

Linda Graedel

Biografie

1941 Geboren in San Francisco, USA

5 seit 1963 Lebt in der Schweiz

1959-1963 Art Center School in Los Angeles

Akademie der bildenden Künste in Wien

Ecole des Beaux Arts Paris

HSBK Zürich

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Einzelausstellungen (Auszug)

1985 Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen

1991 Tonhalle Zürich, Montreux Jazz Festival

1993 Chicago Museum of Design (Swatch Art)

15 1994 Seepark Thun, Schweizerischer Bankverein

1998 Bellevue Hotel, Bern – Bundeshaus

1998 Rathaus Willisau, Jazz Linien

1999 Gallery Attraktion, Bern, Ausstellung mit eigenen Musikkompositionen zu Bildern

2006 Rechtswissenschaftliches Inst. Universität Zürich, Calatrava Bibliothek

20 2006 Varna, Bulgarien, August-in-Art

2007 Landesmuseum, 'small number-big impact'

2008 Kulturzentrum Fislisbach

2009 Sommerlust, Schaffhausen

2011 Gallery 0, Schaffhausen

25 2012 Gallery Mera, Gallery Fronwagplatz 6, Gallery Dosch, Obergericht ZH

2014 Rheinart Gallery, Neuhausen

2015 Chatham Art Center, Chatham, MA, USA Bücher, Film, CD Meier Verlag (Schaffhausen)

Erschienen:

30 Linda Graedel begleitet das "Schaffhauser Bachfest" 1985;

Volksmusik in der Schweiz

Linda Graedel und Hans Ritzmann "Nächte sind wie Frauen";

Illustrationen von Büchern und Heften: "Sing- und Spiellieder aus dem Puschlav," Sauerländer Verlag,

Aarau; "Rund um de Mülihof," Orell Füssli, Zürich "Himmlischen+Irdischen Kostlikeiten" DU Heft 8.98

35 Zeichnungen von Hotel und Parlament

Leben in Bern

Film

"4 Schaffhauser Frauen" Filmfestival, SH, 2011

40 CD PianoSketches, Improvisations 2011

Preise, Stipendien, Lehre

Schweizer Buchpreis für das Doppelband „Linda Graedel. Werke“ (ISBN 3-906660-03-6) 1993

Stipendienaufenthalt im Kulturzentrum Scuol-Nairs. 1998

45 Gastdozentin an der Kunstakademie in Sofia, Bulgarien (Pro Helvetia) 1998

Kursleitung "Malen und freie Musik" in Esalen, Kalifornien mit David Darling 2004.

Ankauf von Bildern und Swatch Uhrendesigns, Chicago, USA 1993

Ankauf von Werken, Sammlung des Museums für Gestaltung, ZH 2009

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text linda graedel

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FFV:

are there any specific reasons to use techniques such as drawing or painting, or is the technique depending on the situation?

LG:

60well as a young girl i already started documenting my life like a diary with little drawings.

I wasn't writing very much like others i know. So the 'sketch' was my language..the sketchbook was my portable office.

In the 60's as i left home to travel and study, i got a camera from my father. I tried taking pictures wherever i went,, even slides. But several times i had such bad luck with developing films, that i
65focused more on the sketchbook as a more dependable means of documenting my experiences and travels.

And in my Kibbutz summer in Isreal, for example, the Orthodox people didn't want to be photographed out of religious reasons... so the sketch was more discrete and no one could complain about that.

70FFV: Do people prefer to be drawn than to be photographed? Are they more open, more in touch with the person who draws them?

LG: yes, it seems so. When i came over from america on a ship, with 19 years old i already drew quite well. I realised that i can draw people better than flowers or landscapes. And when i met some one
75new, or who interested me, i pulled out my book and started to draw them. For example the dutch ship capitan had invited me for tea, he was such a fat guy, i just had to draw him. With few lines i got his essence. And he enjoyed the attention i gave him.

FFV:Why have you got this interest for people? Is it a form of communication?

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LG: I don't really know, but it is really there. even if i have no communication through the drawing, i have a contact. Or maybe if the people are just sleeping in a train, like in my 'sleeper serie', there i am really glad to have a motive that doesn't move all the time. It is much easier to draw or watercolor. Then it is more like in the art academy, where we had models posing for us.

85Just once in san francisco, i was sitting on BART, a train to berkely. I started to sketch the man sitting across from me, and suddenly he looked upset and got up and left. That was the only case i can remember that someone did not want to be portrayed..

Whenever i had to go to a restaurant alone, i didn't feel lonely when i had my sketchbook with me and could draw the surroundings or other people. like if the sketchbook is my friend.

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FFV: With all the drawn people in it, it is like a huge family,,a circle of friends and companions. Is a sketchbook a proof of confidence?

LG: yes, it is sort of like a little zoo,, a collection of encounters of some i remember and some not.

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FFV: What about the expression in the drawing? Are your experiences as teenage model, and as public performer in the newspapers, etc. important for that consciousness of feelings, expressions and passions, which color your drawings?

100LG: Those experiences did not exactly influence my art. But my facination for new visual excitement is surely a result of these experiences..Each new country i have ever visited has interested me in various aspects...like in Africa, Thailand, or Bulgaria, etc.. i am more interested in the ethnic clothing of the people and how they move in them ,for example.

When i was 21, and first came to study in Paris from Edinburg, Scotland, with my Lambretta i was
105fascinated by the various character types walking around Paris. Every day i took the metro to the art school and there were signs saying, "don't drink too much, think of your children" or "no smoking", or "don't spit on the floor". I first had to translate this and then was shocked that they even had to tell people these rules. (I did get the flu quite often in this enviornment.)

In paris, to support myself, i could live in and help out by babysitting for a nice family. The little boy i
110cared for, Vincent, was only 2 years old then. On the weekend when i went out with my future husband for the very first time on a date, i told him that Vincent must join us too for our walk to the jardin du luxembourg. André said, "hmmm i wonder who will learn to speak french first: me or Vincent"? "Vincent Landon was a darling little blond boy then.

I am sorry that i cannot find the sketches i did of him then. i saw Vincent in a french magazine many
115years later, and he had turned to dark hair and had a beard.. he was by then a famous actor, and the partner of Caroline du Monaco. Meanwhile i have seen some of his films... he is great. I am really proud that i could feed and care for him as baby .

In California, i had to care for my 3 younger brothers allot when i was a teenager, as my parents separated. It was a hard time for all, especially for my mother...but i am glad to have had that
120experience so i could help pay for my art studies by caring for other children later on in life. I am a

positive person and try to find the good side of not always good situations. This has helped me thru life allot.

My mother taught me how to play piano... so i used to play boogie -woogie for the children i babysat for during my first year at Art Center in Los Angeles. I said, " when i play ,they can dance and jump
125around,, but when the music stops.. .then...up the stairs to their bedrooms, brush teeth, put on pjamas and whoops in bed. It worked quite well with the family of 3 boys. We still have contact.

FFV: back to the drawings. You did allot of drawings for the newspapers. Why is this medium as interesting as photos.? Where do you think is the sophistication in drawing-compared to photography?
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Well one thing is facinating, is that no two people draw alike.. everyone has their own characteristical 'handwriting'. That alone is waking interest in the reader, i think.

From the 80's on i was drawing all the premieres of the Zurich Theatre and Opera. My drawings were like a summary of the performances, then sent by fax to about 10 newspapers who then published
135them the next day to the written critic. This kept me up to date and educate myself with the german speaking theatre, literature and music world. Since my husband was often leaving the hospital late in the evenings and rarely could make it to a theatre with me in zurich, (40 minutes away)..this was my solution to the situation. I think i have drawn at least 100 operas and theatre plays.

Later on in the 90's the press stopped hiring my 'drawings' and found it cheaper to use photographs.
140The same happened in Fashion. They changed over to photographs too. I must say i missed the beautiful Haute Couture fashion shows in the Bord ou Lac hotel in zurich. it was always a fun exciting atmosphere... i also loved observing the perfumed, weathy women cidental with their long cigrettes and high healed shoes ...

145FFV: But why is this appreciation of drawings in the newspapers??

LG: often you see people look longer at a drawing, than at a photograph....it awakes some sort of curiosity i guess.

i had the chance to go to draw the musicians in various major festivals for the newspapers. This brought me to places i would not have gone to so easily. Montreux, Willisau and Zurich jazz festivals
150brought many american musicians here. I could go back stage and have contact with them too. All in all it was good for my homesickness from california and the music world. And as my mom was a musician, and playing piano myself, i too can feel like a musician does.

But as i first started documenting concerts i felt very shy and inhibited. This was in the Bachfest in schaffhausen in 1985. I had to sit amongst the audience and start drawing. This can be disturbing to
155the others ,, so i had to find a better place to sit. Once in the Tonhalle zurich i was drawing a concert, and the well dressed man next to me said "we are here to listen to the concert and not to draw.!" So then i decided to go to the main rehearsals in the morning, where i felt more free and undisturbt. I really learned how to draw musicians then.. as it's not easy to draw the hand and arm positions of violin players ,,and all other instruments too. For me a real challenge.

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FFV:You describe how your drawing process gets going, that is needs somewhere an external trigger. Like if i would discribe the difference between photography and drawing, then i would say that photography takes just a moment, and drawing is more a process, a lapse of time. By drawing, you are much more in the process of the performance you describe, and the drawing is at the same time a
165creative process similar to the performance. it is a visual appropriation of the scene.. in photography movement are not really visable.

LG: You are right. I perceive the flow of the music, the movements, the situation. If people, expecially the musicians, tell me that they feel the music in my drawings, then i have succeded. Drawings are personal reactions and feelings.

170But funny is: when the music starts,,my pen starts to dance!!

FFV: Photos are just copies, visual statements, neutral images, but not handmade interpretations. Drawings are time capsules, in time is gathered and packed and photos are moments, parts of seconds.

175LG: Drawing is a quiet process, no clicking sounds, cameras on wheels, constant change of places and perspectives. Like in Montreux festival, sitting among the TV and press journalists, i had my little seat there also in the front row. And my paper cup of beer to desolve my crayons when i needed a watercolor effect. It was quite a balancing act, i must say. I am amazed at how i could focus on the music plus the visual interpretation of the musicians playing, and the camera guys moving around the
180whole time trying for good shooting positions, sometimes stepping on my sandals :) once a young guy virtually sat on my lap for a good position to shoot his photo... that was funny. We had allot of nice contact between all of us there. I was usually the only feminine one there.

FFV: What is the difference between colored drawn pictures and just line drawings with a monochrome pen?

LG: My first drawings were more or less black on white paper. This was the normal wish for black printing newspapers then, and was required to send the pics through the fax transmission anyway. I think i was a bit shy of using color in the begining..

In one of my first court cases, Gunter Tschanun, I used just line or brush drawings. But later for the SRF tv news, they wanted color. I would first would be sent to draw in the court room ,, (as no photographers were allowed there), then afterwards i went out to the area in front of the court. The cameraman was waiting for me with all his equipment and a truck near by. We would then lay my drawings on the back of the truck or on a bench and he would make a film, traveling all over the picture. It took over a minute to film it. I often made up to 3 drawings in the morning in court showing different people involved in the case.

Later on i could use color in my newspaper drawings too.

FFV:

so the color or black and white were dictated more by external influences than by your personal drive. I myself was taking pictures in free theatres in the early 80's in color, what nobody did, although the specific mood of lights belong to the staged scenery.

LG: In the music, where everyone has his place on the stage, it is easier than in the theatre. There the scenes are changing and never coming back. I was always tired after such a performance where i made many drawings which were finally put together in one picture to make a compact overview of the whole piece. Sort of like a collage. This is what i sent off to the papers.

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FFV: A question about the volatility, the explosive, ephemeral character of your music and theatre drawings in contrast to the just keeping record in drawings. A lot of your works are like a waft, airy illusions of what is going on. As the situation is volatile, your drawings are as well.

LG: Most things are not drawn exactly like in an academic study. It is like i see a gesture which i memorise, then draw it out of my memory, perhaps in a changed context. This technique of memory/rendition i think i learned by watching the rehearsals of ballet dancers in the cellar of the Opera house Zurich or other moving situations. Watching and capturing the movement of these dancers was really a challenge. You have to feel that flow. As the actors did the same rehearsals over and over to automatise the procedures, it was for me a good schooling of seeing/drawing. This one can learn as well on the television through a football game for example, by drawing the different movements between foul and goal... especially the slow motion clips are good too.

Even in a zoo, a circus or in a sand box with kids, drawing motion is a good way to learn to draw. Anything that moves is a challenge and makes one concentrate intensely.

FFV: What is more important. The exact line/stroke or the blurring to indicate speed?

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LG: i guess it is the anticipation, to be aware of what is coming next. I tell people not to look on the paper, but more to the object and to incorporate the moment in your own body. Drawing is more than an exact reproduction, where you need an exact scale. It is good thought to have the confidence not to have to look and control the lines on the paper. At performances it is anyway difficult because of the lack of light. So you are forced to draw the line in the dark.

FFV: ...like under drugs...

LG.: Yes, funny, like when we had wine together with friends and i had my sketchbook there my drawings were more fluid and loose, but still good.. because there was no need for perfection. All has a context.

FFV: How about influences? From whom have you learned something about drawing passions, special moods, physical and emotional?

LG: There was a Dutch painter who influenced me a little bit in the 80's. But I really didn't look at other artists. I had a somehow inner moral that said, i had to look inside and see what came out of 'me'.

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FFV: What do you refuse to draw?

LG: Up to recent time, i never drew flowers or plants,, i just wasn't interested. Last year during the lockdown of Corona, i started looking in my own garden...and also on my walks to the forest i realize what a treasure of forms and variety there was right in my own immediate life surroundings. Back to my atelier, i brought back a bag full of plants, laid them out on a table and i made friends with them. I tried, even though i believed i was not able, to draw them. Before i thought plants were only for real oil painting artists.... But i decided to do it in my Linda way, line by line,; pine cones, roses, leaves, and even vegetables like kale or even parsley. Later as a friend saw the drawings, he said it reminded him of Elsworth Kelly. These works have opened a new dimension and challenge in my art .

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FFV: Has your reluctance to plants anything to do with shadow.? Your line drawings haven't any shadows. It is more difficult to see which lines belong together, which crossings, more or less distant lines which form the object which makes a whole representation of that real object visible. The mental capacity has to recognise a real object out of lines. To draw the volume of a flower it needs shading

250 around the contours, which structure field and space.

LG: To draw 3-dimensionally without shading needs a lot of concentration. I like to leave out as many lines as possible and to still keep the object recognisable. In drawing figures I can do this.

FFV: Another question about the court drawings. What are your feelings if you draw in a court case in

255 which such a lot of evil is there? How could you portrait these people in connection to their crime?

Is it your aim to draw that evil connected to that person or more the fate behind the case? Or is it just eh documentation of the poor person who committed a crime.?

LG: I think it is above all the actual situation of a victim. I mainly do the most interesting cases, which the press and people want to see, but can't be photographed out of privacy protection. Normally in

260 such cases the accused is pretty much guilty, so it is the question whether or how to lower the measure of punishment. I always go there with mixed feelings. It is a challenge to please my bosses at the newspapers or television. But normally I do a real documentation of a situation in a space with people in their different roles. The drawing should make the case understandable to the public. I go often into the court and ask myself, who is the criminal? It is not always obvious if the accused is there

265 with hand cuffs, or sitting in another seat than the usual one.

FFV: The readership wants to have a precise, profiling description of the the perpetrator.

LG: With my "hobby psychology gene" I try to analyse the situation. Listening to the questions of the judge, I can hear how he or she became what they are, which experiences they had, how these poor guys tick. I often feel sorry for the accused. 99% of the judges do an excellent job, then it is a sensitive

270 inquiry to find out what and why something has happened and went wrong. During the questioning most judges try to make the criminal feel at ease and build up a sort of familiarity. In the end you understand why something has happened against the law and order... For example the Osterwalder case where the man himself was misused as a child, so he felt it was normal to continue this kind of behaviour. When possible I try to see the feet of the accused because they reveal something about the

275 actual state of how they are... Even the others in the room involved too, like the policeman, defender, lawyer, witness or state attorney. Some women lawyers have high heeled shoes on and they look like their feet hurt after standing awhile giving their playdoyer. It seems to be a standard dress code for women working in court. I also like to scan the bodies of the people involved like a seismograph and to perceive the exchanges of face color or certain movements which reveal a lot about their inner

280 condition. I also have a certain pressure to deliver my works before the morning is over because somebody is waiting outside the courtroom to take pictures or film my drawings. When I work for the tv, they want to have some pictures before the noon news already.

FFV: So it is your aim to draw the criminal as a human, not as a monster, which the audience might expect. Is your work as well a visual appeasement in a process of healing?

285 LG: First of all it is a kind of protection for the accused, so that he is not 1:1 recognisable. I am drawing and other one agrees being drawn. My part is not an identification with the victim, but an understanding. It is like a contract. In the case of the Paarkhuas murder in Zurich, I sort of avoided to have eye contact with her. She frightened me because she herself said that she was full of aggression and inner fury and wasn't sure how she could control herself. She had to wear handcuffs on her feet

290 and hands to stay calm. It was a special feeling if you are physically so close to such an accused person, especially that she was a woman.

FFV: Are the accused looking at your drawings? Do they wish to be drawn nicely?

LG: Just in the case of the the accused postoffice robbery in Zurich quite awhile ago. During the break

295 we were all mingling in the hall with the accused as well as journalists, lawyers, and so on. This is sometimes so. One of the guys (they weren't real criminals, just a few silly boys thinking they could pull this job without being caught...) came to me and asked if I could do a nice drawing of himself. And winked and smiled.

FFV; To the last chapter: Art. Do you judge your art as the free will, the liberty to treat ideas, motifs, 300 subjects, to do what is not even expected?

LG: I run on feelings. Energy and feelings are my basic instincts, my rough material and therefore the main components in my art.

FFV: And therefore the interpretation is free, without judgement, without fixation, just the the pleasure 305 of an audience. Free art against the applied art which is in the depending service of somebody or something.

LG: Yes, the difference is whether i do it for me or for somebody else. The doing itself is the same: art processing. I have to be in it with all i know and feel. Now after such allot of linda drawings, i would like to go further with my paintings.. i see myself as an old grandmother sitting in the garden in front of my
310esel and paint the inner and out mood on smaller formats. I do hope to be at least independent enough for this.

After the stroke of my husband, i was morphesized to a nurse or caretaker at home. Plus emptying our old house with my atelier, which had too many stairs for him as he was paralised on the whole left side. The blessing was that he could still think straight and talk. But was gradually going to use a
315wheel chair. I had to change and scale down my life, to reduce all the liberties i had had. Just in my painting i was trying to find a new expression. This went on for over 5 years until he passed in 2010. Just before his passing, i had a breast cancer diagnosos shock ... this was treated with an operation and radiation therapy. It also took all the wind out of my sails for almost 2 years...

Learning has always been my daily life's curiosity, but in that suddenly changed situation i felt like in
320a cage. Earlier i did the Nests and Cocoons which look more cosy and comfortable and have a feeling of security in them. So i made a long pause from these subjects.

Then i decided to go a day a week to the Hochschule der Künste in Zurich taking courses to help me back on track. I studied the work of edward Hopper, whose work is quite rigid, silent and full of psychological emptiness. Through learning, one finds new little joys and some good work came out of
325it too.

Then later came my newer works full of positive energy.

FFV: ...looking like sperms, comets or bugs flying in swarms.

LG: I think those are more comets. Important is their movement. It seems to be a primal symbol for new life.

330When i studied at the famous Arno Stern in Paris in the 70's (after whom i later lead a painting atelier for children in Schaffhausen). He mentioned the primal drawings forms which children draw the same all over the world. He called these basic objects and forms " la langue organique" .I learned through him that children should be allowed to draw their own untaught primal forms in a safe enviorment without any critic or comments from outside. He said it is early enough to learn to draw objects after
335puberty if one wants. I had this atelier for almost 10 years, during my 'being a mother time'.

FFV: So drawing is not a fulfilling of an expectation of some body, but an expression of onself.

LG: Allot of my drawings are more organic-like now. I see things, like in music, then i forget it and wait.. and and digest, and then later see what comes out through these imputs.

FFV: I there anything to say about the nudes? The academic studies of the naked body?

340LG: It is a challenge to capture the human body in a life drawing.

The form, the movements, proportions, all just in a few strokes. I like to try to capture this very minimalistic approach of this art. I did draw allot of ballet dancers. Trying to use charcoal and watercolor. Once i had a cup of milk coffee on my atelier table and i dipped, by accident, my brush into the coffee. So i just continued and painted with it. It seemed such a nice color that i finished the
345drawing serie with it....now after 15 years the coffee color has not faded a bit ,so my 'coffee- dancers' were born from that time.

I do enjoy drawing or painting a corpulent kind of figure instead of perfect thin, muscular, dancer's bodys. There is a bit of eroticism and sensuality there. Different models' bodys stimulate different ways of drawing for sure. I have been drawing in a group of friends at the rheinfalls near schaffhausen since
350over 15 years. We mainly had, masculine and feminine ballet dancers from the Cinevox truppe pose for us.

FFV; As you explain that the mass of a body is more interesting than a like drawing like in fashion art. How is it with the difference between the body and the face?

LG: I think that too much discription of the face bothers me. I often judge other's life drawings how they
355do the face. The body for example could be well drawn, but the face is either a fashion face or just too much information of the model. It should remain somehow anonymous or abstract. I like and respect Rodin for his nudes, as well as the Austrian artist Egon Shiele.

FFV :I guess the difference lies in body versus identity.. the body is a mass without any identity, The face is the mirror of the personality. The life drawing turns into a portrait, and this is somehow
360contradicting- nude body and social protrait.

LG: So the difficulty in life ddrawing is to make just an illusion, a hit , but avoid the personality.

FFV: In the theatre school on learns the seven charachters. One has the neutral state, next to joy, anger, lust, tenderness, sadness... So it is the no feeling situation. It is a vocabulary that you create out of specific memories to perform real feelings.

365LG: In the red hair serie, i covered the face with the red hair to veil the actual person.

So it was somehow a covering of the expressions and feelings beyond. If you have too much face it becomes kitsch.

FFV: coming back to your self portraits: What is wrong with them?

370LG: i didn't portrait myself ever very much Except in the time when my husband was sick and i had to
question myself and my identity.. probably because i was not very happy and felt frustrated and was
fearing my future and my present then.

FFV: Self portraits are always in a specific time and mood. So they are right and correct. Is it a
375question of idealisation?

LG: If the self is coming out, then it might hurt and one takes a certain distance to that face.

FFV: But you can also keep it as a closed document til the time you leave that situation behind. For
me these self portraits are figuring out a specific time and therefore they are true. So i don't judge any
380technical shortcomings. I think self portraits in whatever personal medea they are is good for the
acceptance of life, moods of relationships. One can document the individual biography through self
portraits. So in the future one can see time slots, one can recognise situation and fix memories.

LG:Thats the evolution. I will do a new self-portrait this coming week. I thought about my selfes after
my breast operation, as well as a form of acceptance of changed conditions, a documentation of my
385life.

When my husband was ill, i asked him to take some nude photos of me with the camera with the just
one hand he had then. Because i could not go then to classes to draw models, i could use myself as a
model for reference. That worked.

390FFV: Self portraits are in that case a personal therapy, could be a self for new figuration or could be a
projection for whatever....

LG: I like in that conext Maria Lassnig who used the self portrait as a form of life. It is a real honest
description of herself.

395FFV: She came out of the viennese body expression group like Valie Export, Rudolf Schwarzkogler,
Friedel Kubelka-Bondy or Herman Nitsch. So selfportraits are never over, they could come even in
high age..

LG: yes, why not? I am not afraid of being and looking old. I just try to stay as healthy as possible,,
and wish this for all!

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yes