

THE ART INSIDE By Mark Montovio

Ole Dammegard was born in Denmark and travelled the globe extensively before settling down in this part of the world. An accomplished artist, musician, writer and designer, Ole has combined all his talents and is now also an international yoga teacher fostering peace of mind.

I am self taught with everything I do, be it writing, painting, handicrafts, web design or music. For me the arts all come from the same place, inside. They are just different ways of expressing the same thing. It all has to do with feelings, rhythm, balance and 'shades of colour'. You can express colours in music and writing, just as well as in painting and design work.

"I just love it all, as long as I'm blessed with inspiration and don't burn myself out by pushing and pushing myself in trying to give my best. For some people stress is a gift and it helps them to get going. I'm the opposite, and do what I can to avoid this destructive feeling. Here the yoga is helping me a lot."

Ole, released his first album HeartGlow, in Sweden in 1993, followed by From Prison to Paradise with its title song reaching the US Ambient Top chart, and he is also known for his compositions for Swedish National TV4. He is the author of several books, among them Shadow of Tears which is based on his experiences of Iran during the war with Iraq. During that time he worked as a teacher for Iranian refugees in Sweden and also helped to smuggle out some Iranian friends, via Russia to Sweden.

He was an investigative journalist for many years in Sweden and took a keen interest in re-researching the murder of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme in 1986. Eventually this is what led him, and partner Kim, to leave Sweden as his ongoing investigations created an element of risk for his family but he did complete his novel Coup d'etat in Slow Motion, based on the 12 years of intense research into the assassination. He has organized art exhibitions and for a while owned his own art gallery and he is also the recipient of an award from the Academy of the Arts in Prague.

An encounter with Integral Yoga Gibraltar Founder Nalanie Harilela Chellaram changed Ole's life.

"After having being absorbed by her talks, our lives changed. Both Kim and I loved the yoga philosophy based on human values like truthfulness, non-violence, compassion, non-greed, giving and sharing and felt that this was the way we wanted to live our lives. Through the group of people from all over the world who came to hear her talks, I also started meeting other Gibraltarians and collaborated with many of their projects. I started by designing the website for the Integral Yoga Centre and Nalanie's cover for her Flow with Deep Relaxation CD. I then designed Jane Langdon's website and the cover for The Iceberg Cowboy album, and continued working with chef Vicky Garcia Bishop, yogi Shanti Alman and musicians Dennis and Henry Valerga."

Last year Ole started writing the novel *The Guilty Victim* and completed the children's book, *Truth is One, Paths are Many*. He hopes to get his books and music published internationally with the intention of spreading peace and understanding between people, especially from different cultures.

"I would love to help create a world where people stopped blaming each other for their problems and the difficult times and instead took responsibility for their own lives so we can all make this world a better place to live. I believe in a truly great motto: When you feel down and sad - go out and help somebody."

"In times like this, when the financial situation is difficult and panic is spreading, I believe one of the most important things is to focus on maintaining our Inner Balance. Having spent so many years investigating the powers that are working behind the scenes, it is very obvious to me that this so called crisis is orchestrated in a strong effort to enforce even more control upon us. We are bombarded with Fear, mainly through media, and exposed to so called 'terrorist acts'. I strongly believe that all these situations are insider jobs aiming to spread fear and to get the ordinary citizen begging for even more control."

"So only by not buying into the fear can we withstand the pressure. If we focus on having peace of mind so that we can learn how to "surf the waves", we can keep our balance and support each other in times of trouble. "As our wonderful yoga teacher Nalanie Chellaram often says: When you are in a dark place, remind yourself constantly 'This too shall pass, this too shall pass'. And somehow it always does. It is never the situation that is the real problem, but our way of handling it " .

Ole's talents are as diverse as the countries he has visited and the experiences he has had. He continues to stay focused and inspiration flows. He is clear about the origins of that:

"I believe it is very important to focus on giving, especially in tough times. The giving somehow generates such wonderful results and without you really understanding how, it comes back to you as well. So if you are in doubt or in a desperate situation, just go out and help someone less fortunate and see what happens."