

Creating Your Own Nature Journal Clare Walker Leslie

What we know about the ancient world we owe in large part to the artist-naturalist's journal, one of the oldest forms for recording observations. Lewis and Clark, Thoreau, and John James Audubon made unforgettable observations and reproductions of nature in the New World.

Do you want to wander, look, and connect with the earth you call home? Do you want to slow down and feel your feet on the earth, feel at home outdoors? Do you want to overcome your fears of drawing and learn simple ways to record your observations? Your naturalist's journal is a way to continue a curiosity about, exploration of, and conversation with the fragile circle of life around you. Be the curious scientist/artist your ancestors were.

We'll learn specific techniques for drawing rock walls, plants, trees, geese flying over, waterfalls, cloud shapes, squirrels playing, winter goldenrod, and chickadees. We'll learn various ways to write brief stories, meditations, and poems in our journal. We'll share our experiences, laugh about what we're discovering, and learn to play out of doors. We'll all go home with a nature journal that we will want to continue.

What we observe and are sensitive to is what we truly care about. We can deepen our appreciation of the delicate, interwoven relationships between the human and natural worlds. We'll heighten our awareness and renew our sense of place and belonging by recording our personal experiences, inspirations, wanderings, and wonderings. By immersing ourselves in nature for two days, we'll increase our skills of observation and be more connected with our surroundings.

Experienced artists are welcome, but no previous drawing or nature study is necessary. Clare takes people where they are and leads them deeper into their interests and abilities. You're welcome to bring your children age ten or older, for half your fee on this October weekend as fall emerges in all its beauty.

Clare Walker Leslie, is a nationally known wildlife artist, author, naturalist, and educator. She's been a visiting faculty member at Williams College for over a decade, is on the faculty at Harvard University, Cambridge, and an adjunct faculty at Antioch New England. She wrote six books, including *Nature Journaling: Learning to Observe and Connect with the World Around You* and *Drawn to Nature* and illustrated many more. She's studied drawing and watercolor techniques in England, Scotland, Sweden; had solo and group shows for museums, the Audubon Society, and many other organizations, and is a woman and teacher of enormous enthusiasm and great skill. We're honored to welcome her on her second retreat at Rowe. Fall/Winter 2007 Course catalogue for the Rowe Camp and Conference Center, Rowe, MA www.rowecenter.org

“Setting aside time each day to become absorbed in just being- in the present moment, alone in nature, - will leave you refreshed and refocused. Like a pilgrim going to church, I go outdoors for the prayer that drawing and observing nature offer me. The primordial urge is to Become One, to flee to the arms of Nature, to draw dabbling ducks, preening geese, azalea blossoms, and silhouettes of great blue herons. Nothing spectacular, everything spectacular. The essential magic occurs when pencil meets paper and the eye really sees a tree. The Process of Seeing is what counts, not how good a drawing is. Being A Witness brings a sense of belonging, of compassion, of responsibility.” -Clare Walker Leslie