



THE FROMM INSTITUTE  
FOR LIFELONG LEARNING  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

# FROMM FOCUS

The Newsletter of the Fromm Institute

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## SO MANY FROMM INSTITUTE FIRSTS

You've heard it over and over... this time is unlike anything we have ever known. And it's true! Never, in the history of the Fromm Institute, have we ever cancelled an entire session of classes. It's definitely a first for our forty-four-year-old program. However, there are also more firsts that have happened in the last two months...

Never, in the history of the Fromm Institute,

*... have our staff worked from home,*

*... have our classrooms been so silent,*

*... have we all been apart for so long,*

*... have we offered live, online classes,*

*and never, in the history of the Fromm Institute, have we ever offered a Summer Session.*

By now, more than 275 of you are already enrolled in our first ever Summer Session of live online courses. The staff has been busy acquainting themselves with the Zoom platform that we will be using to offer these courses. This week, we are working with the four professors who will bring our inaugural session together. It starts this coming **Monday, June 1**. If you have not already done so, and would like to register for these classes, please do so [here](#). There are only a few days left to enroll.

If you will be participating, please be sure to download the Zoom app to the computer or other device you will be using to view the class ([click here for instructions](#)). If you already have the Zoom app, please be sure to update your app to version 5 ([click here for instructions](#)). This will help us to ensure the security of each class. Enrolled students will receive an email invitation to your class on the day your class meets, at least 30 minutes before the class starts. [Click here for instructions on joining a Zoom class](#).

We all ask for patience and support as we bring together a few of the pieces of the Fromm Institute we have all been missing. Complications are sure to arise, and tempers may flare, but please know that we are all working hard to make this transition as problem free as possible. We are grateful to Professors David Peritz, James Sokol, Chris O'Sullivan, and Andrew Fraknoi for their pioneering spirit and convivial attitudes in this new endeavor.

As always, the Fromm Institute staff will be available to help, should you need it. Please keep our office phone number and our email addresses handy. We will do our best to get to you quickly, but we may be helping several people, so please be patient with us.

We are all looking forward to seeing you next week.

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This week Matinée coordinator and FISA Secretary **Maxine Einhorn** shares another television series review in **Express Yourself**. Submissions to **Express Yourself** are accepted on a rolling basis and can be articles, opinion pieces or notes, written by you, the students or others in the Fromm Institute family, who want to share something with the larger community. Email your submissions to **Scott Moules** in the Fromm Institute office ([fromm@usfca.edu](mailto:fromm@usfca.edu)).

## RE-PRESENTING HISTORY (2) – WATCHING *THE WEISSENSEE SAGA* ON TV



Having watched the final episode of “A French Village”, I’m finally liberated from Vichy France, still mindful of the importance of this award-winning drama - the first major French television series to seriously address collaboration during the Nazi occupation in World War II. Now I’m trapped behind the Iron Curtain in the GDR of the 1980s watching a German series called “The Weissensee Saga” which similarly is one of the first TV shows to truly reflect life in the GDR in a nuanced and sympathetic way during the final decade of East German communist rule through to German reunification in 1990. It is hugely popular in Germany and I can see why, described as “a cold war Romeo and Juliet,”\* it is a multi-generational saga of human courage and love as well as unscrupulous cruelty.

Weissensee is a district in the heart of the former East Berlin and Stasi agents (the state security service of the GDR) lurk everywhere and know everything. They are truly terrifying. The drama revolves around two families, the Kupfers and the Hausmanns who have always been enemies. The Kupfer family contains two Stasi secret police officers, father and son, one of whom will stop at nothing to further his career. The other family, the Hausmanns, are dissidents whose matriarch, Dunja, is a popular cabaret singer and it is her daughter, Julia, who falls in love with Martin Kupfer, the humane younger brother in the Kupfer family. Endless efforts at “persuasion” are used to force them apart, and both families become embroiled in intrigue which extends to colleagues, neighbors, acquaintances, friends and relations who are forced to collude or risk terrible consequences.

It is of interest that the real-life biographies of the actors are relevant to the authenticity of the series. While both the writer and director were born in (former) West Germany, the actors are mainly from the east, and many were themselves the victims of state repression. Katrin Sass, who plays Dunja, was spied on by the Stasi in real life, once by a close friend who worked as an informer. Others in the cast spent time in Stasi prisons or fled to the west.

Three years ago, a highlight of my trip to Berlin was a visit to the Stasi HQ. Not everyone’s cup of tea I’m sure. But there for all to see was a large wall chart showing who was spying on whom in that period. It seemed to involve every layer of the Stasi bureaucracy, all spying on each other. The history of the Stasi is known but rarely dramatized and maybe German TV is now open to acknowledging this terrifying past.

Watch your back had a real meaning in the GDR.

Enjoy the series. It is riveting.

**24-episode German production on MHZ – which can be accessed through Amazon Prime**

*\*The Observer - Kate Connolly - 2 Oct 2010*

## PLEASE HELP US SURVIVE

Since our lives were upended by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fromm Institute has had to close its physical doors, but we have created a new, online presence so that our students can continue to learn through free access to the *Frommcast*, or through live, online courses. Although our membership fee income has been decimated, our costs of operation continue. This is a hard time for everyone. A time in which the programs the Fromm Institute offers may have an even greater significance to people who are staying at home. Please help us with a meaningful contribution. Gifts of any size are always appreciated, but are especially needed now.

To make a contribution, [please visit us here](#), and click on DONATE NOW.

**Thank you so much from all of us at the Fromm Institute.**

## HEARING LOSS AND COVID-19

Last week we received a communication from Dr. Laura Gaeta who wants to invite any interested Fromm Institute members to complete an anonymous survey on hearing loss and Covid-19. She has extensive credentials and is experienced working with the aging population in Sacramento.

*My name is Laura Gaeta, and I'm an assistant professor at California State University, Sacramento, in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. I also lead a seminar on communication strategies for people with hearing loss through our Renaissance Society on campus, which is for older adults who are interested in lifelong learning.*

*I have created a short survey about living with hearing loss during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The survey is anonymous, and it was approved by the Institutional Review Board at California State University, Sacramento (IRB-19-20-290). It takes about five minutes to complete.*

*I invite all Fromm Institute members to take part in the survey. Cut & paste the survey link into the browser of your choice.*

[https://csus.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_aWNv7SjZluiRzEN](https://csus.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aWNv7SjZluiRzEN)

# IN THE VIRTUAL GALLERY

## FROMM INSTITUTE VISUAL ARTISTS

This week photographer **Kathy Raffel** showcases a sampling of her recent photographic projects. If you are interested in submitting your work for consideration in the Virtual Gallery, send images, sound files, links to webpages, or links to moving art/movies to gallery coordinator **Scott Moules** at the general Fromm Institute email box ([fromm@usfca.edu](mailto:fromm@usfca.edu)).

## KATHY RAFFEL

Brooks Atkinson once said, **“The virtue of the camera is not the power it has to transform the photographer into an artist, but the impulse it gives him to keep on looking.”** Indeed, for me photography is like a treasure hunt. To be successful as a wildlife photographer, I must be curious, patient, humble, and observant. And, when I am hunting for abstract images, I must look at my surroundings from many perspectives to capture something different. I love using a digital camera; the ease of taking pictures and deleting my failures, lets me experiment, play, and have fun.

To view more of Kathy’s enticing photography please visit: [https://www.flickr.com/people/kkr\\_images/](https://www.flickr.com/people/kkr_images/)

### Hummingbirds



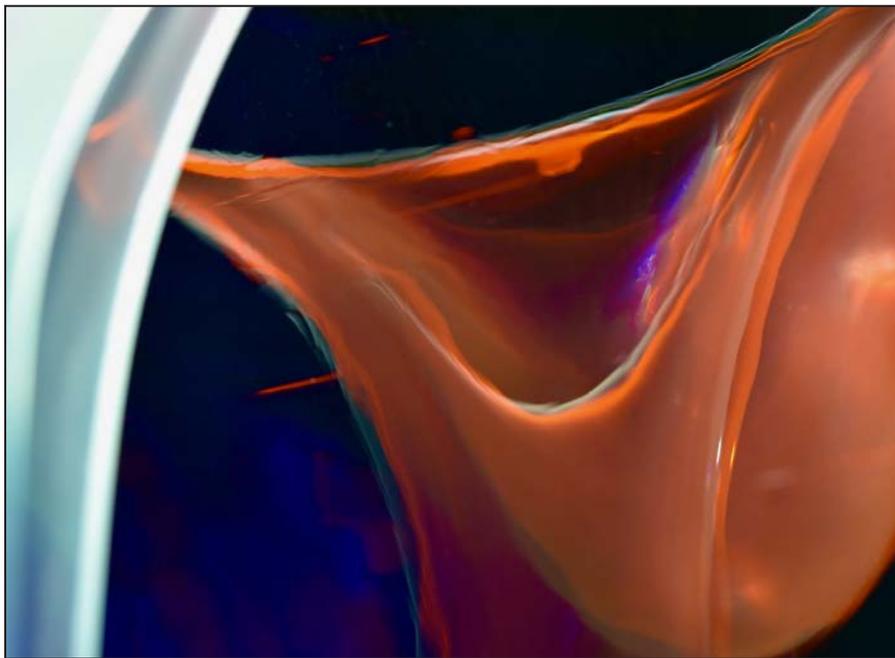
## Hummingbirds



Botanicals



*Abstractions*





## LEARN MORE ABOUT GATHER AND MEET WITH THE FOUNDERS ALEX AND ROB VIA ZOOM ON MAY 29 AT 10AM.

Hello Fromm Community! In case you missed it, in last week's *Fromm Focus*, we introduced you to **Gather**, a new tool to help adults of all ages fuel their curiosities by making the best formal and informal learning opportunities more accessible.

### Learn More About Gather on Friday, May 29:

We're pleased that so many of you have already signed-up for **Gather**, and since we've interacted with some of you by email this week, we thought it would be helpful to host a live conversation for everyone who would like to learn more about **Gather**, as well as to get your feedback on the kinds of learning opportunities you'd like to see more of on **Gather**.

If you are able, we would love to have you join us for a Zoom session on **Friday, May 29, from 10am-11am**. You can join the Zoom conversation by clicking here: <https://stanford.zoom.us/j/91441609432>

### What is Gather?

**Gather** is designed to be a single place to easily find and register for a variety of high-quality learning experiences from a network of trusted education providers. These range from one-time talks and conversations, to formal classes that meet with others over several weeks using Zoom or other online platforms. **Gather** is updated each week with new classes and learning opportunities, each of which links directly to an organizer's website. Using **Gather** is free, although some of the classes have fees that are payable directly to the course provider.

### Sign-Up For Gather:

If you haven't yet signed up for **Gather**, you can do so now at <https://www.gotgather.com/subscribe> where you will be able to enter your email address to receive a weekly update every Sunday evening which highlights learning opportunities for the week ahead. After that, you will be able to immediately browse this week's offerings and even sort them by areas of interest.

If you have any difficulty with **Gather**, you can email Alex ([alex@gotgather.com](mailto:alex@gotgather.com)) or Rob ([rob@gotgather.com](mailto:rob@gotgather.com)) directly, who are both happy to help you. Additionally, we'd love any suggestions you have for things you'd be more interested in learning more about.



MECHANICS'  
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## BLOOMSDAY

Noon on Zoom,

Tuesday, June 16, 12:00 pm



Walk on the wild side of Dublin from your living room! It's our first international **Bloomsday** on **Tuesday, June 16 at Noon on Zoom** with readings, music, song and celebration. We have guest artists from the Bay Area, New York and Ireland to bring Joyce's epic novel to life with interpretations both traditional and contemporary! Performers include Anne Bingham Goess, Esther Mulligan, John Ilyin, Melanie O'Reilly, Caraid O'Brien, Aaron Beall, Bruce Bierman and others. Bloomsday attire is welcome! Pull up a chair, bring your lunch and a libation of your choice -- or clear the room and be ready to dance a jig!

### RESERVATIONS

**WILL OPEN on June 1** at [milibrary.org/events](https://milibrary.org/events). Advance Reservations Required on EventBrite. Admission \$10.00 which supports musicians and artists!

Cosponsored by

**Mechanics' Institute and Gray Area, Irish Consulate of San Francisco and National Library of Ireland**



## ONE LAST REMINDER GUIDED CREATIVE MOVEMENT CLASS FOR ALL AGES

*San Francisco Village* and USF's Intergenerational dance troupe, **Dance Generators**, invite you to the last guided creative movement class via Zoom on **Saturday, May 30, at 11 a.m.** To register, please contact [aschaffer3@usfca.edu](mailto:aschaffer3@usfca.edu).