

## Teaching Philosophy

Since the age of nine years old, Gretchen Grunt knew she was an artist, and that her journey was to dedicate her life to being creative with her hands. This path has always given Gretchen a sense of purpose and a deeper understanding of herself, and the wonders of the world that surround us and beyond.

This dedication has also led Gretchen to start her own business, the *29 Palms Creative Center & Gallery*, where she began sharing her passion for creativity in 2003. This naturally led her to teach and share the multitude of mediums that she loves to experiment with herself.

The mission of the *Creative Center* is founded on the premise that “the creative spirit is an integral part of our spiritual and social paths in life. A loving and non-judgmental art studio environment is one of our primary goals”.

With this mission painting the way, Gretchen has developed an open-hearted philosophy for teaching art: from an artists’ perspective where each student is viewed as a unique snowflake and each student is given space to develop their own relationship with their creative spirit.

The challenge of an artist and an art teacher is letting go of the outcome, and knowing that the outcome is only a by-product of **ENJOYING THE PROCESS!** Creating a joyful and stress-free studio environment is key to nurturing the process of creativity, and for it to thrive beyond anybody’s expectations. Especially the inner exploration that nobody can see but can sense with the joy that shines on each student’s face, no matter how young or old their experience in art may be. This is the ultimate truth-sayer and secret ingredient to Gretchen’s success as an artist and art teacher: *Enjoying the Process! \*/:-}}*

Another challenge for the art teacher is to engage with the students’ processes in a supportive way, without taking away the students’ freedom of expression. This requires developing a relationship of open-hearts and empowering the student to paint their own path of creativity in the art studio. While the teacher listens carefully and patiently to how each student chooses to express themselves, the responsibility of the teacher is to be the technician and designer of creative challenges that will foster their individual expression in art.

Although Gretchen has extensive formal education, here at the *Creative Center*, there is no curriculum, as this would stiffen the teaching philosophy that Gretchen fosters in her students who find this freedom of expression as an asset in their lives. As for those looking for formal instruction and a curriculum, Gretchen understands that this is the responsibility of formal schools to further one’s education. For now, we’ll *enjoy the process* and discoveries made along the way!

No matter what endeavors a student chooses in life, the goal is to be remembered as an open-hearted and supportive voice for each creative experience, and to know that there are multitudes of mediums to express oneself. As opposed to cookie-cutter art and one-size-fits-all, which has no place at the *Creative Center*, because the journey of discovery feeds so much more than just the end result or outcome.

*Thank You for Supporting the Creative Spirit! :) Gretchen Grunt*