

# ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Norman J. Schatz, M.D.



M.D.? WAIT! We're talking about Art --- not the medical profession!  
Read on...



"Here's lookin' at ya!"

Norman J. Schatz, M.D. is an artist ---- *and* a neuro-ophthalmologist. As an artist, he is using the highest technology available and makes art without a brush, paints or a canvas. He was born in Philadelphia in 1936. (I'll save you from doing the math...he was recently 85.) He's always been an innovator... and he's not stopping now. Doing the same old; same old --- has never been--- nor currently is--- his *modus operandi*. That attitude alone definitely speaks to many artists' psyches. Dr. Schatz or just "Schatz" (the moniker he has embraced for many years) has Borscht Belt humor that stands alongside his stunning clinical acumen. He is among the finest and most beloved of neuro-ophthalmologists. In fact, before Schatz and his distinguished, international coterie of neurologists and ophthalmologists got together many years ago, there was no such specialty known as Neuro-Ophthalmology. Since then, he has attained worldwide celebrity status as a sought after entertaining lecturer, revered teacher and spot-on diagnostician of unusual, bizarre symptoms and diseases of the eye and central nervous system. Proof of this is easily documented by his many published papers in prestigious medical journals that celebrate his medical acuity. Physicians who think they have discovered a "never seen before" case had best check with Schatz first. In fact, stories have been told about many neurologists telling him about a baffling weird case they have seen only to find out he probably saw five of them last week.

Unusual cases feed his razor-sharp fertile imagination and creativity!



**Schatz in Repose**

**People are drawn to him...his self-deprecating humor, risk-taking flashes of brilliance, and the feeling that, maybe more than anyone else in his field, he's in touch with himself and his patients' symptoms and fears. Because let's face it, if it's about your brain, you are scared, literally, out of your mind and you need someone who can calm you, know the answers and invigorate your hope.**



**Camaraderie**





**Equestrian Ego**



**Birdbrains in a Tizzy**





**Autumn Moon on my Mind**



**Going Bananas**





**Shadow Clouds**



# 8 to 85...Some things Never Change

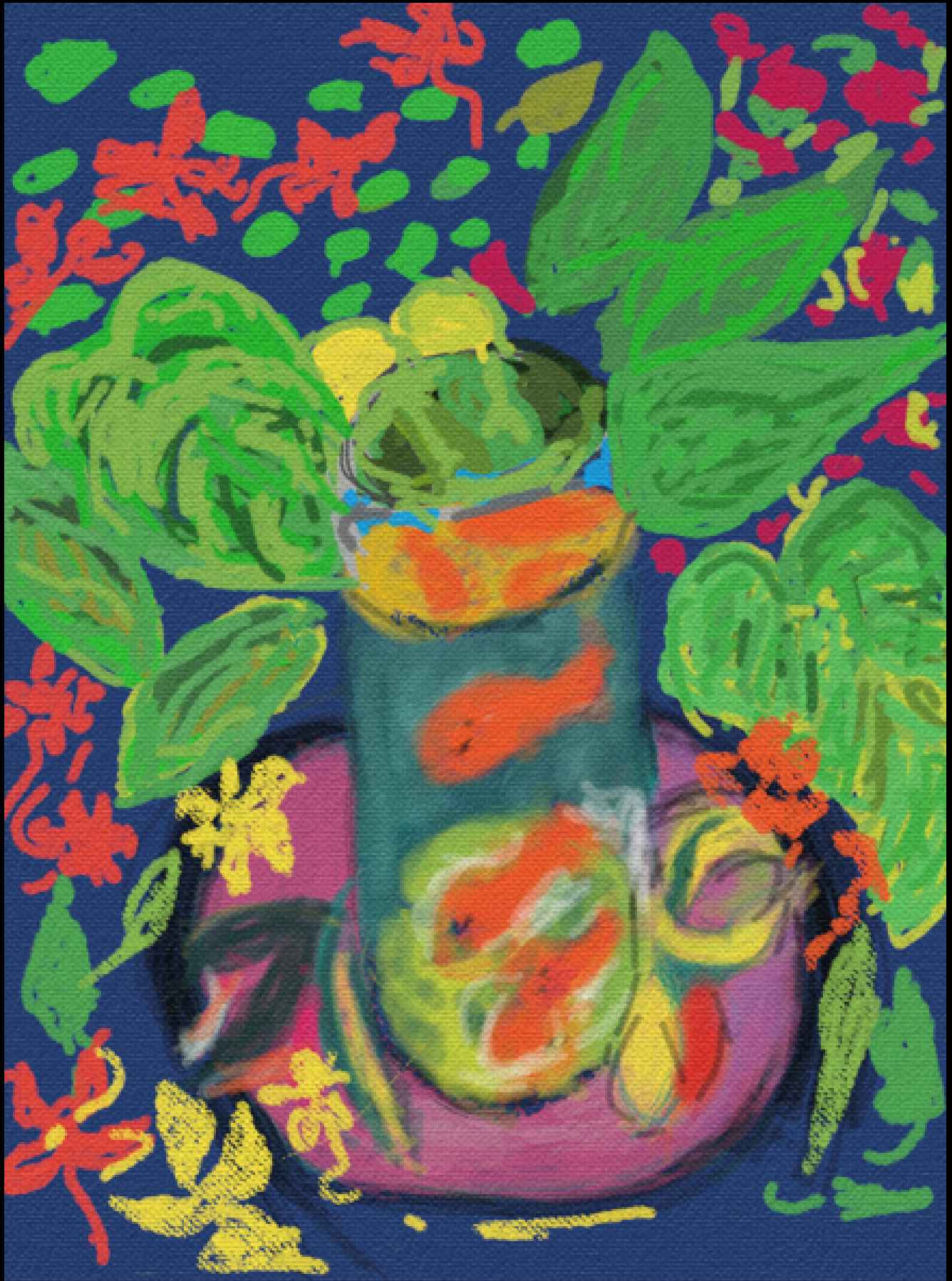
He admits he enjoys the attention from his peers, even though he never believes he deserves it. (A covert, common trait he also shares with well-known artists.) He tells this story:

"When I was eight years old, I brought home my elementary school report card to my father. So did my brother and sister. They had perfect grades. My father looked at my report card and saw that all the grades were erased. So, he took me to the principal's office and asked for an explanation. The principal looked up my grades and said that they were perfect. My father looked at me quizzically. Then he smiled. He didn't say anything. He realized that I had erased the grades because I thought that I was a better judge of my performance than the teachers were. I didn't think I deserved a perfect score, and I didn't want my father to be fooled. I don't get fooled by accolades."



Mad scientist and Artist as One

Ok...OK! I'll get to how this all relates to his Art! But just one more story....maybe two! They all contribute to who he is deep inside his creative neurons. You'll really want his art --- either to wear or adorn your home so that you can tell these stories about him!



**Fish that won't be Frying**



# A Story about Benny

**Before 2016, medical schools used dogs, cats, pigs, and other animals to teach physiology, pharmacology, and surgical skills.**



**After the training session, the animals were euthanized. When Schatz was in medical school, this was a common practice. Thankfully, that practice is no longer in use. Schatz was given a puppy to “practice” on. The dog was from the local pound and had a broken leg. He did a great job putting his leg back together--- and all along --- he called him “Benny” who, in turn, was giving back to Schatz much more than learning about the practice of medicine. When it was time for Benny to meet his maker, Schatz couldn’t give him up...and Benny couldn’t give up life or Schatz. So, after class, he smuggled Benny under his coat and brought him home. Benny lived a long, loving life with the Schatz family.**

**PS~ The photo above is not Benny but, Schatz told me that it closely resembled Benny.**

# On the Way to Heaven...

In flight, going back to Philadelphia from an American Academy of Ophthalmology meeting in Kansas City, Schatz realized he was having a heart attack. The symptoms were evident. It was 1976 and he was only 40 years old. Not to alarm the other passengers on board, he cautiously reached for the call button above him. The stewardess (they were called stewardesses in 1976) calmly asked him what he wanted. He started off by quietly saying, "I don't want you to get alarmed. I am a doctor ---and I am having a heart attack. Please drop down the oxygen mask, find me an aspirin, inform the pilot to safely lower the plane's altitude and have an ambulance ready for me on the tarmac." The stewardess was amazed at his calm attitude and started to rush away---and then--- to stop her, he gently touched her arm.

"One more thing...If I happen to die before we reach the airport, just push me out the nearest exit because that's the closest I'm ever going to get to heaven."



Heavenly Dreams of Tomorrow



**On reflecting how this experience affected how he cares for his patients, he has this to say: "I teach patients to take responsibility for their care. I go overboard trying to explain things. No patient leaves the room without understanding the options and being encouraged to think them through. I give them everything I can possibly give them."**

**And, what about your unique style of teaching? "When teaching medical students, I test them until they get it right. If they get it right, I embrace them; if they don't, the heck with them. By the way, most of my students give me much more than I give them. They keep me alert and give me a quality of life that is wonderful."**



**Reflection at Day's End**

# In His Own Words...

**QCI** - What's your first memory of seeing art?

**NS** - *I was maybe 12 years old when Joel, my best friend, and I would take turns going over one another's homes after school. His father was a physician. When we went to his house, I remember that he and I would prop ourselves up against the basement window and watch as his father painted a nude model. He was very distinguished. I remember it to this day.*

*My father sold brassieres and lingerie. You could say that I grew up in ladies' underwear. My mother would paint the signs for the store --- what was on sale or featured for that week. I never thought much about her sign-painting skills until suddenly, my mother who I had not been aware of had any artistic talent whatsoever, started later in life to do beautiful oil paintings. She became a model and inspiration for me to make my own art.*



**Lost in Thought**





**Adoration**



**Champions**

**QCI** - What's your favorite art work?

**NS** - *I appreciate the work of so many artists. In the 70s I began admiring the work of Charles Bragg. His illustrations made me smile and think. He created satirical depictions of various characters, people in their professions, and he put humor in scenes to soften themes of war and religion. He frequently drew doctors. One of his characters seemed to be wearing my mustache. It gave me laughter and I have that one hanging by my desk.*

**QCI** - I can easily see why!



**Judgment - Charles Bragg**



**Cool Night Out**

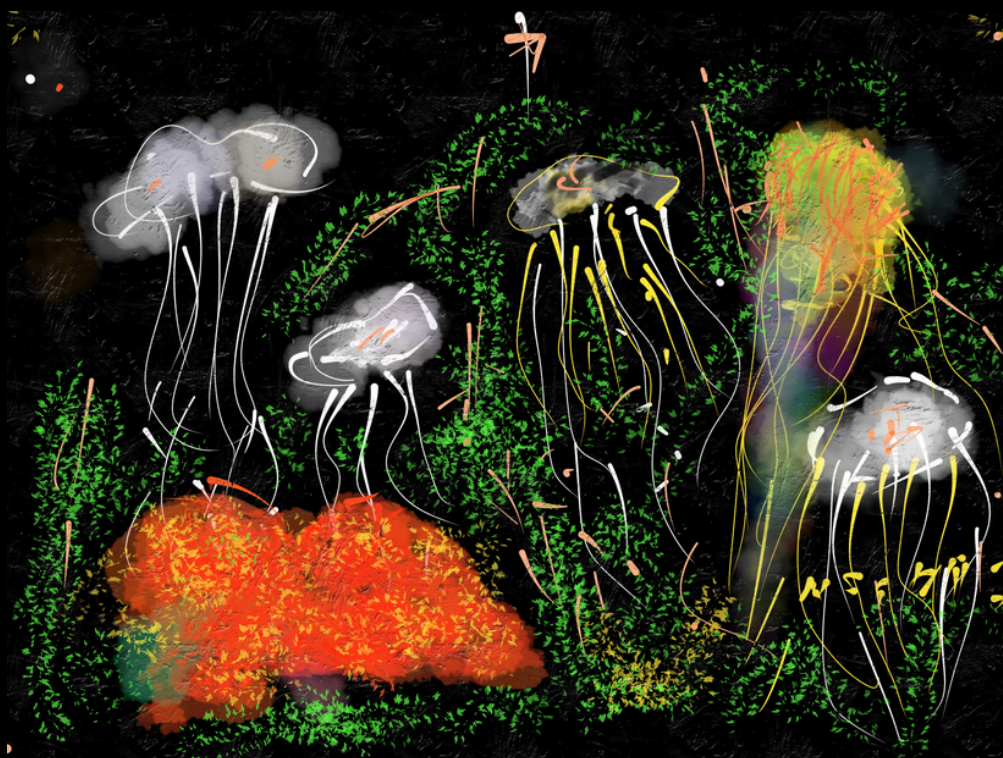


**QCI** - Where, what and/or who do you turn to for inspiration for your artwork?

**NS** - *I am inspired by great artists. Often my art is a joyful interpretation of their work. Other inspirations come from plants, people, nature and music--- particularly Jazz. After all, Jazz is the root of American music! I also paint things that use senses beyond sight and sound --- even food I've cooked. I'll even freeze the TV if I see something in the background that inspires me.*



**Ode to van Gogh - Mystical Dawn**



**Ocean Rhumba**





**Roots of American Music**





**Fellow with a Cello**



**Red Hot Horns**



**Chromesthesia and Music**



QCI - When do you know you've completed an artwork?

**NS** - *I work on a piece for 3-5 days, 1-2 hour sessions on each. I keep going back and forth between what I see around me and what I see on the page, often getting new insights as I observe what I am drawing and making sure that it has the warmth that I wish to express.*

QCI - What's your favorite part of the process and what are you enjoying doing right now?

**NS** - *I enjoy seeing things come into form and laughter and warmth in them. I have been using bright yellows, greens, blues, basic colors that I like to blend.*

QCI - Why have you returned to painting now?

**NS** - *I began doing watercolors many years ago when I moved to Florida from Philadelphia. I was living alone, getting acclimated to my new surroundings and feeling isolated. I picked up a canvas, paintbrush, and watercolors and for the next 3 years used my painting for my own personal satisfaction and company.*

*Now, as the pandemic again placed me in a similar setting of isolation, I had to turn into myself more to achieve comfort. The news/TV was of less and less benefit. A dear artist friend was giving a course online and, at her instruction, I went online to buy a war chest of sable brushes, wet watercolors, tube watercolors and a plastic palette. I placed my order and waited in this hectic time for delivery. My 26-year old granddaughter, Emma, a school teacher, suggested that while waiting I should try a paint app that she had used for her students.*

*I did and found the comfort of beginning to paint daily. At first the page was a totally abstract combination of colors. Beginning at age 84, working on a painting virtually on my iPad was like treading water. But then I began to explore. Wide brush strokes thin lines, merging colors, and old talents found their way to the surface from my aging mind. It now gives me great pleasure. I'm learning the limitations of the medium and reinterpreting the beauty of the world around me to the perversion of my own emotions. Much to my delight and surprise, I began to get reinforcement from my loved ones. So I found my companion --- like Garcia Marquez found in his **Love in the Time of Cholera**. I found my comfort in this darkness.*

Find Dr. Norman Schatz's images on specially curated items by clicking [HERE](#) on the [Needs and Wants](#) page! It's been hard to choose which images to use from his prolific art portfolio!

So, If there is an image of his that you want on an item that I am not offering, don't hesitate to email me at: [Ellen@QuickCultureInsider.com](mailto:Ellen@QuickCultureInsider.com). I'll try my best to get it for you!!!

