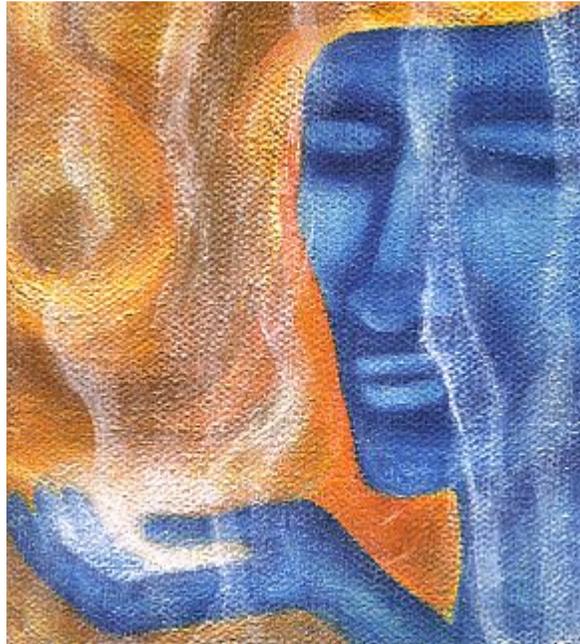


# Pamela Witcher

"Pamela Witcher." WFD News 16.2 (July 2003): 1.

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**Profoundly Within,**

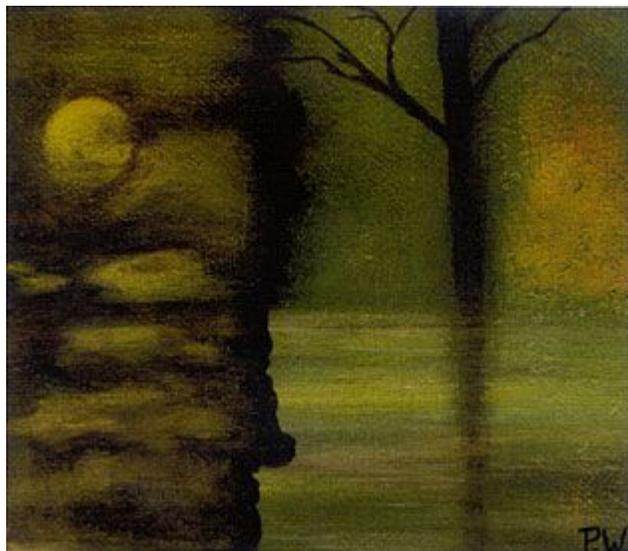
*acrylic on canvas, 152 cm x 122 cm, 2002.*

*[click image to enlarge]*

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Pamela Witcher was born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada in 1975, in a family with Deaf parents. Two years later her brother, who is Deaf, was born. Montreal is a quadrilingual city, divided into anglophone and francophone sections. This gave Ms. Witcher the opportunity to learn American Sign Language (ASL), English, Langue des Signes Quebecoise (LSQ), and French. Within the family, ASL and English were the main languages.

In her family, there was always a lot of love and communication. Deaf culture was learned instinctively, but it was not their main focus. Religious teaching was the most important thing in her early family life. At the age of 16, after a struggle, she rebelled and left her religion.



**Separate But Together,**

*acrylic on canvas, 122 cm x 152 cm, 2003.*

Ms. Witcher began her education in a Deaf school, but later changed to a hearing school where she entered a new world. She finished high school at age 18 and began exploring issues of feminism, sexuality, and Deaf culture. Challenging her parents who did not believe in higher education, she earned a bachelor's degree in social work from McGill University.



Pamela Witcher in her gallery, *Aux Sous-Entendus*, next to her painting **Both Heaven and Hell**, oil on canvas, 61 cm x 92 cm, 2003.

technique, and pottery.

How she expresses herself through her art has been changing slowly. She is learning to let go and dive into the unknown, rather than making graphic plans. She expresses herself with certain ideas and colours. Her style of art is a mixture of figurism, symbolism, and surrealism. Ms. Witcher's paintings tend to be of women, and ears are never shown.

She feels that being Deaf has naturally influenced or affected her art. However, being Deaf is not a full description of her. She is also a woman with various life experiences. A couple of years ago she began asking herself big questions: "Who am I? What do I want for myself? What am I to do on this earth?" During the same period, she met her partner with whom she shares her life today. Now, on every occasion when inspiration comes to her, she creates.

Her family fully supports her and takes great interest in her goals. As she has become older, she has seen more clearly how her family has been one of the most important influences on her interest in art. They take delight in whatever she creates.

It is not easy to support oneself financially while working as a full-time artist. Earlier she felt the need to work in other professions to earn money but she now sees the possibility of working as a fulltime artist. With her partner, she has recently opened a local gallery and studio where she leads a weekly oil painting workshop in LSQ. There she sees how her touch inspires others to gain confidence in themselves and in their own creations. In the same space she releases her own imagination.

Being an artist to the core from birth, Ms. Witcher enjoyed exploring many creative paths. Writing and signing poetry, practicing sketches and colours, taking photographs, digging in the garden, and sculpturing clay seemed to come naturally to her.

When discussing the word "artist," Ms. Witcher says a person who expresses herself or himself in any creative way is an artist. She decided not to attend art school, as she came to believe that the answer to becoming an artist did not come from others but from the artist. Whatever an artist creates represents his or her inner world, not something taught at school. Nevertheless, she took several art classes: oil painting, drawing, acrylic painting, mixed



**Obstacle During a Muddled Period**, mixed technique on canvas, 122 cm x 152 cm, 2003.