



The Mountain
Retreat & Learning Center
presents
Arts & Social Change Institute
with
Holly Near

Date:
Thursday, August 27 thru
Sunday, August 30, 2009
Price:
(all inclusive)
Adults - \$295
Young Adults 18-30 - \$173

for registration info:
www.mountaincenters.org

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Holly Near

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Details of the “Mountain Institute” experience by and with Holly Near

This time with me is designed to offer you a transformational experience, however you imagine that to be. I will be available to help you find the inspiration and the tools that you may find useful in your work for social change.

We will spend a good deal of time together as a group so that we learn from each other's work. However, there will also be time put aside to be outdoors in the glorious setting of The Mountain.

The object of the gathering is to increase our understanding of how the arts and personal creativity are used everyday as a catalyst for social change. We are creative beings by nature but sometimes we don't even notice we are being creative, so we don't practice to improve that which is already working for us. Musicians practice, athletes practice. Why shouldn't activists practice? There is no excuse for boring presentations. If the subject matter is exciting (LIFE!), then the expression of one's perspective on that life has the potential to be equally exciting. However, it might involve some practice.

I have been doing social change activism using creativity all my life, which as of this year adds up to 60. I am thrilled to get to share what I have learned with the participants and staff.

Although the gatherings I lead are not set in stone, the basic direction of the time we spend together looks like this:

1. Practice identifying what we believe in at any given moment.
2. Transfer those ideas creatively into whatever form of communication we consider to be our Vehicle for change (songwriter, lawyer, writer, dancer, good neighbor, minister, teacher).
3. Present our ideas in public (to an audience, jury, city council, family member).

I will work with each participant along the way as we investigate this work, this craft, and this practice. And I will practice in front of you the whole time we are together so you can watch this work in action.

I will be working with The Mountain staff so that together, we will provide opportunities for you to:

- nurture your spirit in a rare natural environment
- build community, trust and acceptance through shared experiences
- prepare and inspire you to work for the common good

I encourage you to be brave, inquisitive and to join me in this energizing and challenging work. I value that each participant defines his or her own goals. There is no competition. To create a safe space in which to work, I will discourage cross-talk and I will be the only one giving feedback and suggestions when anyone is working in front of the group. I will also share as much of my own experience with you as schedule allows in this luxurious time we spend together.

Still not sure what this is? In part, that is because it becomes what it “IS” once you get there. But for example, here are a few stories from past gatherings.

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One participant suffered from stage fright and this painful condition interrupted the power of her activism. I helped her come at that fright through many doors. Was it all gone by the end of the workshop? No. But she had tools to take home with her to keep chipping away at this inconvenient challenge.

One participant could not get through a very personal song she had written. I worked with her on how to transfer the deep and personal experiences of her life into creative expression.

One participant shared with us the nature of her transgender experience and we worked together to find creative ways for her to teach her community how to become conscious and supportive.

One participant was a lawyer who wrote powerful closing arguments but didn't have the theatrical experience to be convincing. Theater is an important part of communication whether a lawyer, a parent, a nurse, or a folksinger. We work on theater.

One participant wrote political songs. They were all broad stokes, generalities. We worked to break down the ideas and find the details that will reach out and grab a listener, to move an idea forward by poetic example and not by rhetorical declaration,

One participant was a minister who had to write sermons every week! Whew. How do we keep our work alive, creative, and interesting? Are there tools for reaching to a high level of communication when we don't have a lot of time in our daily lives? Yes! I will help you with this through “active noticing” and filling a “tool box” well in advance of when you are called on to be of use.

One participant's voice was weak. Turns out he wasn't breathing!

One participant kept assuming that everyone in the group thought the same way she did. We worked on understanding diversity of ideas, avoiding assumptions and generalities and most of all, going in to life with fascination rather than fear.

So you see, each person has something to work on and the part of this teaching that I love the most is that every one of us gets better from practice. I have never seen anyone not improve.

On top of all this, I am actually very funny. So there will be lots of laughing, which as far as I'm concerned, is the only way to learn. Otherwise it is just tooooo scary!

I do hope you will gift yourself this opportunity. I look forward to working with you.
Holly Near



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Arts & Social Change Institute
with Holly Near
August 27-30, 2009

A place · An experience · A way forward for all ages!

Thursday, August 27

3:00 - 7:00 pm	Check-in & registration
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Community Social Time
7:00 - 7:45	Dinner
8:00	Welcome and Ingathering

Friday, August 28

7:00	Silent Meditation
7:30 - 8:15	Breakfast
9:00 - 12:15	Arts, Activism & Social Change
12:30 - 1:15	Lunch
1:30 - 3:00	Arts, Activism & Social Change
3:15 - 5:15	Time in Nature for Reflection, Hikes Personal time – arts, journaling, conversation, naps!
5:15 - 6:00	Community Social Time
6:00 - 6:45	Dinner
7:15	Arts, Activism & Social Change

Saturday, August 29

7:00	Silent Meditation
7:30 - 8:15	Breakfast
9:00 - 12:15	Arts, Activism & Social Change
12:30 - 1:15	Lunch
1:30 - 3:00	Arts, Activism & Social Change
3:15 - 5:15	Time in Nature for Reflection, Hikes Personal time – arts, journaling, conversation, naps!
5:15 - 6:00	Community Social Time
6:00 - 6:45	Dinner
7:15	Arts, Activism & Social Change

Sunday, August 30

7:00	Silent Meditation
7:30 - 8:15	Breakfast
9:00 - 10:00	Taking It Back
10:00	Evaluations and Closing

About Holly Near

Holly Near is a unique combination of entertainer, teacher, and activist. An immense vocal talent, Near's career as a singer has been defined by an unwillingness to separate her passion for music from her passion for human dignity. She is a skilled performer and an outspoken ambassador for peace who brings to the stage an integration of world consciousness, spiritual discovery, and theatricality.

Although she sang in public from the age of eight, Ms. Near's professional career began with numerous performances in film and television, and a run in the Broadway production of *Hair*. Torn between a career as an actor or a singer, Ms. Near chose to pursue her love of music, especially that music which articulated the social conditions of the world community.

Ms. Near's historic papers are housed at Radcliffe's Schlesinger Library and are regarded as an informative look at the last 40 years of social change movements as experienced by a singer/songwriter/activist. Near's participation crosses over many cultures and countries. Some samples of her work in the last few years include:

- One of the "1000 Women for Peace" nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2005
- Presented at the National Women's History Project's 2003 conference at Smith College
- Spoke to workers at Intel's Albuquerque, NM facility about tolerance and diversity
- Delivered the prestigious Ware Lecture for the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in 2005
- Invited to sing her song *Hay Una Mujer Decaparecida* at Villa Grimaldi in Santiago, Chile. The villa, an infamous prison of torture and death, has been reclaimed by survivors and families and turned into a peace park.
- Joined Eve Ensler, Jane Fonda, Sally Fields, Christine Lahti, and noted Mexican performers in Juarez, Mexico to protest the uninvestigated killing of hundreds of young women
- Sat witness to the testimony of women reporting rape and other violence against women in Toledo, OH
- Participated in a two-day discussion with Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, Harry Belafonte, and Pete Seeger that focused on political song, responsible citizenship and the effect that protest music has had on public policy
- Met with Mohawk and European-American women to invite spiritual healing
- Has received numerous awards including honors from the A.C.L.U., the National Lawyers Guild, the National Organization for Women, National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences, Ms. Magazine (Woman of the Year), the Legends of Women's Music Award, and Impact Fund

Near's portrait hangs at The Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio along with those of other social change artists including Paul Robeson, Marion Anderson, Pete Seeger, Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, Joan Baez, Harry Belafonte, and Woody Guthrie.

**To learn more about Holly Near visit her website at:
www.hollynear.com**