

Artist Barbara Maye exhibits at Nakusp's Studio Connexion

by Art Joyce

If you've ever been inspired by a walk in the forest, then artist Barbara Maye has a collection of art for you. Maye is exhibiting her latest show, *Spaces in Between*, at Anne Belliveau's Studio Connexion in Nakusp from December 3 to January 23. This exhibition includes volcanic stone sculpture, woodcarving, painting and lithography. The opening reception will be Friday, December 4 from 5-7 pm with live music.

'Creation from destruction' is one of the themes of the show. Many of the artworks were made by first making rice paper and graphite rubbings of patterns on trees created by pine beetle larvae, then transferring them to woodcarvings and other media. Maye did research on the pine beetle to learn about their life cycles and uses a Dremel router to carve the patterns into the wood. The result is something akin to an abstract landscape – beauty from destruction. The exhibition also features carvings in volcanic stone imported from Zimbabwe inspired by the patterns of tree trunks. Three of the exhibition pieces are lithography, and all the works are inspired by nature – especially trees, which fascinate her.

"I've been studying trees as inspiration for my art so it made sense to come to BC. Since I've been here I've been thoroughly inspired." While teaching art at Mount Royal College in Calgary Maye worked with recycled materials – including felled trees – in her art. "In the city my work was about missing trees but here it's about being

inspired by them."

Maye grew up in Saskatchewan and lived in the US for about ten years. She returned to Canada to complete an art degree in 2007 but has been showing artwork internationally for far longer. Maye obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree with distinction from the University of Calgary. She has exhibited in Denver, Colorado, New York City and her portraiture in Germany at a private exhibition.

Working with Zimbabwean volcanic stone, Maye was very aware that she was working from material "from across the world and across time." She was mentored by a Shona master, who helped her realize that the work was about the 'spaces in between.' The Shona people have no preconceptions about their art, no pre-set patterns. Instead they respond to the materials to guide them to the patterns that create the finished product.

"There's this line between whether we see trees as living or as a commodity," says Maye. "At the same time, we have to log to build our homes, but we're also concerned about what's happening to the planet. We really have to be conscious of what a precious place we have here, there just isn't much left in the world like this."

Since moving to Nakusp this year, Maye feels she has finally come home. She says she was born "accidentally" in Saskatchewan but feels she was really supposed to be born in BC. Maye had an exhibition at Alpha Guild Gallery in May and has wanted to leave the city for some time. She has since kept busy house- and pet-sitting and teaching art. Maye also does photography and

portraits of people and their pets as a means of earning a living.

"Your voice can get lost in the city. You feel really embraced in a community like Nakusp. People have been so helpful to me."

Studio Connexion is at 203 5th Avenue. The hours are Thursday and Friday 3-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday from 12-4 pm, but showings can also be arranged by appointment, phone 250-265-3586. The gallery's Christmas hours will be December 21 and 22 from 12-4 pm.

Maye's website is www.barbaramaye.com and examples of her work can be seen at www.artincanada.com/barbaramaye.

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