Artistic Insights into Addiction and Recovery

This issue of Innovations features original works of addiction art from the Innovators’ Art & Addiction Exhibitions that were held in collaboration with the annual meeting of the College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD) in Quebec, as well as the Dr. Lonnie Mitchell National HBCU Substance Abuse Conference in Washington, DC. Talented visual artists provided valuable insight into addiction and recovery. We believe that creativity and artistic expression can play a significant role in both recovery and in raising awareness of the personal toll caused by substance abuse and addiction.

This year’s exhibitions were national in scope with 70 works received from more than 40 artists representing 18 states. The exhibitions featured original artworks ranging from bronze and marble sculptures, oil paintings, woodcuts, photography, lithographs, and ceramics.

Ten artists, whose artworks were selected by the exhibition’s jurors as being the most creative in capturing both the destructive power of addiction and the new life born in recovery, were awarded consultancies to the Innovators Program. Several of the “Award and Honorable Mention” selections are displayed throughout this newsletter, and will also appear in the Innovators’ 2008 Addiction Art Calendar that is currently in press.

(Cont’d on p. 5)
Integrating Addiction Art with Addiction Science

Addiction to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is one of the major public health issues of our time, accounting for 1 of 5 deaths in America. Our hospitals are filled with patients whose presenting illnesses are severely complicated by substance abuse and addiction. Patients with co-occurring substance abuse and addiction often show poor compliance with prescribed medical care and have poorer treatment outcomes, increased hospitalizations, and increased medical costs across the board as compared to non-substance abusers. Substance abuse has reached epidemic status, and demands vigorous action as an urgent public health problem. The solution rests on changing the current state of addiction treatment, as well as changing the way America views addiction. Art provides a lens to the human side of addiction and recovery.

We can change the current state of addiction treatment because we have excellent addiction science to improve our treatments and build a health care system to deliver them. This issue of Innovations describes our forthcoming book, Addiction Treatment: Science and Policy for the Twenty-First Century, that critically examines drug addiction treatment in the United States. It explores specific challenges (scientific, medical, social, and legal) to reaching the goal that treatment for drug addiction should be as accessible as treatments for diseases of the heart, liver, and lungs that often result from the use of addictive drugs.

This issue also presents addiction art that we believe is the complementary universe to addiction science. Addiction art can help bridge the gap between addiction science and the human experience of addiction. The Innovators Program has organized four juried, Art & Addiction exhibitions over the past four years (2004-07). One of the basic tenets of our addiction art program is to change the way America views addiction from being seen as a “moral failing” or “criminal act,” to being accepted as a medical illness requiring treatment. To participate in our exhibitions, a formal “Call to Artists” (see p. 3) is published that contains specific submission guidelines.

The complementary forces of addiction art and addiction science can drive America’s leadership to make science-based, addiction treatment readily available to those who need it, and thus reduce and control substance abuse and addiction.
Innovator Dr. Larry Gentilello Discusses Drunk Driving among Teens

Prom and graduation season is a time when teens are especially prone to the risks of drinking and driving. Motor vehicle crashes remain the number one cause of death among youth aged 16-24 years, with nearly one-third of traffic accidents being alcohol-related. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one-third of youth under the age of 21, who are killed in alcohol-related fatalities, die during the months of April, May and June.

The Innovators Program organized a satellite radio media tour this past Spring, which featured Dr. Larry Gentilello (2002 Innovator Award recipient) discussing the topic of alcohol-related traffic deaths among teens. As a trauma surgeon, Dr. Gentilello has published numerous studies documenting the extraordinary high contribution of alcohol and drug abuse to life-threatening injury, and the potentially powerful impact of hospital-based trauma center interventions to reduce such problems.

Dr. Gentilello participated in ten live radio interviews with national and regional networks and stations, delivering key messages on how to prevent teen drunk driving. The radio media tour resulted in extensive national news coverage. The successful tour reached two national networks, USA Radio and CNN Radio, and six radio stations in the top 50 markets (including 3 in the top 10 markets). Copies of the key prevention messages developed for Dr. Gentilello’s radio tour, as well as other resources to prevent drinking and driving, are available on the Innovators’ website (www.innovatorsawards.org).

CALL TO ARTISTS: ART AND ADDICTION

DEADLINE: March 1, 2008

National Juried Book/Exhibitions exploring Art and Addiction. Content of artwork should be a narrative of, reflection upon, or expression about drug addiction and recovery (drugs include alcohol, tobacco, illegal, or prescription drugs). Open to all artists. All 2-D and 3-D works (including video) are eligible. No size or date limitations. No fees. Jurors: prominent members from art and addiction science communities. Finalists will receive a monetary honorarium ($200), with the top 5 finalists receiving an additional honorarium of $500; published book (publication date 2009); and inclusion in exhibitions: Maryland (May 2008), Puerto Rico (June 2008), and other possible venues. Innovators Combating Substance Abuse Program at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, 600 N. Wolfe Street, Meyer Building 3-142, Baltimore, MD 21287. Phone: (443) 287-3915. For additional information and prospectus, please visit the Innovators’ website (http://www.innovatorsawards.org)
Our new book critically examines drug addiction treatment in the United States. We conceived this book to help revolutionize and energize debate and discussion about drug addiction treatment. Leading thinkers from many disciplines in the addiction field were asked to offer their perspectives on what addiction treatment could and should look like in the twenty-first century. We challenged our contributing authors to be creative and constructive by writing focused chapters, not technical review articles. We encouraged them to explore novel, promising, and, in some cases, provocative aspects of addiction treatment. Thirty-one leaders in the substance abuse and addiction field, including twelve of our program’s twenty Innovators, contributed chapters to the book.

_Addiction Treatment_ highlights some of the most controversial issues in medicine:
- **Is addiction really a disease, a behavior, or just an excuse to use drugs?**
- **Is stigmatizing addiction helpful or not?**
- **Should cocaine-using pregnant women be locked up or treated for addiction?**
- **What do people treated for drug addiction, asthma, diabetes, and high blood pressure have in common?**
- **What does heroin production in Afghanistan have to do with crime in your city?**

_Addiction Treatment_ begins with an introduction by former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop who outlines the key issues, controversies, challenges, and opportunities facing the field of substance abuse and addiction. His vision of what could be possible if addiction were addressed more as a public health challenge than as a “war to be won” provided a stimulus for many of the authors contributing to the book. The book consists of three parts. _Part I_ examines the emerging science and theories that underlie the development of specific models for treating addiction to illicit opioids and stimulants, alcohol, tobacco, and prescription drugs. _Part II_ explores the complications raised by the diversity of those with addictions, ranging from pregnant women who use intravenous drugs, young men who abuse methamphetamines, youths who smoke cigarettes, adults who abuse alcohol, to those who smoke marijuana or abuse prescription drugs. _Part III_ provides a detailed analysis of health care, social, and policy issues that challenge our views about addiction and its treatment. Throughout the book, compelling examples of addiction art explore the human side of addiction through the lens of visual artists’ stunning insights into addiction and recovery.
Artistic Insights into Addiction and Recovery
(cont’d from p. 1)

Several artists had personal experiences with addiction that influenced their work. Teddy Ann Richardson, a high school art educator, created a large water color depicting individuals in bottles trapped by their alcoholism, trying to Break the Cycle of their addiction. Julia Carpenter, a professional artist, composed a powerful series of portraits of her late sister who died of a drug overdose. To create his brilliant, miniature (2.5”x2.5”) drug-themed embroideries, renowned “outsider” artist Ray Materson (2003 Innovator Award recipient) uses sock thread, adhering to a medium he first used while imprisoned for drug-related offenses. Margaret Dowell, an artist, art historian and college art professor, created a captivating large oil painting revealing her idea of the challenges of a friend addicted to prescription drugs.

When the Art & Addiction Exhibition was displayed at CPDD in Quebec, the Innovators Program also had the privilege of displaying selected reproductions from William Eppridge’s photographic essay, “Needle Park.” This photographic essay of heroin addicts in New York’s Times Square was the inspiration for the 1971 film, The Panic in Needle Park. The Innovators Program also organized two “Meet the Artists” sessions at CPDD, which featured two engaging speakers. Nancy Campbell, PhD, an art historian from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, presented the story behind William Eppridge’s essay in her lecture entitled “Revisiting Needle Park: the Halls of Lexington, the Monkeys of Michigan, and the Streets of New York,” using several of Mr. Eppridge’s photographs to illustrate her talk. The Innovators’ second speaker, Sam Barnes, MD, a retired orthopedic surgeon, spoke on “Art Reco,” focusing on how art is intrinsically linked to recovery from addiction. Dr. Barnes illustrated his talk with twelve bronze sculptures he had created while working the 12-Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.
INNOVATORS COMBATING SUBSTANCE ABUSE

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