

ON THE COVER

The Shadow Self by Adrienne Ione

This article is based on a video interview with Adrienne Ione on July 6, 2022.

Adrienne Ione, the artist featured on the cover of this issue of *American Psychologist*, was prompted to try painting after admiring the work of George Rodrigue, a New Orleans, Louisiana, artist that created the Blue Dog series with its popular and whimsical representations of dogs. Based on positive feedback from her initial paintings, she created a series of paintings of dogs, using acrylics and canvas. Many of these were created specifically for donation to auctions and fundraising. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Ione began painting regularly for 10 min every morning, to add structure to her life, and to help her cope with the challenges of working as an integrative health practitioner when the restrictions of the pandemic had a dramatic impact on her ability to be available to her clients.

Ione works in Tacoma, Washington, helping her clients integrate the physical, emotional, and spiritual in her interventions. Although she had no formal training in art beyond high school courses, she notes that she did not like the way that art was taught and that many of the “rules” around creating art did not make sense to her. Her childhood was spent enjoying the outdoors, living in tents, cabins, and vans with her family in many states and in Japan. She brings nature into her work (e.g., having clients face windows when they can look outside at nature) and into her art whenever possible. Now she works primarily with people over the age of 65 and those with Alzheimer’s disease. Previously, she was a fitness specialist with the U.S. Marine Corps. And, early in her career Ione was a counselor in group homes and particularly enjoyed work with high-functioning clients who were placed there for aggressive behavior. Her educational background is in psychology and exercise physiology (Miramar College, San Diego, California) and social welfare (University of Washington, Tacoma). She obtained a master’s degree in political psychology at the University of Washington but returned to a focus on working with people (rather than policy) and subsequently received a doctorate in grief counseling and trauma from Breyer State Theology University.

The painting on the cover portrays a small chicken in the lower left corner and a large dark translucent shadow. One interpretation of the picture is that we may feel small but we all have a larger power within us. In this case, we see the

projection of the looming, more powerful self. Indeed, we all have hidden strengths inside us, there to be accessed when needed. However, Ione revealed an interpretation of the work that is quite different and not readily apparent. When working on the piece, she read an article about Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the *New York Times*. A subhead in the article read “A Shadow of Itself, yet Capable of Devastating Attacks.” This resonated with her as well. In another version of this piece, she clipped the headline from the newspaper and added it to the art, also including another (unrelated) clip of the word “HER.” She indicated that she was commenting on possible self and other destructive tendencies of people she has known. Ione indicated that we could feature either version for the cover but that she preferred the one without the text because it gives people more room to make their own interpretation of the meaning of the picture.

Although she started by drawing dogs, chickens have a prominent place in Ione’s work. Why? One simple reason is that Ione’s nickname is Chickie and she, therefore, feels a connection to them. She also used chickens to develop her portrayal of eyes in her art. In her initial paintings of dogs, she painted very simple eyes with no details. As her art developed, she refined emotional expression in eyes, and in the eyes of chickens. She gravitates toward chickens because she views them as nearly universal, benign, and approachable. She finds that chickens can be used to help clients express emotions. By taking the human element out, one may be freer to experience emotions. Ione introduces a playfulness to her work with clients and chickens play a role in this. She pulled a chicken puppet off her shelf during our video interview and introduced me to Florence. With Florence, she is able to help clients think differently about their bodies and movements and Florence joins her clients with Alzheimer’s in practicing yoga.

Ione is a creative, energetic, and optimistic holistic health practitioner who has found a unique way of integrating art into her life and work. Her practice embraces psychological knowledge and approaches and she asks us to relate to the universality of the chicken and make the most of it for ourselves. What do you see in *The Shadow Self*?

 Anne E. Kazak
Art Editor