The in-between is a landscape of possibility and of transformation. It is a place that demands letting go of the known, of the comfort of the familiar, in order to let oneself be the transformation for others. Artists call this home.

Landscapes of the in-between demand that we implicate ourselves, bodies and all. It is not for everyone, this heading out into the unknown, led by one’s passion, to what writer Sue Monk Kidd calls the exquisite edge of courage (1996:106). Artists inhabit it, open themselves to interpreting their craft and culture, and offer this mediated culture to wider audiences. Their artful behavior is rooted fundamentally in sensual knowledge, making them peculiarly sensitive to the traditions and values of their own cultures. This sensitivity and their residence in unfamiliar territory, both rooted and rootless, allow them to remind their own communities of who they have been and can be. They also speak from and for their communities to those who do not know their traditions and histories. I will explore the following questions in the context of the rich and continuous tradition of visual art, poetry, and music among the Isthmus Zapotec of Juchitán. What circumstances make it possible for artists to create out of their own traditions while departing from them? How do they navigate the in-between roles of interpreters and transformers? What conditions support acceptance of the artist as person, the work created by the artist, or both person and creation? Working with image, word, and sound, I will offer examples of the ancient, the reworked, and the new, touching on the role of social media in creating and sustaining art.