



# THE ART *of wellbeing*

## HOW ART CAN CHALLENGE CONDITIONED BEHAVIOUR

Words by **Helen Mulhern**, photographs by **Andrew Mulhern**

I am fascinated by the likes of Derren Brown and The Mentalist. I love examining human behaviour – why we act in certain ways, how we react to stimuli and why some people are better at some things than others.

I would like to be better at drawing. So when professional artist, Jeanni Grant-Nelson, said that she could have me filling a pad with images to be proud of within three hours, I was intrigued.

During our session, I discovered that Jeanni is an art whisperer. She takes you on a journey using fascinating exercises - some without pencil even touching paper, pointing out patterns of behaviour as they unfold. It's an eye-opening experience, whether or not you want to develop your artistic talents.

We started by drawing a chair, a building and a woman. Out came my stick chair, woman complete with triangle dress and a tin mine. Jeanni's first point was quickly made – I was not drawing what I saw.

She explained how we fall back on patterns of learnt behaviour – especially under stress. Using some very clever exercises, Jeanni highlighted that I was making assumptions rather than really looking. These exercises helped me to focus on looking at the subject and less time looking at my page.

Now breathing properly, feeling far more relaxed, my drawing became looser and I was really enjoying myself, while

Jeanni drew attention to things that I was doing and unlocked my potential. Could I be one of her many success stories? You'll have to judge my results for yourself, but I'm still astounded by what I created in a three-hour session.

Not just an art lesson, Jeanni uses her sessions to open minds. Perhaps her teachings should be called "the art of wellbeing", as external realities slip away in a state of complete focus. Using skills from the old masters, Jeanni taught me more about the fundamentals of art in a few hours than during years of GCSE art and A-level ceramics.

Jeanni is a professional artist and a graduate teacher. Her images are on sale at Truro Cathedral and the National Trust, and she is also the artist in residence at The Nare Hotel on the beautiful Roseland. Her seascapes, landscapes, portraits and animal commissions can be found in private collections across the world including Holland, Germany, France, the USA and Australia.

"My passion and enthusiasm for art were ignited in early childhood by my architect father and art teacher mother, making artistic expression an essential part of my life," she explains. "A background in art and theatre, mixed with a love of inspiring others to believe in themselves, has led me to create a method of teaching which allows anyone to reach a clear understanding of the fundamentals of art in a very