

Next up at Studio Connexion – 'Journey to the Butterfly,' a study in metamorphosis

submitted

The idea for Journey to the Butterfly started in the Studio Connexion art gallery itself.

"I was with Anne and Clark at Studio Connexion a couple of years ago," says Barbara Maye. "I was exchanging some soapstone carvings at the gallery and Clark mentioned how he liked my carvings that you could flip over."

He was referring to five stones that Maye had carved decade years ago – one of which the gallery owners had in their own collection. The comment planted a seed for Maye to revisit the 'flip stone' style of soapstone carvings. The year-long *Journey to the Butterfly* began.

Most of Barbara Maye's art is

informed by research before physical creation. With this collection, that research began with a mentorship with Mark McKay, a retired Revelstoke prospector and stone carver. With financial backing from GoFundMe supporters and a CKCA/CBT Major Projects Grant, Barbara and Mark headed into the mountains surrounding Revelstoke in hunt for soapstone.

Visiting 35 different soapstone sites on seven trips, the two became fast friends and fostered a mutual respect with the guidance of nature. As they discovered carving stone together, Barbara gained the appropriate permissions from active title owners to harvest a few. "Mark and I both feel strongly about

respecting the claim title owners of the places we visited."

Maye's unique 'flip stone' carvings can be lifted and reset in different resting positions to expose a completely new perspective.

"The act of touching the carvings ignites healing properties of the soapstone. The action of turning it echoes both the molten transformation of the rock and my handling of the stones during carving," she says. "The abstract forms engage the imagination as impressions of the familiar are revealed. How one interacts with the sculpture, and the condition and position it is left in then becomes the first experience of another."

But when Maye began carving for the show in the fall, a severe compression of the nerve at her cervical spine caused acute pain and mobility loss in her neck and right arm. "For a while, I couldn't even lift my arm to brush my hair."

Overwhelmed by fear and disappointment, it was her mentorship with Mark, the concept of the 'flip stones,' and the soapstone itself that reminded her to change her

perspective.

"Soapstone is the result of a metamorphosis. Like the transformation of a butterfly inside the chrysalis, it undergoes a complete physical restructuring if the right conditions are present – to recreate itself anew, more beautiful."

She determined to focused on what she could do and not what she had lost. She concentrated on her non-dominant arm and incorporated new tools to simplify the process.

The love of art persevered and beautiful stones became beautiful carvings. With new curiosity and encouragement from Anne at Studio Connexion, Barbara attempted both landscapes and left-handed painting for the first time – depicting loving

memories of mountain roads traveled during the mentorship. And as the art was created, so was the healing.

The first exhibition of Barbara's new works, *Tectonic Perspective: Journey to the Butterfly* will be at Studio Connexion Art Gallery in Nakusp June 2-20. The opening reception is June 5, 5-8 pm.

Social distancing guidelines mean people attending the gallery can't handle the stones as originally intended.

"But Anne and I will be happy to show everyone how the carvings can be transformed. It's still going to be magical," she says.

Studio Connexion is open by appointment only for now by calling 250-265-8888.

Rainer Krissler

Rainer Krissler born November 19th, 1937 passed on May 9th, 2020 at the Nakusp hospital in the presence of his wife, Gesila, children and family. We deeply appreciate all those from the hospital, friends and neighbours for their support and care.

Rainer spent endless hours with his wife and family in the surrounding mountains fishing,

hunting, collecting mushrooms and appreciating nature's offerings.

He worked very hard and had multiple true talents. He passed along to family upon retirement a very accomplished concrete finishing company that continues to this day in Kelowna.

He will be deeply missed by all for his endless energy to help family, neighbours and friends.

WHY LEAVES UNFURL

Leaves unfurl in spring due to cues set up the previous autumn: day length and temperature. Plants respond to longer nights by shutting down, forming hard casings that protect the buds in winter. In spring, there must be a sufficient number of consecutive warm days in a row for leaves to open. Hormones, temperature changes and water availability also trigger unfurling.

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