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## A Centennial of “Seed Pictures”

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Alongside the many one-hundred-year anniversaries in different anthroposophical fields, this year marks a century since Rudolf Steiner gave Henni Geck his last painting sketches, which have been a cornerstone of anthroposophical art trainings. Here, Van James tells us of the ways this centennial and other important anniversaries have been celebrated by those involved with the anthroposophical visual arts.

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Over the past few years, there has been a rich revisiting of Rudolf Steiner’s work as a twentieth-century spiritual scientist. Centennial celebrations of the founding of Weleda in 1921, the Christian Community in 1922, the Christmas Conference in 1923, Biodynamic agriculture, special education, and a renewed School of Spiritual Science in 1924, and many other initiatives that have flourished throughout the world. This has been equally true of work in the visual arts. Like other one-hundred-year celebrations, the Visual Art Section vividly recalled the one-hundredth year of the burning of the First Goetheanum with a summer conference of lectures and workshops. Also, in Dornach, the Arteum Malschule has been hosting in-person demonstrations of the training sketches for painters for local visitors. Presented as close to the exact date as when they were executed last century, the paintings have been rendered with accompanying descriptions of their themes and stories of their history.

On the other side of the world, Nurturer'Studio, an online platform based in India, has been leading international groups of people in painting the nine Nature Mood sketches, the Friedwart sketches, and some of the other "seed pictures" given to Henni Geck by Rudolf Steiner for her painting students. After the destruction of the cupola paintings in the First Goetheanum, there was the unspoken question, "Where are the examples of anthroposophic painting?" In response to Geck's request for a "renewal of painting," Rudolf Steiner gave very striking, colored chalk pastel sketches over the course of 1923 and 1924 that are now finding a new audience.

It was in 1924 that the last and only (five) watercolor paintings by Rudolf Steiner were created in connection with the seasonal festivals. Some of them were used as eurythmy posters. Now, in many places around the world, these unique pictures are being and will be copied, repainted, and freely rendered by a new generation of artists and interested novices. Like the meditative verses that are contemplated and inwardly taken to heart, these colorful pictorial imaginations known as the training sketches are being actively studied in studios during this jubilee year of 2024 and will aptly conclude with Rudolf Steiner's very last painting, the Archetypal Animal/Human.

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**More** [Nurturer'Studio](#); [Arteum Malschule](#)

**Image** Series of sketches by participants of a workshop at Goetheanum, based on the sketch by Rudolf Steiner "Sunrise". Photo: Xue Li

### **Van James**

Van James is an artist, council member of the Visual Art Section of North America, and former land representative for the Anthroposophical Society in Hawaii.