

**Carolyn Law**  
**Article for NW Dharma News**

WISHING. YOU. A. WISH. MOMENT. is the title of an art installation that I recently placed in the intimate gallery space of one of Seattle's lesser known treasures – Jack Straw Cultural Center located in the University District near the University of Washington. This decades old non-profit is focused on the production of sound in all forms. It offers sound studios and technicians to further all efforts using sound in its many forms – for example, film sound tracks, recordings of community histories and stories, capturing second graders poems, production for sound artists, and much more. I was one of four visual artists-in-residence for 2015.

This installation had the intent to gently envelop each visitor in a set of circumstances that might allow them to be fully present, aware of an unfolding of moments requiring their attention - not as an interpreter or outsider, but by becoming part of the particular situation, really a moment in their day. I used the idea of making a wish to help plant the seed that someone might concentrate their mind – just as you do before blowing out the candle on a birthday cake perhaps. But this was merely a cracking open of the door.

My intention was quite different from many art shows. More typically you as the viewer are busy interpreting, trying to understand the content and place it within your context, ending up with an opinion of meaning and usually, whether you like it or not.

My installation offered a scenario -- framed by sound, light, and object intertwined – choreographed by its placement in the gallery to consciously draw people in. Now shifting to a description as if you were actually experiencing this installation --

You entered a dark, quiet room but notice that there is a dramatically lit sculptural object diagonally across the room. Your eyes adjust, and perhaps you notice a faint sound in the room not unlike wind or maybe the ocean. There is no other sound except ambient sound from the street outside. The sculpture draws you across the room. What is this? What is happening here? It is so quiet in here you think.

Once you walk across the room you notice that the sculpture is made of bright, highly polished metal encased by stacked layers of warmly colored wood. This is like a well you think. Looking

inside, the interior is also highly polished and is cone-shaped, tapering down to a dark circle. Light reflects in shifting rays around the cone's surface. Then you slowly notice very soft sound emanating from the bottom of the well. Layered, changing sound. Murmuring voices underneath wind chimes, rustling leaves, and other sounds coming in and out of range. You can only hear it once you are standing at the well. The sound changes, broadens and deepens if you lean into the well opening. The volume is never very high but sometimes it almost fades to nothing. Then a water drop and a soft, sweet word floats over the surface of the sound. WISH. It is at this point that you make the decision to stay, relax and fall into the sound composition. And yet the end result is to bring you to the very experience of standing there. Ultimately to bring you to the sounds in your mind – which usually are thoughts. The range and depth of the actual experience is in each person's hands. And in the end that is all you will take away from this installation. Your experience.

Over the past 40 years, my journey as a person who happens to be a visual artist, has been informed and influenced by many things. All have fed my creative endeavors and in the exploration of the twists and turns of life and living it fully. There is my family and raising two sons, time spent in the beauty of the wilder environment, interest in the social and cultural happenings of our community and the broader world, what I have been my contributions that I, as an “artist-of-the-world”, have offered to help make the world a better place. The list goes on, and this long list translates into a layered and networked format, because as an artist, it is imperative that my mind and experience continues to grow. Because my path is built stone by stone, it is a bumpy, hand-built path. And as an artist, I appreciate these qualities.

In resume language, my art career spans both studio and public art driven by my exploration and consideration of how to act as a catalytic force that impacts civic issues and space/places we share in common or infrastructure that makes our lives possible. One part of my career has revolved around diverse public art projects encompassing complex design team projects, site-specific artworks integrated into a place, and iconic sculpture. Equally my studio artwork involves mixed media pieces such as a long-term visual journal about my reading and musings and temporary installations located in natural settings that focus on the potential for the viewer to have an interactive experience with the setting.

Yet over the past decade plus, another path has developed for me that runs beneath all that I do and experience as an artist. It is my vipassana meditation practice which is building a more expansive path. Vipassana means to see things as they really are and through this seeing to live life informed by knowledge of moment to moment experience. Each present moment is like a

“match striking the side of the box, resulting in flame. When the two strike together, a moment of experience happens: a moment of hearing, seeing, smelling, moving, touching, tasting, feeling or thinking.”

Some would say that the making of art is the ultimate moment to moment practice. But I have come to understand that for me, this is no longer so. My practice is.

And WISHING. YOU. A. WISH. MOMENT. is my first attempt to make art that springs from my vipassana practice.

One friend sent me an email that warmed my heart. He wrote “What I liked most was the experience of over a half hour having my senses sharpened to it. When first went in I couldn't see much and the sound seemed so subtle. I sat down and after awhile the room brightened and I could begin to hear. After about 30 minutes the room was brilliant and the sound almost deafening! Wow.”

What more could a girl ask for?

#### BASIC INFORMATION:

Carolyn Law is a visual artist of many strips living in Seattle, WA. To see her work visit her website – [www.carolynlaw.net](http://www.carolynlaw.net). To support her vipassana practice she is part of two regularly meeting sanghas and attends weekend retreat activities at SIMS.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION:

C) 206-612-2182

#### PHOTO CAPTIONS AND CREDITS:

