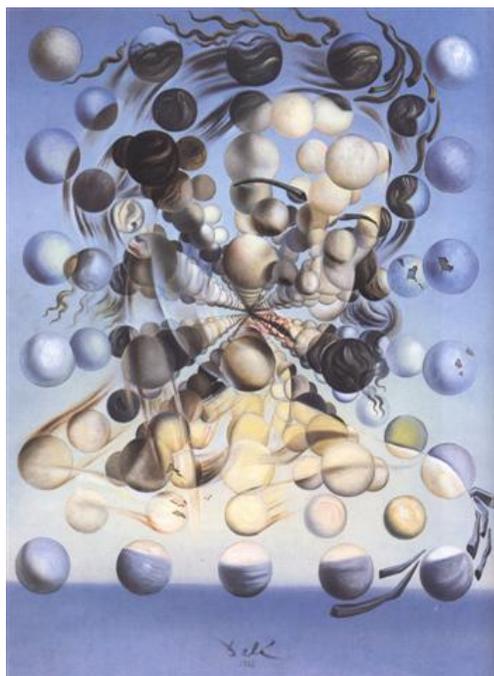


Salvador and Gala Dali: The Rock 'n' Roll Couple of the Painting World!

Posted on September 12, 2013 in Lioness Portraits by Monique Bourgeois

<http://www.lionesswomansclub.com/1410-salvador-and-gala-dali-the-rock-n-roll-couple-of-the-painting-world/>

There was much more to Salvador Dali than first meets the eye... just like his paintings. Each look at his works reveals a new dimension not seen before, giving a whole new meaning to the piece. Oftentimes, he would masterfully use the shapes and objects in the main picture to create a secondary picture. In "Galatea of the Spheres", the spheres create a portrait of his beloved Gala. A reflection of his own life, where at first you see his eccentric and quirky side, but lurking just beneath the surface is a pin-drop quiet observer, absorbing all the intricacies of life surrounding him. A powerful combination of qualities, which when brought together, created some of the most acclaimed artwork ever made. Though not creatively inclined herself, Gala had almost a sixth sense for talent, it's easy to see why Dali's work caught her attention, instantly.



Gala was not one to follow the crowd or live by a rulebook, so the fact that she was married when she met Dali didn't stop her. Of course, this wasn't her first time taking a young artist under her wing and crossing the boundaries of marriage either. Gala was well-known within the surrealist community; somehow, she brought out the best in those she took an interest in. There was a certain understanding within the Surrealist group: if a group of members were admiring a piece made by one of them, and someone alluded to the fact that the artist was with Gala at the time he made it, there was no need for further explanation, it clarified instantly why that piece stood out. When it came to Dali though, it was different. They were mutually awestruck, Gala - by Dali's raw talent, and him - by Gala's all-encompassing personality and looks. In their own wonderfully weird way, they were a perfect pair, in both business and pleasure, and fell for each other hard and fast, much to dismay of Dali's father.



Also named Salvador, Dali's father, didn't approve of his son's new love interest, to say the least. Being a well-established notary, the fact that Gala was ten years senior than Dali and a divorcee did not bode well for him or his business. Their relationship already strained due to some of Dali's controversial works, and his father had had enough. Unwilling to yield, at 25 years old, Dali was kicked out of his father's home. Years passed before Dali's father would finally come to accept their relationship. Unusual for that period in time, Dali and Gala met and moved in together within the same year, 1929, though they wouldn't marry until 1934 and then again in an official capacity in 1958. Nineteen twenty-nine would turn out to be a big year for Dali, as it was also the same year he became an official member of the Surrealist Society.



Both the Surrealist Society and Gala had found their golden ticket. Gala went full throttle doing everything and anything possible to allow Dalí focus solely on his painting. They each knew their strengths and took full advantage of them. Dalí let his imagination take over in his work, whether it was painting, writing or taking photos. Gala, on the other hand, had a knack for business, especially when it came to publicity. Together, they believed the difference between goodness and greatness was publicity. Combining their skills, they had the media wrapped around their baby finger. Whether it was Dalí presenting at the London International Surrealist Exhibition in a deep sea diving suit, saying that he wanted to “Plunge” deeply into the human mind, or when he smashed in the store window he designed, because the store owner changed the outfit the mannequin was wearing, the media ate it all up, making Dalí one of the first household names ever.



As Dali became more and more well-known, tension started brewing between Dali and Gala. Though she still loved him, she wasn't used to being in tow instead of towing. She took refuge in one of her most notorious vices, sex. Though they always had an understanding between them that theirs was the primary relationship, they both had wandering eyes, especially Gala, who had a unstoppable sexual appetite. As an escape tactic from her resentment, Gala started courting young artists again, lavishing them with expensive gifts. To appease his wife, Dali designed a castle for her, which – by Gala's rules – he was only allowed to visit with written consent from her. It's this castle where she would host these young men, and in 1982, at 87 years old, it would become her final resting place.



After Gala's death, Dali basically gave up. He was already ill, and without Gala to give him something to fight for, he became even more sick and incoherent. Following suit with his frenzied life, it's been rumoured Dali attempted to commit suicide a couple times, once by dehydration and another by purposely setting his room on fire. Almost symbolically, on January 23rd, 1989, he died of heart failure. Leaving behind enough paintings to fill museums exclusively for his work, and a legacy of intrigue that made him not only a practicing surrealist painter, but as Dali put it, Surrealism itself.

The Rain Room, the Only Place You'll Want to Get Stuck in the Rain!

Posted on November 1, 2012 in *The Arts Loft* by *Monique Bourgeois*

<http://www.lionesswomansclub.com/1118-the-rain-room-the-only-place-youll-want-to-get-stuck-in-the-rain/>



Your ears are soothingly filled with sounds reminiscent of a towering waterfall and your eyes are transfixed on the thousands of raindrops majestically surrounding you. It's a beautiful picture! There are just two things about it that don't quite fit, you're indoors and you haven't got a single drop on you.

Believe it or not, this is exactly the experience you'll get while visiting the Rain Room, the newest exhibit at London's Barbican. As you walk through, the 1000 liters of water falling around you every minute, eight 3D tracking cameras follow your every move. The cameras trigger the sprinklers over your head to stop, leaving you dry as a bone. Just don't decide to suddenly take up sprinting and run through the 100 square meter exhibit. You'll probably wish you had your raincoat or umbrella with you.

Rain Room is the brainchild of Random International, an organization known for creating exhibits where people don't just look, they interact with the exhibit, raising the bar of the artistic experience! In one endeavor, called The Audience, they grouped together motorized mirrors that were designed to find and reflect an "interesting" visitor, making the visitor not just an observer, but the piece itself.

Rain Room creators, Florian Ortkrass, Stuart Wood, and Hannes Koch say the goal was to give visitors a "cocooning" experience, as well as the thrill of controlling the weather. Of course, as we all know, Mother Nature tends to like having hold of the reins, so this exhibit is for a limited time only. Don't worry though. Rain Room doesn't close until March 2013, so there's still plenty of time to prepare your rousing rendition of "Signing in the Rain"!

The Jolie Life

Posted on June 13, 2013 in *Lioness Portraits* by *Monique Bourgeois*

<http://www.lionesswomansclub.com/1333-the-jolie-life/>



Before raiding the silver screen, Angelina was the punkie and troublesome daughter of actors Marcheline Bertrand and John Voight. Angelina has been very forthcoming about her very dark and painful past. Tormented so much, she succumbed to bouts of severe depression. She began turning to drugs (every type of drug), self-mutilation and even suicide attempts in an effort to get rid of the pain. Angelina was heading down a terrifying road and fast.

At 14 years old, Angelina told her mother she wanted her boyfriend to live with them. Marcheline finally agreed when Angelina explained to her mother that, "I was either going to be reckless on the streets with my boyfriend, or he was going to be with me in my bedroom with my mom in the next room. She made the choice, and because of it, I continued to go to school every morning and explored my first relationship in a safe way." It takes a lot of guts and a different way of looking at things to tell your mom, at 14, that you want your boyfriend to move in. Could it be that the thing (or space) in her that allowed her to do that is the very thing that has mesmerized so many?

Though Angelina had already taken some acting classes, it was after her two-year relationship with her boyfriend ended that she started to take acting seriously. No stranger to a film set, as she had done some film work alongside her "on again off again" estranged father from a very young age, it wasn't until her deliciously deranged performance as Lisa Rowe in *Girl, Interrupted* that audiences took notice. The final nail in the coffin (so to speak) to becoming a household name came when she proved once and for all that women could kick butt too! She earned \$20 million dollars for her role as Lara in *Lara Craft: Tomb Raider*, earning her the title of the highest paid actress ever. The filming of *Lara Craft: Tomb Raider* turned out to be much more than a big paycheck and fame for Angelina though; it changed the whole trajectory of her life.

Only Angelina knows what it was about the experience that ended up affecting her so deeply, but the overall effect is easily evident. While filming *Lara Craft: Tomb Raider* in Cambodia, seeing the refugee camps affected her so much that she approached the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and asked what she could do to help. She started venturing to trouble spots in Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Cambodia and Pakistan. That trip was only the beginning. On August 27, 2001 she was named the Goodwill Ambassador for the UNHCR, a position she hasn't held lightly. Angelina has traveled to over 30 countries since, including some of the most precarious locations and living in the same conditions as the field staff, gathering knowledge of what needs to be done to help those in need. She's been a guest speaker at many refugee events, including The World Economic Forum in 2005 and 2006 and worked with many members of the Congress in an effort to push through many bills to aid refugees. In appreciation of all her work with the UNHCR, in April 2012, she was promoted to Special Envoy of High Commissioner Antonio Guterres, allowing her to represent the UNHCR and the High Commissioner himself at a diplomatic level.



Becoming a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador wasn't the only thing that changed for Angelina after her time in Cambodia. During her stay, she met one of the loves of her life, her son Maddox. Angelina met Maddox when he was just weeks old and fell in love with him right away. She officially adopted him on March 10th, 2002. She became a second time Mom in 2005 when she adopted her daughter Zahara from Ethiopia. In 2006, she gave birth to Shiloh, her first biological child, with fiancé Brad Pitt. There was still a lot of love to go around, so in 2007 she adopted her son Pax from Vietnam and, finally, in 2008, she gave birth to twins Knox and Vivienne. Though each of the adoptions was done by Angelina alone at

the time, each of them has now also officially been adopted by Brad as well, and all the children's last names are Jolie-Pitt. They've proven to be very dedicated and hands-on parents, traveling together as much as possible, and using outside help as little as they can.

Reading about Angelina's life is a journey into what looks like opposites. Who would have thought that the still self-proclaimed "Punk kid with tattoos" would grow up to become an Academy Award winning actress, director, and one of the most influential people of all times. Recently, Angelina announced that after testing positive for a gene defect known to be a strong indicator of risk for breast cancer, she decided to have a double mastectomy. **Time Magazine** released a cover with the headline "The Angelina Effect", acknowledging that her opening up about her decision puts a spotlight on genetic testing and making informed choices when it comes to health. Undoubtedly, she's given genetic testing, especially in regards to making it more accessible, a huge leap forward.



Angelina is a testament to many old adages, like march to the beat of your drum and don't judge a book by its cover. She's proven that it is possible to turn your life around, even at the deepest depths of despair, if you make the choice to and stick to it. Angelina clearly lives her life with intention and passion and doesn't say sorry for doing so. My guess is that if we were to dig into the "novel" that is Angelina Jolie, we'd find that it's these very qualities that draw us to her. Why not play a note or two on our own drum and to do so why not start by looking at those who already do, even if their cover seems so unlike ours. Who knows what could happen, your **life** could turn out to be très Jolie!

Treehouse Point Hotel: Unplug Your Phone and Recharge Yourself

Posted on January 22, 2014 in Dream Hotels & Resorts by Monique Bourgeois
<http://www.lionesswomansclub.com/1507-treehouse-point-hotel-unplug-your-phone-and-recharge-yourself/>

Feeling a little burnt out? Need to disconnect from the world for a little while? Want to soak in the silent peace of nature while still enjoying the comforts of home? Make your way to just 30 mins outside of Seattle, WA to Issaquah and you'll find your sanctuary.



Treehouse Point Hotel isn't just your ordinary hotel. No matter if you're looking for a romantic getaway, a conference room or a place to celebrate one of life's defining moments, Treehouse caters to them all and all the while being nestled in the tranquility of nature.

While the surroundings alone put Treehouse Point strides ahead of the rest, that's not all. When Pete and Judy Nelson decided to build Treehouse Point, they wanted a place that not only provided an escape, but also educated people on the importance of nature. They are now a fully operational Nature Conservancy, events centre and learning facility including a fully stocked library. All put to good use, spreading the word about Mother Nature to the community and guests.



For those who want to not just learn, but get immersed in the serenity of the environment, all while indulging their kid at heart, there are five luxury treehouse cabins ready to welcome anyone that would like to stay. All of which were designed and built by Pete. Can't make it to Washington? Pete also runs Nelson Treehouse and Supply, which designs and builds treehouses of all kinds. Or if you want to take a crack at making your own little hideaway, they offer all the supplies you need. So don't be shy, put your feet up and let nature take its course.



Your 5 Piece Marketing Toolbox!

Written for Inklyo

You've got an amazing product (or service), that you know the world has been waiting for, and a great team behind you. All that's left are the droves of people lining up to buy! There's only one problem, they're not there; yet. All it's going to take is to get the word out. How do you do that? Here are 5 proven marketing tools that will do just the trick.

Podio (www.podio.com)

With task management, a project calendar, customizable workspaces, instant chat, file sharing and more Podio has all the tools needed to make the perfect marketing campaign. Podio makes it easy to keep up to date with every part of the campaign. With over 700 pre-built apps Podio is easy to use on the go and if you can't find a pre-built app you need you can even build it yourself.

BuzzStream (www.buzzstream.com)

A campaign is only as strong as the people that hear it and see it. No matter how good a campaign is if you don't reach your potential customers, all the hard work will be for not. BuzzStream helps by researching those people that like to try out the latest and greatest in your industry and those loyal 20% repeat customers. They'll even tell you the best way to get in touch!

Hootsuite (www.hootsuite.com)

With lightning speed, social media has quickly become the best way to build and keep strong relationships with your customers. With so many great social media outlets available it can be practically impossible to keep up with them all. Hootsuite pulls the information from each of your accounts into one place so you can keep on top of all the conversations and make the most of every tweet and post.

Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics)

Was the campaign worth the effort? Google Analytics can tell you that and much more. They provide real time reporting on how many clicks your ad got, how long someone stayed on your website and which pages are visited most. With all this information, and more, at your fingertips you'll know how to make the most of every marketing dollar!

HARO (Help a Reporter Out - www.helpareporter.com)

Of course, the media is still a tried and true way to get the word out, but how do you get in touch with those key media players that will put your message on air? HARO does all the hard work for you. All you do is put together the necessary information you want to send out and post. Just like that your message is ready to be picked up by reporters from companies like ABC, Huffington Post and Fox.

Iris Grace: The Underlying Beauty of a Young Painting Prodigy

Posted on April 23, 2015 in *The Arts Loft* by *Monique Bourgeois*

<http://www.lionesswomansclub.com/1776-iris-grace-the-underlying-beauty-of-a-young-painting-prodigy/>

There are times in life when you come across someone or something that breaks through the ho-hum or tragedy of the day to crack you open and reaffirm the heart of the world. Today, that someone is little Miss Iris Grace.

For the most part, Iris is a typical, sweet, 5-year-old little girl that likes music, nature, pets and books. Oh, yes... and painting.



Her works remind us of a world that many can tend to forget, full of peace, playfulness and beauty. Technique aside, there's wisdom in her artwork that is far behind her years. No surprise, art enthusiasts around the world have taken notice and are adding her work to their collections and even comparing it to Monet.



While the art world is enchanted by this little girl's paintings, there is no one else more thrilled and grateful than her parents, but in this case even more so than you would think. You see, Iris is autistic, and her paintings have given them the first glimpses into her world.

While people with autism can be affected at varying degrees, commonly they have difficulty being able to communicate and relate to the people around them. In fact, many, like Iris, can't speak. They each see the world in a way that is uniquely their own. It wasn't until her parents handed her a paintbrush that Iris could finally share her beautiful world. Incredibly, the experience seems to be going both ways! As Iris has gotten more and more comfortable using art as a form of communication, it has opened her up to the world, so much so that she has even started learning words.



As soon as Iris held her first paintbrush she was smitten! Arabella, her mother, says that Iris can be whisked away into her paintings for up to two hours, a feat for any child but especially for many of those with Autism. When Iris wants to paint, she simply points to the colour paint she wants to use, so that Arabella can prepare it with some water. Once Iris is happy with the shade, she gets to work, becoming totally engrossed in her masterpieces, working all on her own. Well, sometimes her furry sister, aka cat Thula, likes to help!



Along with painting, Thula has become a true source of connection for Iris. While other families with children that have Autism were having success with animal companions, it didn't seem to be working with Iris. They tried several animals and were about to move on to other ideas, when the Grace family took care of a family member's cat while they were away. To their surprise, Iris formed a bond with the cat. That's when Arabella realized that they just hadn't found the right animal yet. After some more searching, they brought home Thula and the kindred spirits were united. They travel together everywhere, nap together, and even bathe together!



There are so many heart-warming parts to this story: a touching animal friendship, her inspiring artwork, of course, but also the fact that her parents never gave up. Doctors told them that painting or getting a pet weren't likely to help. But her parents didn't let that deter them though. Instead, they let Iris lead the way. How lucky we are that they did! Every person has, and deserves, a part in sharing their spirit with others. I think my favourite part of her story though is the reminder that beauty can be found in places that can often be overlooked. It would have been a shame to discount her part to share and miss out on her truly magnificent world. A world beautifully synonymous with the name of its beholder, Iris Grace.



Slip Slidin' and Singing Along with a Waterproof Speaker!

Posted on September 18, 2013 in Lady's Gadgets by Monique Bourgeois

<http://www.lionesswomansclub.com/1419-slip-slidin-and-singing-along-with-a-waterproof-speaker/>



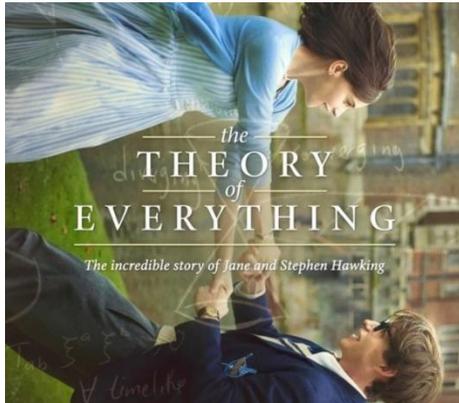
For many of us who like to belt our hearts out, but are ... ummm, let's say, pitch-challenged, there's nowhere better to flex our vocal cords than in the shower. The acoustics are amazing, the steam from the shower helps keep your mouth from getting dry, and usually it's one of the few places for people to find a little privacy. The only one thing that could make it even better is accompaniment! At last, as **Etta James** would put it, the wait is over! Now, with the Muji splash-proof speaker, your very own smartphone can turn you into the lead singer of the best rock band in the bathroom.

A portable speaker that runs on battery power, the Muji can be taken anywhere. Open up the case and hook up your smart phone with the standard headphone jack and you're set. The clear film on the top of the case allows you to change the tune easily, or – if so inclined – you can stay connected by writing an e-mail or even surf the web. Your phone stays nice and dry, while you get squeaky clean! With each fresh set of batteries giving you up to 30 hours and a combined 800mW of speaker power coming at you, you've got everything you need to rock the house. So grab your shampoo bottle (aka: microphone) and let the music fly!

Film Review: The Theory of Everything

Posted on January 8, 2015 in *Cinema Galore* by *Monique Bourgeois*

<http://www.lionesswomansclub.com/1723-film-review-the-theory-of-everything/>



Stephen Hawking has led such a big life that there was no question his life could fill up the silver screen. With there being so many ways for his story to be told, the question becomes whether the movie would succeed in telling a story that would do justice to his journey. With *The Theory of Everything*, justice has been served!

Generally people know that Hawking is a brilliantly smart man who, sadly, has been confined to a wheelchair for the majority of his life. While *The Theory of Everything* definitely shares the experience of living a life as a genius with Lou Gehrig's, what's so elegant about the movie is that those things take a back seat. Instead, it is centered on the connections Hawking has with the people around him, particularly the love story between him and his wife, Jane (Felicity Jones). In fact, based on her book *Travelling to Infinity: My Life with Stephen*, the movie is as much about Jane as it is about Stephen. You could even classify *The Theory of Everything* as a romance. It's through their relationship that we get an inside glimpse into what his life has been like.

James Marsh directs us on a journey where we first see Hawking, played exquisitely by Eddie Redmayne, in college. Enjoying life in their early twenties, Stephen and his friends find themselves at a party where he meets Jane. Jane is enchanted with all of Stephen's knowledge and Stephen was happy to have an intelligent and intrigued ear to listen. They talked all night and spent more and more time together as days went on. Things were going well for Stephen.

He had a girlfriend and was excelling in class; he was even given his own space to work on his goal. The quest to find the one equation that explains the universe, known in the scientific community as The Theory of Everything. Though not extremely shy, Stephen was slightly socially awkward and somewhat clumsy. He didn't know the

cause of his clumsiness until one fateful day when he falls to the ground, hitting his head. The tests done after Stephen's accident showed more than he bargained for.

Lou Gehrig's disease is a condition that hinders a person's ability to make voluntary movements and as the person is able to move less and less, the muscles deteriorate, often cutting the person's life short. Stephen was given two years to live. Devastated by the news, he pulls away from everyone, especially Jane. But Jane wouldn't have it. She forces him to face the issue and tells him she's not going anywhere. Though Stephen's family try talking her into moving on, she refuses, saying that she knows what she's getting into and wants to anyway. Feeling the pressure of time, they are soon happily married and expecting the first of the three children they are going to have.

As the rest of the movie follows the Hawking's life, there's a seamless similarity to reality that is so well expressed it's almost surreal. Felicity Jones' portrayal of Jane is almost beyond truthful, as she moves from fighting to be a part of Stephen's life, to taking on anything and everything that needed to be done with gusto, to feeling the wear of the stress and fatigue take hold and then to the eventual collapse of the marriage. Eddie reveals a rainbow of emotions as he shows us Stephen working through the pain of dealing with his illness, to the strength he mustards to fight the illness, to a gentle acceptance of the circumstances. Even when resisting his first wheelchair, extra help and new communication technique, Stephen retains a sharp wit that Eddie pulls off to a tee, taking the audience from tears of sadness to tears of laughter.

There are so many great messages entwined into *The Theory of Everything*, most vividly that of persistence. Whether it was Jane's determination to work through a life with a spouse with an illness, or Stephen's persistence to not let his illness stop him from achieving his best, including writing his revolutionary book *A Brief History in Time* or surpassing all medical expectations and living a full life as a thriving 72-year-old with Lou Gehrig's. The best way to encapsulate *The Theory of Everything* though is from *The Theory of Everything*, "There should be no boundaries to human endeavor. We are all different. However bad life may seem, there is always something you can do, and succeed at. While there's life, there is hope."