



## Let me tell you... about emulating Leonardo.

**Brett Weber, a Moravian College alumnus, received his B.S. in Biology and his B.A. in Art in 1991. He went on to earn his Ph.D. in Neuroscience at Temple University in 1997. Brett was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) the week before completing his doctorate. Since then he has devoted his life toward understanding MS through science and art.**

“I have always admired Leonardo da Vinci. He experimented in both art and science, and experienced his share of both success and failure. I admire that attitude to be unafraid, to

pursue truth, to have faith in your observations, and to continue onward no matter what obstacles present themselves. In that way, I have always hoped to emulate Leonardo. Not only by doing both art and science, but by pursuing each without fear in an effort to do some good.

As a scientist, I have been interested in the visual system and how the brain processes visual information. I have also studied nerve regeneration. Ironically, the week before completing my Ph.D. in Neuroscience at Temple University, I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS), a defining moment in my life. MS is a degenerative neurological disease that damages the central nervous system. It is not contagious and not often directly fatal, but it is unpredictable. Symptoms caused by MS vary in severity and duration and may range from blurred vision and numbness to blindness and complete paralysis. Although my disease has not significantly affected my vision, I do have partial paralysis in my legs, cannot stand without assistance and must use a wheelchair. The cause of MS is not yet understood and the form of the disease which I have has no proven effective treatment. Since my diagnosis, I have devoted myself towards understanding the disease through scientific research, but also through my art. I hope that my paintings may bring greater public awareness to progressive relapsing & primary progressive MS and encourage broader scientific research in these two areas. MS can be devastating to those who are afflicted with it and to their families, but like any major life-changing event chronic illness can also bring new values, new appreciations, and new colors and textures into one's life.

There is a sharp distinction between art and science, and studying a disease through art is not the same as studying it through science. My art is about my own emotional, intellectual, and spiritual journey, and within that context MS plays a significant role. When I paint, I feel as though I am on a journey of discovery. I allow myself to think about problems in a different way. I hear the words of great people and imagine the journeys they have taken as I navigate my own course through an expression of color and texture. My paintings tell me about my journeys. They are a record of where I have been. And, they express the artistic side of myself. Dissimilar as we may be, both artists and scientists are creatures of observation. What some overlook, we take joy in discovering. Things perhaps not clearly understood, but things we believe to be real and open to interpretation. We are in constant struggle to describe what we observe. And, even after we convince ourselves and others that we have seen some truth and made sense of it, there is always some doubt. For the artist and scientist both recognize how imperfect our human capacity is as we search for moments of understanding in a sea of complexity.

A friend of mine once referred to a painting I had just finished as being "either a complete abstraction or a landscape, but either way poetry." I was amused by my friend's comment, and although I have never painted poetry, I do feel that my paintings convey a certain beauty, mystery and brevity. Since that time, Sophia (my German Shepherd Helper Dog) and I have often created works of art together. See if you can correctly guess which paintings are Sophia's "official" signature pieces. Thank you for visiting our new show "**Voyage of Discovery – Alma Mater**" at Moravian College from September 24<sup>th</sup> to October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007 & for joining the fight against MS this year.

Your friends, Brett & Sophia

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**“Voyage of Discovery – Alma Mater” - Brett Curtis Weber Ph.D. & Sophia the helper dog.**

1. <b>Escape</b> (Triptych)	“One of the strongest motives that lead men to art and science is escape from everyday life with its painful crudity and hopeless dreariness, from the fetters of one’s own ever-shifting desires.”- Albert Einstein (1879-1955)
1a. <b>Dreams</b>	“Stop telling yourself that dreams don’t matter, that they are only dreams, and that you should be more sensible.”- Julie Cameron
1b. <b>Report</b>	“The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man’s hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was.” - William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)
1c. <b>Disease</b>	"Physicians of the utmost fame, were called at once, but when they came, they answered as they took their fees there is no cure for this disease." - Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953)
2. <b>Beginning</b> (Quartet)	“When the ancients said a work well begun was half done, they meant to impress the importance of always endeavoring to make a good beginning. - Polybius (205 – 123 B.C.)
2a. <b>Boldness</b>	"Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth, that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves, too. All sorts of wonderful things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would come his way. Whatever you can do or dream, you can begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now." - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 - 1832)
2b. <b>Answers</b>	"What is important is to keep learning, to enjoy challenge, and to tolerate ambiguity. in the end there are no certain answers. - Martina Horner
2c. <b>Questions</b>	"Live your questions now and perhaps even without knowing it, you will live along some distant day into your answers." - Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)
2d. <b>Voyage</b>	“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.” -Marcel Proust (1871-1922)
3. <b>Fall</b>	“If one dream should fall and break into a thousand pieces, never be afraid to pick one of those pieces up and begin again.”- Flavia Weedn
4. <b>Prayer</b>	"Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul." - Mahatma Gandhi (1869 - 1948)
5. <b>Pleasure</b>	"Personally, I experience the greatest degree of pleasure in having contact with works of art. They furnish me with happy feelings of an intensity such as I cannot derive from other realms." - Albert Einstein (1879-1955)
6. <b>Blind</b>	“The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.” -Helen Keller (18080-1968)
7. <b>Research</b>	"Research is the act of going up alleys to see if they are blind." - Plutarch (c. 40 - 120 A.D.)
8. <b>Guide</b>	“The only guide to man is his conscience; the only shield to his memory is the rectitude and sincerity of his actions. It is very imprudent to walk through life without this shield, because we are so often mocked by the failure of our hopes, and the upsetting of our calculations, but with this shield, however the fates may play, we march always in the ranks of honor.” –Winston Churchill(1874-1965)
9. <b>Discovery</b>	"Discovery consists in seeing what everyone else has seen, and thinking what no one else has thought." - Albert Szent-Gyorgi (1893-1986) 1937 Nobel Laureate
10. <b>Mirror</b> (Triptych)	"The spirit of the painter will be like a mirror, which always takes on the color of the thing reflected, and contains as many images as there are things placed before it. Know, O painter, that you will never succeed if you do not have the universal power to represent by your art all the varieties of form present in nature – and indeed, you will find this impossible unless you can first see them and hold them in your mind." - Leonardo da Vinci
10a. <b>Teach</b>	"What I am going to tell you about is what we teach our physics students in the third or fourth year of graduate school... It is my task to convince you not to turn away because you don't understand it. You see my physics students don't understand it...That is because I don't understand it. Nobody does."- Richard Feynman (1918- -1988)
10b. <b>Mysterious</b>	"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science." - Albert Einstein (1879-1955)
10c. <b>Science</b>	"Science is the refusal to believe on the basis of hope." - Charles Percy Snow (1905-1980)
11. <b>Peace</b>	If there must be trouble let it be in my day, that my child may have peace.- Thomas Paine (1737-1809) I believe in the sun even though it is slow in rising. I believe in you without realizing. I believe in rain though there are no clouds in the sky. I believe in truth even though people lie. I believe in peace though sometimes I am violent. I believe in God even though he is silent. – Unknown
12. <b>Prologue</b>	“Try to put well in practice what you already know; and in so doing, you will, in good time, discover the hidden things which you now inquire about. Practice what you know, and it will help to make clear what you do not know.” - Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn
13. <b>Snowy Night</b>	“I often think that the night is more alive and more richly colored than the day. ~Vincent Van Gogh
14. <b>Burden</b>	"No burden is he to bear, we'll get there. For I know he would not encumber me. He ain't heavy, he's my brother.”
15. <b>Valley</b>	“A friend who is far away is sometimes much nearer than one who is at hand. Is not the mountain far more awe-inspiring and more clearly visible to one passing through the valley than to those who inhabit the mountain?” - Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931)
16. <b>Cocoon</b>	“Like the Butterfly, I have the strength and the hope to believe In Time I will emerge from my cocoon....Transformed.” -Kristi A. Dyer, MD,MS
17. <b>Butterfly</b>	When we have done all the work we were sent to do, We are allowed to shed our bodies, which imprisons our soul like a cocoon encloses the butterfly and when the time is right we can let go of it. Then we will be free of pain, free of fears and free of worries –free as a beautiful butterfly returning home to God...- Elisabeth Kubler-Ross
18. <b>Change</b>	"In this world of change naught what comes always stays, and naught which goes is lost." - Madame Sophie-Jeanne Soymonof Swetchine (1782 - 1857)

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