

Gloucester Times

[Lifestyle](#)

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Shaun McNiff of Gloucester will present "Moving Between Worlds: The Artist in Service to Life and Others," on March 24 at the Rose Performance Hall, Center for the Arts at Endicott College.



Endicott College's Department of Fine Arts announces the second event of a yearlong program, "Investigations in Art Therapy: Inquiries at Endicott College," with Shaun McNiff of Gloucester. The program begins at 6 p.m. with the reception and book signing and continues with the lecture at 7 p.m. The event is free to the public.



March 16, 2011

Series takes new strides in arts therapy

By Gail McCarthy Staff Writer The Gloucester Daily Times Wed Mar 16, 2011, 10:38 PM EDT Gloucester artist Shaun McNiff has taken his artistic talents out of the studio and into a sphere of service to others.

A pioneer in the world of arts therapy, McNiff, who holds a doctorate degree, will be the guest lecturer at a free event at Endicott College in Beverly next Thursday.

The lecture is part of "Investigations in Art Therapy," a year-long program hosted by the college's Department of Fine Arts which is free to the public.

"This particular series was designed to engage our students and the community in a series of non-classroom presentations that focus on creativity-based healing," said Mark Towner, dean of the School of Visual and Performing Arts at Endicott, which has an undergraduate program in creative arts therapy. "This is a field for people who love to make art but want to work for the benefit of others. It's a wonderful way to contribute by being an artist. They are community-oriented and they want to reach out."

McNiff said talk will focus on the interplay between these two worlds.

"It will touch on what it's like to be in a studio making your own art and the broader subject of service to others," he said.

McNiff has had a bit of a circuitous path into the field. The North Shore native attended New York's Fordham University and went on to law school.

But he quit in January 1970 to pursue painting and sculpture. Soon after, he stumbled into the world of arts and therapy.

"I was hired as an art therapist at the psychiatric hospital in Danvers by complete serendipity," he recalled. "People were becoming interested in how art could serve others, arts and therapy, and arts and health care. Art has many functions."

That was the start of a long and varied international career in the field.

McNiff is an educator, painter and author of several books, including "Trust the Process: An Artist's Guide to Letting Go," "Art as Medicine," "Art Heals: How Creativity Cures the Soul," and his recent "Integrating the Arts in Therapy: History, Theory, and Practice." His books have been translated into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, German and other languages.

McNiff's lecture will focus on the exploration of how an artist works in service to others while maintaining an active practice in the studio. Discussion also will include the idea of moving toward a complete integration of art and life.

McNiff founded the first integrated arts in therapy graduate program at Lesley University in Cambridge.

The discipline of expressive arts therapy emerged from the Lesley community and its international affiliates. He was part of the group that established the Arts Institute Project in Israel in 1979. He left Lesley in 1995 to serve as provost and dean of Endicott College in Beverly, and returned to Lesley in 2002 as a professor.

The two remaining components of Endicott's "Investigations in Art Therapy" series take place next month.

On April 5, a reception, exhibition and presentation by Ric Haynes, a fine arts painter and creative arts therapist who teaches at Endicott C, will deliver a lecture titled "Discovering and Creating My Own Mythology."

On April 11, the program "Dance as if No One were Watching: Body Awareness and Intuitive Knowing" will be facilitated by Michele Laura with Marytha Paffrath. It will include yoga, drumming, martial arts and more.

These events are free to the public. For more information on the events, contact Kathleen Moore at 978-232-2655.

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If you go

Who and what: Shaun McNiff of Gloucester presents the lecture "Moving Between Worlds: The Artist in Service to Life and Others."

When: Thursday, March 24; Reception and book signing, 6 p.m.; lecture, 7 p.m.

Where: Rose Performance Hall, Center for the Arts at Endicott College in Beverly.

How much: The event is free to the public.