

# AMA Journal of Ethics

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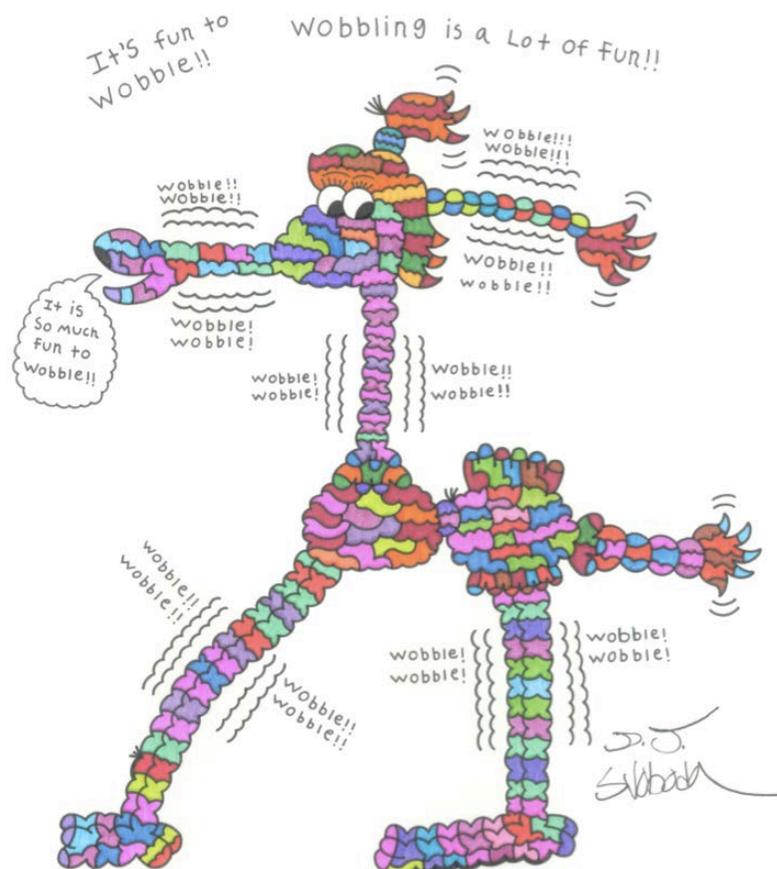
## IMAGES OF HEALING AND LEARNING

### Artwork by People with Autism

D.J. Svoboda, Kevin Hosseini, Noah Schneider, Emily Casanova, PhD, and Kay Aitch

#### D.J. Svoboda

My name is D.J. Svoboda, and I am an artist diagnosed with Autism. I am the creator of the Imagifriends of Imagiville. The Imagifriends of Imagiville are based on the experiences I have faced during times at school. There were days at school when I was made fun of, and when I was picked on and treated mean. Those made me feel very sad and hurt. That is how I got the idea of the Imagifriends of Imagiville.... Now I want to share my experiences to help open people's minds, hearts, and souls to have more compassion and awareness for Autism.



The Wobbling Saruvogoo

This is a Very Cheery Friend who always Loves to Wobble. No, it is not because she is Clumsy, No Way! It is because she is so full of Cheer and excitement that she always loves to Wobble for Fun and to show Her Cheer and Joy. When you see Her Wobbling you will also see that she is full of Great Joy and also Great Cheer!!

All those with Autism and Disabilities and Special Needs show and express their feelings in different ways.

When I am filled with Excitement and cheer I love to shake and Dance and even Wobble too.



### The Happy Waving Habfreedook

This is a Very Happy Friend who always loves to Smile and Wave Everywhere He goes. When He waves He loves to show Joy and Care and Kindness. He also Loves to Wave because it makes his Hands feel really good, But most of all he loves to Wave to everyone He sees, He even Loves to Wave to You too!!

Even all those with Autism and Disabilities and Special Needs show Happiness and Care and Kindness in so many different Ways.

I love to Wave and Smile to Everyone I see because it is one of the ways that I love to show Joy and Care and Kindness and Happiness too.

**Kevin Hosseini**



Bella

I like to paint with thick paint. This is my favorite dog Bella who I used to play with. Bella was my tutor Keith's dog. Keith worked for the Koegel Autism Center.

**Noah Schneider**

My autism has influenced my art because my disability makes me think of creative ideas from my imagination that other people do not think of. I think differently from kids who don't have autism because I already know what I want to do in my future. In general, a lot of kids who don't have autism don't know what to do with their lives. I started loving art when I was in 7th grade in Middle School. Everyday throughout my life I always create art and I like anything that deals with art.



60s Still Life



Peanut Butter

**Emily Casanova**



Dying



Beautiful Ladies



Beluga Whale

## Observation and Imagination

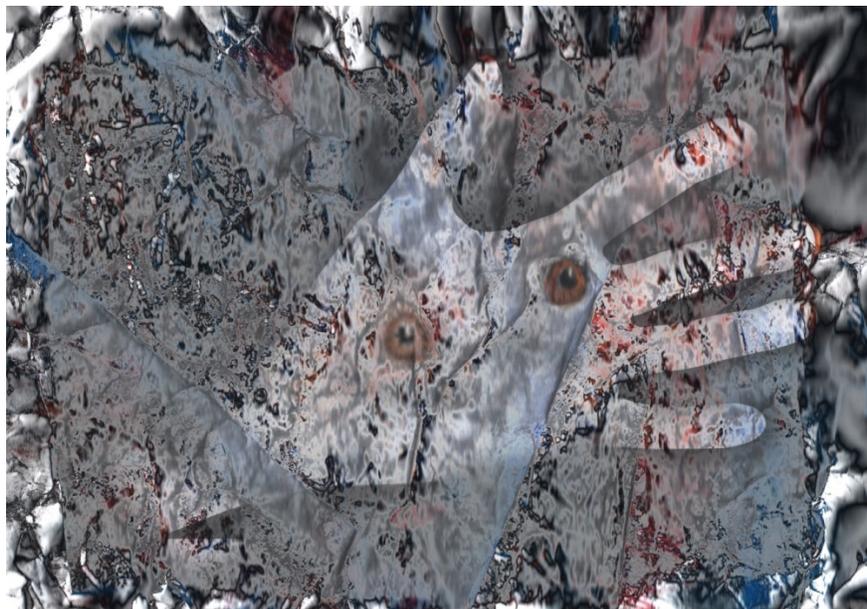
by Kay Aitch

During encounters with drunken old men on trams, who grasp my hand and ramble in slurred speech, I explain that I am a surrealist. If the drunk knows nothing about this he holds my hand tighter still, leans forward and nods knowingly; if the drunk knows something about art he lets go of my hand and leans back quietly—realizing that I am probably weird.

For me, being a surrealist means encountering everyday life with an exuberance of curiosity, excitement, and fear, along with an unexplainable but overwhelming desire to communicate with others through art. The intention is not for others to understand me but in the hope of connecting with the viewer on a level deeper than conscious rational thought.

I work across a variety of media; I do however have a preference for working with or on paper in some way. My preliminary work is often an expression of my day-to-day experience, which I record through drawing and photography—sketchbook and camera notes that I often process on the computer as ideas develop—maybe then through paint, digital print, sculpture, a textile piece, or an interweaving of techniques. I produce work for exhibition, commission, illustration, and installation.

I often use the technique of drawing without looking at the paper, as this helps me to concentrate much more closely on observing the subject of my drawing. Developing the ability to observe more closely helps to excite my imagination and inspire my creativity. Drawing helps me to focus in the moment, as with the concept of mindfulness. It is therefore the foundation of the workshops which I run—Drawing for Well Being.



Hand with Eyes

I think of my self portrait as being of my hands—I can see my hands, they are my direct contact with the world, whereas I only see my face in the mirror.

**D.J. Svoboda** is a public speaker, artist, and author with three books to his credit: *My Imagiville*, *The Mupperezmo and the Rainbow*, and *The Inspirations of Imagiville*. D.J.'s artwork has been featured in *Autism Spectrum*, *Autism Digest*, *Autism Perspective*, and *Australian Parent's Child*, among other publications, and hangs in museums and on the walls of corporations, organizations, and private homes. D.J. has been nominated for the Naturally Autistic ANCA Visual Arts Award and been interviewed on numerous radio and television shows. He is an advocate for the North Carolina Autism Society and has been the keynote speaker at various autism conferences, meetings, and events all over the country.

**Kevin Hosseini** is an artist on the autism spectrum who resides in El Cajon, California. His artwork has been displayed in many galleries and museums, including the Smithsonian Institution.

**Noah Schneider** is an artist and character designer whose animated films have won several awards.

**Emily Casanova, PhD**, is a developmental, molecular, and cell biologist who studies autism, intellectual disability, epilepsy, and schizophrenia and enjoys photography in her spare time. Emily was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome in 2007.

**Kay Aitch** is an artist who leads workshops entitled "Drawing for Well Being" that explore the relation between creative expression and health.

#### **Related in the AMA Journal of Ethics**

[Drawing Autism: Showcasing the Artistic Talents of People with ASD](#), April 2015

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