



Artist-in-Residence

Cara Bean

July/August 2026



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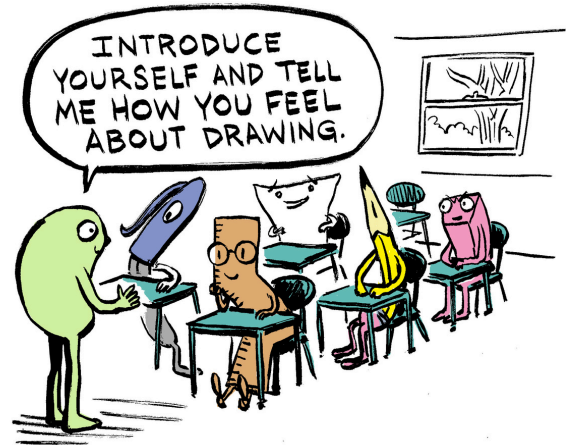
Mindful Doodling for the Entire Community! |

Thursday, July 16th, 10-11:30 AM, Auditorium

Open Studio at The Cottage | Thursday, August 27th, 6-8 PM

Cara Bean is a cartoonist, art educator, and the author of "[Here I Am, I Am Me: An Illustrated Guide to Mental Health](#)". Her book was named to the Children's Book Council's 2025 Favorites lists for both Middle Grade and Teacher Favorites and was shortlisted for the Graphic Medicine International Comics Awards. Her comics and writing have appeared in PEN America Illustrated, The Women's Review of Books, and Teaching Arts Magazine. Cara leads interactive workshops that spark creativity for people of all ages and backgrounds, with a special focus on how drawing can nurture mindfulness and imagination.

"In my upcoming work "Why Draw?", I explore the true heartbeat of a creative practice: the idea that drawing is not about a "good" picture, but about the curiosity and confidence gained through the process. As a cartoonist, I will communicate these ideas directly to the reader through panels, word balloons, and storytelling.



LOUISE BOURGEOIS DREW FOR HER ENTIRE LIFE.

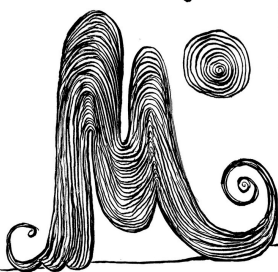
I know that when I finish a drawing my anxiety level decreases.



The realistic drawings are a way of pinning down an idea.



With abstract drawings, when I'm feeling loose...



...I can slip into the unconscious.



I view the sketchbook as a playground for the mind—a sanctuary where we can be messy, experimental, and entirely ourselves. For many of us, the inner critic and the pressure of perfectionism act as barriers to expression. My work focuses on dismantling those hurdles and championing the doodle as a vital tool for confidence and clarity.

Ultimately, this project is a celebration of the everyday practice. Whether you are a lifelong artist or haven't picked up a pencil in years, I want to show that the real magic isn't found in a finished masterpiece. It lives within the scribbles, mistakes, and the honest, unpolished moments that fill our sketchbooks."

Learn more about Cara and our AIR program here: westerlylibrary.org/artist-in-residence