



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXHIBITION: “Unpack Your Mind”: A group show by artists with Mental Health challenges

EXHIBITION DATES: April 11 – June 20

RECEPTION: Saturday, April 11, 6-8pm

EVENTS: Artist-Patient/Medical Professional Conversation, Open Mic, Webern Quartet (and a complete list at opening reception)

GALLERY HOURS: Thursdays – Saturdays, 10am-5pm and by appointment

LOCATION: dnj Gallery, 3015 Ocean Park Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90405

CONTACT: office@dnjgallery.net

WEBSITE: <https://www.dnjgallery.net>

Pamela Schoenberg, owner/director of dnj Gallery, and Ted Meyer, founder of Art and Med, are delighted to present the exhibition, “**Unpack your Mind**”: a group show by artists with mental health conditions. The Art and Med program, curated by dnj Gallery, includes a ten-week exhibit and corresponding, community-focused events, all highlighting a chronic disease. The Art and Med program is designed to increase awareness, further education, and raise funds for charities.

In the Spring of 2024, Pamela Schoenberg brought the Art and Med program to dnj Gallery. During the pandemic, she studied nutritional science, and then, in 2023, she received her certification as a registered Health Coach. By combining her two passions—art and health—Schoenberg currently displays fine art that calls attention to certain health illnesses. She stresses the current mission to provide a platform for sharing experiences related to these chronic conditions.

The Art and Med curriculum highlights the voice of the artist/patient. Originally, the program was designed by Ted Meyer, artist-in-residence at the USC Keck School of Medicine, for use in medical schools. These visual lessons were used by the schools to illustrate the specific illness and thus emphasize the perspective of the patient. In other words, Meyer reveals a commitment to utilizing art as a tool to support individuals.

Our next exhibition explores the many ways people experience and navigate their mental well-being. Rather than defining mental health through labels or conditions, this exhibition centers the voices, stories, and creative expressions of those who live with these experiences every day. Through art, the exhibition invites reflection on resilience, vulnerability, care, and the ways individuals make meaning of their journeys. Mental health exists along a spectrum, and every person’s experience is shaped by their

relationships, communities, and the circumstances they move through. This exhibition seeks to create space for empathy and connection—offering artists an opportunity to share their perspectives and audiences a chance to listen, reflect, and recognize the humanity within these stories.

dnj Gallery will align itself with Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services as our community partner for this upcoming exhibition. Didi Hirsch provides compassionate mental health, substance use, and suicide prevention services to individuals and families, especially in communities where discrimination and injustice limit access. They have nine locations throughout the Los Angeles area, offering direct treatment and support, crisis services, and community education and training. The Art and Med program at dnj Gallery is grateful for these participants.

Art is an expressive method used to process emotions, reduce stress, and boost self-awareness. Some might say that it is a means to survival. Similarly, as Mila Fejzo states, “I use the imaginary realm [the paintings] as a way to cope, process, and make sense of intense internal experiences.” No matter the media, it is the development of the art piece that aids in healing. In her artist statement, Kristine Schomaker explains: “[it is] making the invisible visible. Getting it out of my head and onto a surface where I can actually look at it and ask: is this real? Is this concrete? Or, is it made of dots and color and light?” The remaining artists in this group exhibition react to their mental health experiences through art-making as well.