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Tatjana Debeljački vs. Christine L. Villa

Christine L. Villa

interview

Can you tell us something about your hometown and growing up?

I was born and raised in Manila, Philippines. My residence for almost 40 years was specifically in Quezon City, the national capital of the country. As a child, I spent many afternoons playing with paper dolls and teacups. I believe that making up stories in my head ignited my creative imagination. In high school, I started writing poetry, but I put it aside and pursued a degree in Business Administration.

Since I migrated to California, U.S. in 2013, my life has been filled with creative opportunities.

When did you publish your first book and how did the success follow later?

I self-published my first children's book entitled The Magic Paintbrush in 2014. I do not gauge the success of this book by the monetary value it generates but how much joy it brings to the readers. There is no greater fulfillment than witnessing a child's face light up as she reads or listens to Alexa's adventures, the main character of The Magic Paintbrush.

The true purpose of art is to uplift humankind, inspire reverence and morality, and instill in people's hearts a true sense of beauty?

Most of my children's stories, published and unpublished, are not only whimsical and entertaining, but also inspirational. Without preaching, there are lessons to be learned by reading the book. Writing, like any art, is a form of self-expression with a higher purpose. That is to foster a better perspective of life and an appreciation of beauty in our everyday existence.

You are editor of poetry journal Frameless Sky?

Yes, I am the founder and editor of the poetry video journal Frameless Sky. If I am not mistaken, it is the first haiga and tanka art video journal. This unique journal showcases poets, artists, and musicians in collaborative projects. To know more about Frameless Sky, please visit the website at <http://framelessky.weebly.com>

Are you satisfied with the Editorial team and the members of Frameless Sky?

I am extremely satisfied with every issue because of all the people who contributed to its success. While I am completely in charge of the editing and video production, each issue is composed of a team – the artist, musician, and poets. Each team is composed of different people as I want each issue to be fresh and innovative. The only staff member who I regularly maintain is my ever-reliable proof reader, Shloka Shankar. Sometimes she even offers editing suggestions which I am very thankful for. I am also grateful to the poets who have been loyal contributors since the premier issue.

Your writing and the style with which you express the symbolic power of lust and eternity?

(I'm sorry. I don't understand this question. I don't think it is applicable to my writing style.)

Engage in creative writing, children's author, poet, publisher, crafter, editor?

I think I've touched every subject except my passion as a crafter. I love making jewelry for kids and adults. I also dabble in notebook and greeting card making. For my greeting cards, I use my own photographs. I'm in the process of looking for more homemade products to make to help advertise the main characters of my children's books. Currently, I only have made notebooks with Alexa and Molly on the front cover.

Believes in the randomness and richness of life, and that every day is a possible adventure?

I believe that life has full of surprises. Every day we wake up with gifts to unfold. We have a choice to mindfully be in the present and enjoy what life has to offer. The ordinary things in life are not meant to be taken for granted. They are there for us to appreciate and to give meaning to it. From simple things, we breathe life and rise above from the ordinary to the extraordinary. Life becomes more than just a mere existence, but an adventure or a miracle waiting to happen. Within us is the capacity to dream, create, and inspire. Life has endless possibilities if we open our minds and hearts.

What can you tell us about your work, prizes, journeys and friendships?

When I was much younger, I wanted to become a writer, but I was too scared to pursue my dreams. It took a backseat while I tried different things. There were moments in my life when I had this gnawing need to write, but I felt I was empty inside and had nothing to share to the world. It was only before I reached my 50th birthday when I stumbled on Japanese short-form poetry and writing for children. From then on, I never turned my back on writing. I finally found something inside me that I could impart to others. The prizes or recognitions that I've earned along the way have been signs telling me that I've been on the right track. Through my journey, I've learned to use my gift for writing as therapy, inspiration, and an offering to others. One of the

greatest gifts I've received in return are the friendships I've discovered coming from different parts of the world. The encouragement and support that we give to each other are incomparable.

Do you think you have outwitted the expectations?

Sometimes I get frustrated when I think I have not done enough. There are always deadlines to meet, contests to join, poems or stories to write, books to publish, social medias to keep up with, websites and blogs to build, articles and books to read. There is not enough time in a day to be the best that I can be. Comparing myself to others can be very tempting so I always remind myself that I have my own journey different from others. I am where I am supposed to be and I am doing the best I can.

Is there anything that you could pinpoint and tell us about yourself between dreams and reality?

I still have so many dreams as an artist. If I can dream it, I can create it. Sometimes impatience or fear of failure gets in the way. To keep myself in line, I pat myself on the back for every big or small achievement that I make. Each step I make is a step closer to the fulfillment of my dreams.

What are your plans for the future creative work?

I still have more children's books to self-publish in the very near future. I have a list of ideas to make my books accessible to more children. With regards to my poetry writing, my first book is underway. Frameless Sky has bigger plans ahead. I've already created the team for the next three succeeding issues of Frameless Sky.

I believe I will always be a crafter trying to learn new things. If I'm not making and selling jewelry in the years ahead, I know there will always be some new projects that I will be busy with to sell at craft fairs.

Christine L. Villa's career in a few years?

In a few years, I see myself still actively publishing both my children and poetry books. By then, I would have already helped other aspiring children's book authors and poets to publish their own books by offering my publishing services.

Have you achieved everything you have ever wanted to and if you could live your life again would you be an artist again?

I think my life just started when I reached 50. I am now turning 53 and I still have more dreams to achieve. If I would live my life again, I would still want to be an artist. My birthright is to be creative and it is in creating and self-expressing that I am fulfilled.

Is there anything you would like to say that you think is important and that I haven't asked you?

One lesson that I want to share to others which I've learned as an artist is that creativity has no age limit. It is never too late for anyone to tap his/her own creativity, to grow and be a blessing to others.

Christine, thank-you! It was a great pleasure talking to you and you are always welcome to our house "DIOGEN pro culture" magazine.

Thank you so much, Tatjana! It is an honor to be featured in this magazine.

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