



May 11, 2026

Dear MVFF Coordinators:

Mill Valley is where this *Unbound* project began. I moved to Mill Valley from London in 2009 with my husband, Mark, when we were struggling to save our marriage. The first years, as we were integrating in community with three elementary school kids, Mark was diagnosed with stage 4 prostate cancer. My husband is 10 years older than I am and at that time had undiagnosed Autism or (Autism Spectrum Disorder).

This rapidly became a very deeply isolating situation. I so wanted to leave the marriage but was fixed in place by illness and responsibility. This became a crucible of change and echoed my childhood which was framed entirely by my two brothers' severe mental illness of schizophrenia. While in Mill Valley, I showed up publicly as Park School PTA president and at non-profit galas, but I was crumbling inside. I had to change. I began a Masters program in Jungian Psychology and Creativity which led me on a path to access and integrate my deep childhood trauma through dreams, symbols, myth and artmaking.

First the artwork was my own personal healing of trauma and then, surprisingly, the symbols resonated with the collective in 2018 (of women trapped but emerging from brick walls and winged hearts in cages). It rapidly became about the healing of trauma in our culture. Since that time, I created a healing arts non-profit, [Life On Art](#), dedicated to providing a platform where those who feel most alone can find community through art and creativity and co-create large-scale art projects. We are based in Petaluma, CA and have worked in psychiatric hospitals, California state prisons, in schools, non-profits, with veterans and behavioral health organizations, with at-risk youth and those recovering from shelterlessness. Our artworks and programs have been enjoyed by over 60,000 people and exhibited at the Museum of Sonoma County, the Marin County Civic Center, the O'Hanlon Center, the Monterey County Government Building, the Mill Valley Music Festival and other parades and festivals.

*Unbound* is our signature project. Built in partnership with one of California's largest state psychiatric hospitals, Napa State Hospital, *Unbound* brought 1500 people together to destigmatize mental illness: 500 psychiatric patients, 200 staff and 800 community volunteers. We built an 80-foot sculpture of hundreds of paper mache winged hearts flying free from a cage.

It wasn't just an art sculpture—it was a year long creative experiment as the 70 multi-disciplinary therapists in Napa's rehabilitation department explored with their patients what it means to be 'Unbound and Free' in art, movement, music, spoken word, and Taiko drumming. This sculpture is currently in our Petaluma warehouse gallery, where people gather, dance and connect.

*Unbound* the documentary gives a glimpse into what radical inclusion, radical compassion, and radical social design and creativity can mean. This project is a beacon to the future. Pointing to new way to value and uplift others.

Why this is relevant to the Mill Valley Film Festival is 1) this project was generated and sprouted in Mill Valley just a couple blocks from downtown; 2) Life On Art was invited to create a whole facility participatory art program at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center over the next three years, to include teens in a community service criminal justice platform—so this is very local; 3) we are driving to create blueprints of innovative design of participatory large-scale public art that brings diverse multi-generational participants together. We are based in Petaluma and can create salient community artmaking events in Mill Valley and Marin County for the film festival.

We are keen to develop community artmaking events aligned to the needs of the festival. Please feel free to contact me on 415-755-7033 or [tracy@lifeonart.org](mailto:tracy@lifeonart.org).

Looking forward to connecting.

Best,  
Tracy Ferron