



Alberta
Society of
Artists

HIGHLIGHTS

Spring / Summer 2010—Issue 88

Recently I spent a memorable afternoon with Barbara Pankratz at her home in south Edmonton. Upon entering I was struck by an abundance of bright colour, art, books, and touches of nature from stones to driftwood, and especially apparent, bird and tree imagery.

I would see, during my visit, that almost every room of Barb's house is devoted to her art making. Barb's genre is paper and collage and as a member of the St Albert Paper Arts Guild, she spends one weekend a month at St Albert Place actually making paper. Using both the big hollander (to grind and masticate raw materials into workable fibers) and the hydraulic press



Passion for paper

story and photos

by Edie McIntyre

available there, she then returns to the comfort of her home to continue her art process, specifically to her "bedroom studio," a cozy room where a big willow bed predominates and a large window provides good lighting.



"This is where I live," she jokes, showing me a newly made cloth book, fabric dyed, the pages inside sewn and collaged. "Stuff is stacked up all over and I'm happy with the way it is." Long

forsaken are the frigid fifth floor SNAP studios in downtown Edmonton where, at times, she had to wear a toque and gloves while printmaking.

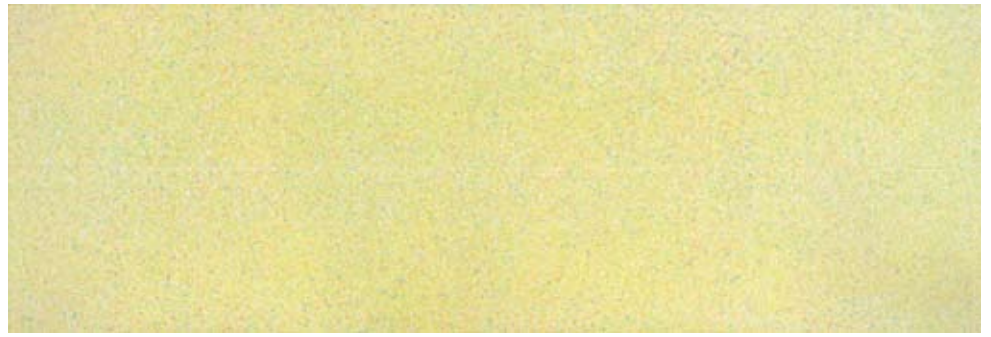
Exposed to art all her life, she learned to weave while living in Fort Smith then subsequently took courses in fiber arts at Grant MacEwan College from 1986-88. About six years ago she was kickstarted in the direction of collage after taking a course from Helena Hadala. She also credits early mentoring by Clyde Connell (1901-1998), the Louisianan sculptor whose mainstays were wood and paper.

Process is very important. At home Barb assembles paper and material that she has collected then folds, wrinkles, crushes, gesses, pastes, and sometimes washes before transforming it further by staining, painting and stamping, constantly experimenting, playing. After the treatments, "layers and layers of stuff

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Senior Alberta artist Harry Kiyooka's solo show is an elegant and understated exploration of the dimensions of time and space.

During a trip to India in 1997, the artist was taken with Hindu visions of the universe and the role of Brahma the god of creation. He explains that the life or presence of the gods is on a galactic



kalpa #28, kaurma

Time and space: Harry Kiyooka

by Greg Pyra

scale with a single day in the life of Brahma spanning more than four billion years. The challenge for Kiyooka was to visualize the immensity of time and space and our perceived notions of measuring these dimensions.

The sharply designated spots and spatters of paint in *The Kalpa Series—Slab Paintings* are strongly reminiscent of the stars on a clear dark night. Focus on one spot and you are drawn to a multitude of tiny dots—events really—layered in every direction.



kalpa #12

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War brides: One-way passage

by Bev Tosh

Bev Tosh's exhibition *War Brides: One-Way Passage* closed at the Glenbow Museum on Valentine's Day. The media had a heyday with the artwork (and with the women who generated it). The artist's previous opening on Remembrance Day had been sold out prompting another scheduling for December of 2009.

In January the Glenbow installation was the focus for a writers' workshop co-hosted by Alberta writer Aritha Van Herk and Bev Tosh. Following this success, the Rotary Club of Calgary honoured Bev in March with the Integrity Award to mark her unique artistic contributions.

The exhibition (a work-in-progress) has since been split. Twenty-two portraits and the textile components are currently on display at the Otago Settlers Museum in Dunedin, New Zealand (until late August) and seventy-two portraits have been installed at the Pima Museum in Tucson, Arizona (until mid-July). The installation in New Zealand brings it home, literally and emotionally for the artist, whose mother was a Canadian war bride to New Zealand.

"Once a teacher, always a teacher." Bev continues to share the stories that generate her artwork with diverse audiences—the saga continues...



How we communicate.



This past weekend I helped our ninety-one year old next door neighbour bond with his cell phone. (I've never owned one and I've used one *exactly* five times in my life). Twice I went over to his house to teach him how to use his new device. I really admired his spunk and I do hope that at age ninety-one I will have the same desire to keep learning about new technologies.

For ASA members, printed communications have been largely replaced with newer media (computers and email). Highlights is published only twice a year and cannot adequately tell members about all the ASA Calls for Submissions. If you want to stay in touch, reading the bi-monthly email newsletter is essential. Enews comes out on the first and third Monday.

There is no need for all the *technologically unconnected* to rush out and buy a computer. All libraries have Internet access and public computers to use. Email providers like Microsoft's Hotmail and Goggle's Gmail have free accounts that are very easy to set up and used from any computer. Librarians are trained to help you get started. (When you get your email account, email me at cwcarson@artists-society.ab.ca so I can update our databases).

On occasions when it is too cold or inconvenient to get to a library, phone an ASA member you know for updates on what is happening. Or you can always ask your neighbour! The email newsletter can be found on the ASA website (www.artists-society.ab.ca). From the homepage click on **ENEWS** and scroll down to the bottom of the page for the latest edition.

—Chris Carson

Why the ASA?

by Chris Carson

As artistic coordinator for the Alberta Society of Artists for over four years, I am interested in the how and the why artists become and – especially – remain ASA members. I emailed five questions to six members from across the province (Dale Beaven, Morry Katz, Larry Cromwell, Barbara Amos, Annette Ayre and Judy Hamilton) to help me better understand their reality as Alberta artists. Their answers point to many of the present day strengths of our organization

but also to some opportunities for growth.

The first question was *How did you first hear about the Alberta Society of Artists?* Five heard about the ASA through acquaintances and friends. Several knew ASA members, one was encouraged to apply after attending a membership drive organized by a senior ASA member and another was encouraged to apply by a prominent art professional who was also an ASA member. The sixth—and newest full member—found out about us by way of

Internet.

The second question was *Why did you decide to join the ASA?* The answers here point to attributes of the ASA, including the association's reputation, its historical importance and professional nature. Also mentioned was the sense of community or connectedness that our group provides. "I joined ASA so I could connect with other committed Alberta artists," answered one artist; another wrote, "ASA has a good reputation as an arts organization of long standing."

How long have you been a member for? was the third question. This was the scientific control question for this mini-survey. The members were equally divided over each of the last three decades. Some long term members and some newer members.

The fourth question *How much have you participated in ASA events?* pertained to level of involvement. Here again answers varied. One stated "Early on in my membership, I participated quite a lot in the



Barbara Amos with some of her art.

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A weekend to remember.

story and photos by Danielle LaBrie



L to R: Nadien Cole, Larry Cromwell, new member Evelyn Kolijn and Chris Carson. Top: group photo of the ASA AGM.

This year, the ASA Annual General Meeting and gala banquet was held April 23rd at *La joie de vivre*, run by The Servants Anonymous Society of Calgary. It was nice to see the ASA support a local charity in their choice of venue. Servants Anonymous gives young women, at risk of being sexually exploited, a chance to rebuild their lives within the community.

The AGM, chaired by Nadien Cole, began a little after eleven Saturday morning after the traditional counting of proxies and members to insure a quorum. Nadien welcomed members and acknowledged the work of volunteers before moving on to her president's report that

gave an overview of ASA activities. It was nice to see new faces mixed in with familiar ones, listening attentively to each report.

Well into the meeting, Larry Cromwell surprised us by asking us to stand for his education report. This was such a welcomed change, giving our chairs (and our derrières) a chance to cool off for ten or so minutes. It was, as well, a great opportunity to stretch our legs or to get that second cup of coffee or juice from the refreshments table.

AGM participants were treated to a copious lunch made particularly delightful

because it was also an opportunity to chat with other ASA members about what had been said during the first half of the meeting. There was so much to digest, everything from the financial reporting, to the TREX program, to the new ASA gallery (a clear winner in terms of interest that weekend I might add). Questions and comments from members were fortifying acknowledgements of the work done by Provincial Council and volunteers.

Elections were held near the end of the meeting and a hardy welcome was extended to David Harrison, the new ASA president for a two-year term. The AGM ended a little after



New ASA president for two-year term: David Harrison at the gala.

I want to focus on who we are as a group and what the ASA does.

I want to focus on communication, collaboration with others and celebrating the ASA's eightieth anniversary.



Two lovely ASA ladies, Linda Daoust (L) and Bonnie Scott (R) greeted guests as they entered the ASA gala banquet room.

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two in the afternoon, giving ASA members ample time to get ready for the gala evening affair set to take place in the same building.

Dave Casey took the podium as emcee for the gala, entertaining us with trivia and making introductions. Nadien Cole spoke of her experiences as president and presented gifts to volunteers. Two awards were given out—an honorary membership to the ASA was awarded to George Botchett (Edmonton) and another to Gary Sinclair (Calgary) for their continued service to the ASA.

As colourful images of artworks from new members danced on a large screen behind the podium to the music of a quartet, participants lined up for a buffet dinner. Some took this opportunity to visit the caricaturist Mark Cromwell at the far end of

the room. I noticed one couple walking away admiring their caricature, their faces lighting the dimly lit room with glee.

The guest speaker was Mary Beth Laviolette. She focused her talk on two past ASA members based on her recently curated exhibition of their works. **At the Crossroads: Helen Stadelbauer and Wes Irwin** could be viewed at the Triangle Gallery in Calgary.

I took the opportunity to speak to a few ASA members as I walked about the room with my camera. They all had varied and interesting comments about art, artists and, of course, what the ASA should or should not do.

Members were particularly interested with the Alberta Society of Artists Gallery, a site I was to visit the following day for the opening

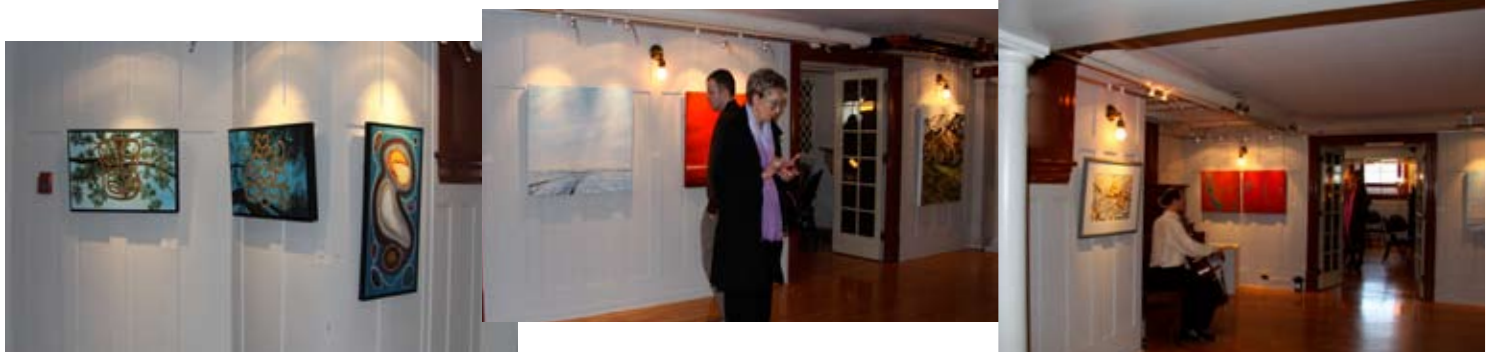
“I really enjoyed the AGM,” said Elizabeth Allen, “in particular, the presentation Les Pinter gave about the TREX’s program.”



Liz Allen at the gala.

of a new exhibit featuring the newly inducted into the Society. The ASA Gallery is situated in the basement of Lougheed House (see images below), a heritage building complete with restaurant and epoch rooms that speak of past glory days and prestige.

I thought that it was indeed fitting to highlight new members this way. In conjunction with the ASA AGM and the gala, this was an opportunity to introduce them to what the ASA does best (from numerous points of view) and to welcome them into the fold. Well done organizers!



Time and space: Harry Kiyooka

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kalpa #25, aghora

Kiyooka’s art takes on a cosmic scale, and the thin incised cuts, which run through the panel, emphasize the nature of the works as part of some larger whole.

The triptychs, including ***Kalpa Series #5*** and ***Kalpa Series #13***, are most successful for two reasons. First, the muted light grey colouration suggests a softness and fragility, which compliments the understated quality of the works. Second, the horizontal cuts, which carry onto adjacent panels, reinforce the artist’s vision of time and space as part of a continuum without a defined

beginning or end.

As a senior Canadian artist, Kiyooka continues to create serious works based on a lifetime of exploration into philosophy and conceptual art practice. The creative spirit takes unexpected turns and, for this reason, Kiyooka’s latest work is a departure from previous efforts. I expect that the artist has only begun his explorations of time and space through paint, and that the conceptual underpinning of his work will strengthen further.

"OMG, not another editorial!"

Danielle LaBrie, editor

It's not really. This is more about me (the editor) informing you (the reader) why Highlights ends up looking the way it does. Not all submissions, sent to me before the May 15th deadline, made the cut. I can just imagine half a dozen echoes, "But why? My information was just as important, just as relevant."

As editor, designer and writer for this publication, I have to make choices about relevancy—what I think readers might want to see and read. A text, for example, on how to take good digital photographs can readily be accessed via the Internet. It has, therefore, fewer reasons to exist within the limited space of this publication. Similarly,

a text that is nearly the same as texts published in previous issues has fewer chances of being relevant than newer and different stories. I look for interesting stories, well written content and good imagery because we represent the visual arts in this province (well, a portion of it, at least) and a good publication can go a long way in promoting art and artists.

Elements that stand out, the different, the out-of-the-ordinary concepts (the above title indicates, for example, that I'm not afraid to put to print today's trendier language) and current trends that can and will appeal to a diverse, connected and well-educated crowd of visual

artists and art lovers. With an increase to my budget this year, I can now get specific stories from writers and have writers re-write texts that are important but that need to be stated in fewer or different words.

We often talk about the importance of having a voice, but we are sometimes intimidated to express this voice in text. My aim is to facilitate this process for those who wish to contribute and share their work and artistic life with other Alberta artists or for those who want to comments about the status of art and artists in our society. I extend a special thank you to those who took the time to send me their words and images, making this issue of Highlights spectacular.

This non-editorial reflects the opinions of the editor and not of the Alberta Society of Artists, the Provincial Council or employees of the society.

Doris Charest's Internet experience



Doris with her students' art.

I would not have believed teaching art via the Internet possible, but I found out recently it worked quite well. Over a four month period, I gave weekend lessons in basic art techniques to students ages 12 to 17.

Students came primarily from rural areas (Plamondon, Peace River, Grande Prairie, Canmore, Airdrie and Okotoks) where art instruction is not readily available. Students were exposed to drawing, ink, watercolour, acrylic, oil, clay, and polymer clay by way of live video

demos from my Campus St. Jean venue.

While participating schools could see me simultaneously, I only saw one school at a time on my monitor. I kept the lessons fresh and interesting by showing videos of how other Alberta Francophone artists made art.

The sessions culminated with students producing two final projects to summarize what they had learned. Student's works were shown at the Centre d'arts visuels de l'Alberta, sponsor of this pilot program.

Why the ASA?

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ASA, but I don't do anything now." A couple of respondents stated that their personal situation (home or health) influences their involvement with the association. "Sometimes I look for things that would be interesting to do, other times (but) there are times I just need to be apart and uninvolved," shared one of the respondents.

The final question was *In your opinion what are the benefits of ASA membership?*

Almost all referred to the importance of "networking with like-minded people," and of "the sense of

community," some describing the ASA as "a lifeline to what's happening in the province and beyond." Some spoke of their pride in the organization and its standards: "Putting 'ASA' after my name is most gratifying." Many commented on the importance of ASA programs, especially the shows and travelling exhibitions, educational opportunities, etc. One artist remarked, "I can exhibit my work in various shows and not have to belong to a gallery."

"As is the case for any volunteer organization," wrote another, "you only get out of it what you are willing to put in." While I designed these questions to examine the

positive attributes of the ASA, I was also interested to see if some would write about how the ASA could improve. One artist replied that "Artists need to be heard as a group." That is definitely important and at times we don't seem to take it seriously enough. We need organizations that speak to the provincial and municipal levels of government. And, the ASA offers that opportunity.

A non-profit organization like the Alberta Society of Artists is a group of like-minded people. My job as Artistic Coordinator is to make you, as members, feel more connected. Any ideas on how we can improve in this would be greatly appreciated. Please send your comments and ideas to cwcarson@artists-society.ab.ca.

will be ripped up and used in collage." No longer a purist, Barb does use paper other than her own. Since the demise of the Imagination Market (a wonderful resource for odd papers), she has had to look to other sources; currently she is quite excited about using deli papers.



Barbara Pankratz

This pattern of construction/deconstruction resonates throughout her work. "Wabi Sabi has been part of my life for some time now," she remarked during our visit. A Japanese aesthetic, Wabi Sabi is a way of life that finds beauty in the impermanence of nature. It's about the acceptance of transience, the appreciation and awareness of natural processes. "All of my work is informed by nature. I've always considered the forest to be important. When you go into the forest, you just don't see the ground and trees. The forest is decomposing all the time. To me, that's important—the change. When you look at the detritus of the world, there is beauty there."

It was while traveling with her husband through northern forests that she decided to embark on an ambitious project resulting in her most notable work to date: *Spirits of the Boreal* consists of six towering figures and five tree groupings. The figures were constructed from foamcore and were covered with her handmade paper, each one distinct with a name, a face and hands. The tree saplings were embellished with copper wire, patina and handmade paper. The project took months to

complete and was shown first in the spring of 1995 at the Works Festival in Edmonton.

The figures were sent back into the forest (Maureen Harvey's farm) to decompose in 1999. Over time Barb recorded the way the entities were devolving and interacting with nature. An Alberta Foundation for the Arts project grant helped her get the documentation together and the work was shown at the SNAP gallery in 2003. Barb created ten different boxes. Each holds an edition of twenty images, which

Passion for paper

continued from cover page

includes digital prints as well as photo etchings all done on her handmade paper. The project also included 32 very large photo etchings. She made one more figure and, several years later, this last remaining entity inhabits a small storage room in her home surrounded by the very materials from which it was built. The work has since showed at the Alberta Craft Council and Profiles Gallery in St. Albert. The AFA has acquired one of the boxes as well as an opera coat that she and a friend had constructed entirely out of paper in conjunction with the opera *Filomena*.

Barb is also a member of the Edmonton Calligraphic Society. She says she enjoys using words in her work but not necessarily for their context; she is thoroughly looking forward to a fall workshop *Lettering as Texture* offered by Julian Waters. "This is totally where I come from. I don't like the lettering to be what it's about. I want everything to be incorporated and come back to all the layers. Layering is really what I'm all about. I think we're all a bunch of onions to be peeled."

When Barb does use words in her work she prefers them to be her own. She says that she admires the poems of Rilke, Rumi and e.e. cummings, but when the words are hers she has a more successful piece, "it's part of the

purist coming out...it's all mine." She notes that a framed collage nearby, an inspiration piece done twenty years ago, still holds true.

Barb readily admits that she is "addicted to books;" there are art books everywhere in her home but her present interest is in "the book as Art." She is a member of the Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild (CBBAG). The making of books as art objects allows for a fusion of all her interests: papermaking, collage, calligraphy and poetry. She says she

is excited about planning her work for a fall show at the Bruce Peel library, loosely themed, *What is a Book?*

After celebrating a certain birthday recently, Barb said she had an epiphany: "I am quite adamant that my life is about art making. I only have so much of it left and that's what I plan to do. Again it comes down to a definition of art making. It doesn't have to be my claim to fame. It's just something that I get to do that makes me happy."



figure by Barb

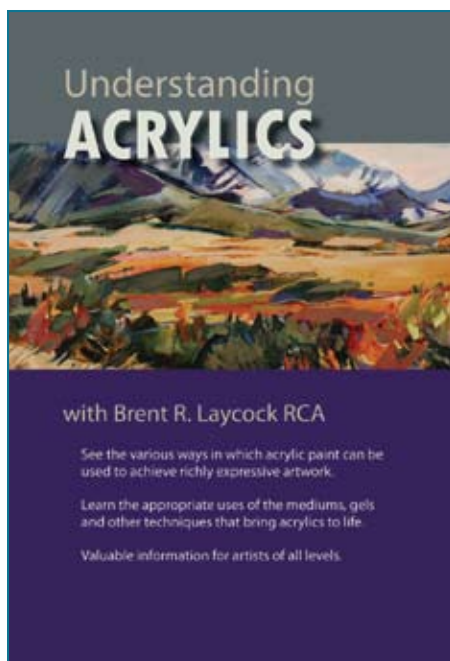
Laycock exhibitions in 2010

In March 2010, the West End Gallery in Edmonton presented an exhibition entitled *Spirit of the Land*, consisting of about twenty-five new acrylic landscapes by Brent R. Laycock. These works depicted various locations in southern Alberta (in all seasons) and ranged in sizes from 12 x 16 inches to 4 x 6 feet.

To coincide with July 1st, Brent will present another exhibition at the Gust Gallery in Waterton Lakes National Park. This collection will contain both acrylics and watercolours. On November 13, 2010, a new exhibition of landscape acrylics will open at the Wallace Galleries in Calgary.



Brent Laycock, *Parkland pond*, acrylic, 2010



New acrylic instructional DVD by Brent Laycock

Brent is pleased to announce the release of a new instructional DVD entitled *Understanding Acrylics* produced by WhitePine Productions. The DVD features four sections: mixing acrylics with water; mixing acrylics with polymer medium for transparent effects; mixing acrylics with white for opaque effects; and putting it all together. Each section is accompanied by clear instructions and demonstrations. The final demo shows how all the basic acrylic techniques are used to complete a painting. The DVD gives viewers a candid glimpse into Laycock's unique style of landscape painting. The retail cost of the DVD is \$45 and it can be purchased from various art supply stores or online at www.whitepineproductions.ca or www.brentlaycock.com.

HIGHLIGHTS Editor

Danielle LaBrie

highlights@artists-society.ab.ca

ENEWS Editor

(position vacant as of May 1, 2010)

enews@artists-society.ab.ca

ASA OFFICES

Calgary

3rd Floor, 1235 26th Ave, SE

Calgary, AB T2G 1R7

Tel: (1) 403 262 4669

Fax: (1) 403 463 4610

south@artists-society.ab.ca

Edmonton

Box 11334, Main P.O.

Edmonton, AB T5J 3K6

Tel: (1) 780 426 0072

Fax: (1) 780 420 0944

north@artists-society.ab.ca

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