

ARIANNA CAROLI

# Block Notes



2006-2007

Laos Burma India

*THE RAJA PROJECT*



SIGNORE, GUIDA LA MIA MANO  
PERCHE' QUALUNQUE COSA IO FACCIA  
SIA OPERA DI LUCE

Giacobbe

*LORD, GUIDE MY HAND  
SO WHATEVER I DO IS  
A WORK OF LIGHT*

*Jacob*





I was born to have thoughts  
no one else would understand  
I was born to live free and wild  
to feel the wild and the wilderness  
and to see what no one else sees  
I was born to travel and to express myself  
through art

Laura Edwards, age 9 (in 1990)  
Silverstone, Oregon

This poem published in a magazine in 1990, has been given to me by Marco Fiorentino. Great friend, spirit guide in my first years in New York. He wrote a personal comment to accompany the paper cutting:

*'Thought little Arianna wasn't sure what she wanted to be when she grew up, she did seem to intuit with certainty that she was meant for something that would involve her whole self. She has pursued her own identity and now painting and writing are an expression of it. With a singular focus, drive and courage.'*

Marco, New York 1990

I was born to live free and express  
myself through art  
The passion for life and learning guides me  
like the Ariadne's thread  
The spiritual and artistic quest  
takes me to places away from my country of birth  
In the journey I find myself in my work  
and I discover people and places  
with whom and where  
I feel home

Arianna, New York 2007



**To:** arianna caroli <ariannacaroli@earthlink.net>  
**Subject:** Re: something is in the air  
**Date:** Jun 29, 2007 9:45 PM

Dear Arianna,

So the book would be portraits of the many people you have met and how meeting them has changed you... moulded you... and from these interactions the Raja Project has formed in your mind and is seeking expression. A story or stories waiting to be told by you.

To share with others. Am I getting the idea?

ciao, ken

*“Tell me about your life and the beautiful places you visit”, People ask me all the time.*

*“We want to know more about the Orphanage in Luang Prabang, where you go to paint with the children”...*

*“Can you show me the photos of the monks in Burma when they go out for the quest at sunrise?”*

*“Where did you go last time you went to India?”... ‘Can you share some stories?’”*

So many times I have told those stories etched in my heart, during a dinner or at breakfast, over a cappuccino. It seems that the Universe is sending on my path very special people in order to create real magic. One day I show images from my computer to a gentleman just met at the Peninsula Hotel in Bangkok. Suddenly the stranger becomes a maecenas for the children in Luang Prabang. Thanks to Norbert the 350 orphans now are starting a vegetable garden with brand new tools and very soon they will breed sheep and goats to get milk and eventually food. “I will come with you to Luang Prabang” The beautiful, super busy manager of the Hotel keeps her promise and delivers personally to the children fantastic toys, underwear and food: it is the way Rainy decides to invest her farewell present.

“You will buy colors for the kids when you go to paint with them.” Fabio insists, refusing to take back the money I had borrowed from him. “Just give me the list”, and Christoph spends his day off buying supplies for the Lao children and the artist monks.

I thank you all, generous people I have already met on my way. Norbert, Rainy, Christoph, Fabio, Joe, Herbert: Grazie.

For you all I will share once again, this time on paper, moments of my journeys. It is time for a little book, an album of images, a jigsaw of short stories. Fragments of the world encrusted on the metaphysical web of my life. I sit down and face the thousand of photos stored in the computer. I also have to write. I feel lost and I am wondering why I have to embark on this adventure. It is only a moment. Then I remember the sparkling eyes of the children when they squeeze the tubes of the new colors and start painting with them; I see their smiles when they sip the orange juices and their joy when they play with the new frisbees... I look at the orange string wrapped around my right wrist: It was given to me as a blessing by the head monk of a beautiful Vat in Burma. In the remote village after the heavy rain the access at the monastery was completely flooded. The stagnant water was also attracting dangerous insects. I remember Joe suggesting a donation. For us it is a very reasonable amount of dollars, for them it is a fortune. We feel so good during the little thank you ceremony. The head Monk keeps chanting and praying while we pour holy water and a young monk writes a beautiful ‘receipt’. Our unexpected donation will bring back peace into the monastery’s life.

*Well, arianna, you have to find the patience to go further in the work, look for more photos,  
go through your journals and write one more story.*

*Remember: it is to thank all the people who support your RAJAPROJECT.*



# Block Notes

2006-2007

Images and words from my photo archives,  
from my journals and the memories etched in my heart.

Il viaggio concepito come opera d'arte ma anche come strumento al servizio dell'arte.  
The journey conceived as a work of art but also as an instrument in the service of art.

Block Notes is a... block notes, a 'cahier de voyage' inspired by Raja, from Shravanabhenagola in India.

I dedicate this work to him,  
to all my friends who, loving to hear my stories, want to participate on them  
and to the Collectors of my paintings and photographs.  
Thanks to them I can go further 'On The Way' and create more Beauty.

'Block Notes' is for me, because I need something I can hold when I have moments of doubt.  
Looking at the images in the book I will erase those doubts and get new courage  
to keep following my Ariadne's thread.  
I am here, now, to discover what new direction my life will take.  
What would enable me to be of more Service.

This Book has been conceived as an artwork.  
It has been printed to support The RAJA Project.  
This is the third edition, each copy is signed by the artist.



## For Raja

'We have arrived'. The driver gets out of the taxi to open the door for me. I am about to face the hundreds of steps leading to the top of the sacred mountain.

Up there, closer to the sky, awaits for us the gigantic statue of Mahavira, the Tirtankara venerated by the Jain people. Gathering here from remote regions of India, they bring to the naked God precious offerings and prayers.

I have been traveling a long way to accomplish this pilgrimage myself. I feel moved and nervous at the same time... preoccupied because the ascent appears to be tough and the steps at this time of the day are incandescent.

Looking out of the car window, the smile of the most beautiful young man strikes me like a lightening bolt. What a precious face, almost sculpted in ancient amber. Stars are sparkling in his eyes, his teeth are pure pearls.

Enchanted, I grab my camera: this is a portrait to be taken immediately. I hold my breath ready to shoot and make this moment 'immortal', but I hesitate. There is something weird, something wrong in the whole scene.

I look again.

The magnificent head rests over the powerful torso of a young man, the torso rests... over a wooden cart with four wheels. Nothing else. Wrapped around his hands are strings of leather.

What to say... I feel lost.

The small crowd of beggars backs up to let me out of the car. They all extend their hands to beg. He does too. I walk. They all walk behind me. He pushes his cart.

'Coca Cola' is my answer to brake the embarrassment. Everybody has his bottle and I sit on the step of the little shop close to the young man who is standing on his cart.

Everyday he takes a bus to come to this place because the generosity of the devotees and tourists is the only hope for his survival.

'What is your name?' I ask.

'My name is Raja'.

What a cruel irony: Raja means King.

I hold tears while my heart begins to fly high.

In this exact moment I promise to myself that I will do something good, something beautiful to bring moments of joy in the life of the many Rajas I will meet on the way.

And THE RAJA PROJECT begins here.

*Shravanabenagola, India, February 2004.*

Hundreds of images in my files: The Gallery of the Portraits taken on my journeys is a beautiful, large one.

But I miss one face. I never had the courage to ask Raja to look at my camera.

This portrait never taken is the inspiration.

Raja's portrait is in each page of each of my RAJA PROJECT books.

Thank you dear friend: one day I will come back, I will find you at the bottom of the sacred steps and I will ask you to look at my camera and smile.

Just smile for me. And this time I will not feel nervous.

You did great, and I am doing great thanks to you.

Raja, King.





**Whatever we do  
is a drop  
in the Ocean  
but if we  
don't do it  
that drop  
will be lost  
forever**

**Mother Theresa**

Laos





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If you liked the book and you want to support The RAJA Project  
please make a donation.

[www.therajaproject.com](http://www.therajaproject.com)

With our gratitude we will send you the complete 224 pages book.