

Sun Studio, Crestone, Colorado

by Jennifer Thomson

Twelve years ago, Philip Incao and I moved from Denver to Crestone, Colorado, a small mountain town up against the Sangre de Cristo Mountains with various spiritual centers and lots of wild life where nature is stark. The weather is unpredictable but with lots of sunshine. Every August I present an art retreat to share color and the art of painting. This venture also opens doorways to art for the local community. Some local artists are helping develop an evening presentation on a chosen artist; we're scheduled to present the chosen artist in a small nearby town, and in the Shumei spiritual center in Crestone.

Her retreats renew my soul and spirit. Jennifer guides us to see in new ways, deepening our connection to nature and to our perceptions of life. —Lois Hartman

It takes two days before students begin to feel quiet and turn inward to listen to the colors. On the third day, one hears only the sound of brushes on paper. I spend months preparing the material for the retreats by creating exercises that lift the heart forces. I am not a therapist, nor do I judge a student's work. I look at the art only and see where there is too much flow or hardness in order to find a balance. Balance is the key.

I enjoy studying a new master artist and a different color theme each year. I leave newly inspired to continue my artistic work at home. —Kim Youngblood

Participants may be professional artists looking for something different, teachers, people going through an illness or life change, or who just want an art experience. Beginners are great; they shake up us old-timers. I love leading others through an artistic process, then watching them find their own path. Working with color in a living way nurtures a person's life. Developing a feeling



for the artistic process brings one to a deeper understanding of life and death. We strive to create a setting and a mood in which a student feels inspired to enter, courageously, into a process of *making the unseen visible*. Art awakens the creative forces in our souls and penetrates our life in all areas, giving us more confidence and flexibility. So much more! In both retreats there is an evening presentation in which Philip Incao talks about the parallels between the healing process and the artistic process.

The learning environment is gentle, encouraging, and deep. We are supported to work from within ourselves with kindness and clarity. —Susan Fey

The Landscape Painting Retreat has been in process for five years. My love for nature inspired this program. Viewing nature through art stimulates an awareness of the depth in nature. This year's theme, "Art & Nature," explores the texture of sand, patterns, and paint. Katie Schwerin will give a presentation on "Color Shadows." In these retreats, I wanted to create art programs that speak to everyone. Especially near these mountains where the elementals thrive and the environment is unspoiled. It is my way of giving back what I love most—art and nature.

Two years ago I told everyone, "I came because my wife asked me to. I'm just a 'doodler.'" Last year I attended again to learn more and advance my art. I love the landscapes that emerge in my work, and the inspired training! —Bill Whyte

Jennifer Thomson (sunstudio.thomson1@gmail.com) grew up in rural Tennessee, studied in Switzerland with Beppe Assenza, and led a painting training for 11 years in Hudson, NY. She has written *An Artist's Workbook with 45 painting exercises distilled from many years' experience*. Her week-long retreats are in August of each year.