ARTiculate

SPRING/SUMMER 2016

TOGETHERNESS: WOMEN'S ART COLLABORATIVE, IRWIN & THE RETRO GIRLS, MADE ON MONDAY
IMBIBE: PAMELA NAGLEY STEVENSON

WILD THING: STEPHANIE KELLETT
FOCUS ON YOUTH FESTIVAL
GUSHUL STUDIO RESIDENCY

ARTS & HERITAGE NEWS
PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR ART, PART II
Together We Are the Trust
Columbia Basin Trust supports the ideas and efforts of the people in the Columbia Basin.

We take our lead from residents and communities. Whatever the situation calls for, we adapt our role: from providing resources, to bringing people together, to leading an entire initiative. The Trust is here to offer experience and support to all Basin residents.

While our range of services, programs, initiatives and financial investments is extensive, our purpose is straightforward: we exist and act for the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Columbia Basin—now and for generations to come.

cbt.org/arts

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Given our mountain valley geography, physical connection with like-minded others can present challenges. Many of the artists we feature in this issue have found ways to come together, physical and otherwise. These days, art and the Internet are far from mutually exclusive. In fact, sharing our work in the virtual universe has become a rich and valid means of building community and receiving affirmation and feedback for the work that we are pursuing.

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AMANDA STRONG AT OXYGEN AND LANGHAM

Originating from Métis and mixed blood, Amanda Strong’s work centres around blood memory and indigenous ideologies. Her artistic background is rooted in photography, illustration and media, which extend into her recent stop-motion animations. *Indi* and *Me*! challenge conventional structures of storytelling in cinema and have screened internationally, most notably at Cannes, TIFF, VIFF and the Ottwa International Animation Festival.

The detail and layers of these animations are often lost via two-dimensional and screened formats. Amanda’s current curiosity lies in extrapolating the process of the animations to exist in dimensional and screened formats. Amanda’s current project for Langham Cultural Centre this summer will explore *Mia*! via a display of puppets, props and some set elements, in addition to a projected reel of animated works.

Amanda’s new work will capture the attention and imagination of local youth, as her practice is a successful marriage of traditional (stop-motion) and new media and technological savvy, very much the currency of the target audience. Amanda’s perspective is important in rural settings such as Nelson where cultural diversity and diverse forms of expression are relatively few compared to large urban centres.

Amanda Strong, Oxygen Art Centre, Nelson, June 4 to July 3, opening night June 3, 7–9 pm. Langham Cultural Centre, Kaslo, July 9 to September 4, opening night July 8, 7–9 pm.

THE VALLCAN WHOLE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Forty-five years and counting

by Moe Lyons

The Vallican Whole Community Centre, lovingly referred to as the Whole, is a shining example of the old adage that life begins at 40.

Back in the day, idealistic young people moving to the Slocan Valley realized that they needed a community centre of their own. Raising the centre from the ground up helped to build community, and as women, children and men worked side by side, they learned many of the skills they then applied to building their own homes.

For many years the Whole was home to a community school, which eventually outgrew the space and moved to a new location in Winlaw. The Rural Alternatives Research and Training Society (RARTS), the organization that oversees the building, then had more flexibility to host workshops and events, and to collaborate with other organizations. In the past, RARTS had been instrumental in the creation of the Durnam Creek Burial Society and the Slocan Valley Seniors Housing Society.

Nearly five years ago the Whole celebrated its 40th birthday with a big community party, marking the first four decades of its rich and varied life. Soon after, work began on major renovations and the building is now ready to enter a new era.

Starting off with style, the Whole sponsored its first three-part cultural series this year: a Valentine’s cabaret, and performances by vocalists the Whole sponsored its first three-part cultural series this year: a Valentine’s cabaret, and performances by vocalists the Whole will host an afternoon tea featuring the Wind River Quartet series this year: a Valentine’s cabaret, and performances by vocalists the Whole will host an afternoon tea featuring the Wind River Quartet this year: a Valentine’s cabaret, and performances by vocalists the Whole will host an afternoon tea featuring the Wind River Quartet.

Looking to the future, the Whole is planning to find in a larger urban centre. As one Valentine’s cabaret attendee said, “When he heard the mix on playback, I wished I could have videoed his reaction.”

Green was produced by Nanaimo-based Jordan at Bill Noble’s Straw Bale Studio in Golden. A huge part of the CD project involved looking for opportunities to add benefits to youth and community, key directions for the Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance (CKCA) grant that helped to finance the recording. John describes the studio sessions as “a massive mentoring process.”

Still wanting to maintain a representation of their live sound on record, John realized that the sky’s the limit in the studio. He added some new band members, including David Stonehouse on banjo, producer John Stringer on percussion and cajon, and 14-year-old Slade Coffman on guitar and vocals. Slade also co-wrote one of the songs for the CD with John, who is his guitar teacher. “He can really sing,” says John. “When he heard the mix on playback, I wished I could have videoed his reaction.”

Green tells a story of human rights and the enduring perseverance of the Slocan Valley’s favourite singing duos, and by classical guitarist Jackson Baker, describe themselves as weekend warriors. Three-quarters of the way through mixing their new CD, Green, John (kick drum, snare, high hat, guitar and vocals—it’s easy to understand how he played as a one-man band for two years) and Jackson (bass and vocals) have been playing live shows and preparing for their CD release party in Golden in early May. “We’ve turned into a power trio of two,” says John. “We can perform in a variety of venues and we can fit into a Toyota Matrix!”

John went into the studio last fall with a vision for a new collaboration. “I was trying to get away from my usual country heartbreak tunes with some fun, danceable music,” he says. Still wanting to maintain a representation of their live sound on Green, John realized that the sky’s the limit in the studio. He added some new band members, including David Stonehouse on banjo, producer John Stringer on percussion and cajon, and 14-year-old Slade Coffman on guitar and vocals. Slade also co-wrote one of the songs for the CD with John, who is his guitar teacher. “He can really sing,” says John. “When he heard the mix on playback, I wished I could have videoed his reaction.”

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John Jenkins’ Smalltown Revival

by Margaret Tessman

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John Jenkins’ Smalltown Revival

John Jenkins and Jackson Baker lay down a cool tune. Photo: Jan Kotyk
Golden. It soon became apparent that there were no community
majority moved immediately to the United States but 50 settled in
Canada was built in Golden. What is certain is that between 1904
It has long been believed that the first Sikh temple or gurdwara in
and sawmill.
boom of people in the lumberyard, planer
military contingent travelling to the coronation of Edward VII.
The first Sikhs came to Canada in 1902 as part of a Hong Kong
stories of an attractive land waiting to be settled by British subjects.
Canada on their way home, these soldiers returned to India with
In 1897 Queen Victoria invited her South Asian troops from India
to attend her Diamond Jubilee celebrations in London. Crossing
•  Research assistance
•  Instructive events for
•  Extensive children’s programs
•  Instructional events for
•  Research assistance
...and books!

"Libraries are not made; they grow"
Augustine Birrell

Your local library has much to offer...
• 24/7 Online access to a vast collection of information, audio and e-books
• Support for literacy and to the print disabled
• Free onsite internet access
• Extensive children’s programs
• Instructional events for personal learning
• Research assistance

The challenge for the museum is photo documentation. Although
there were four or five photo studios in Fernie at the time and some
travelling photographers, Hosmer was an exception. “The community
there was so briefly, it didn’t have its own photographer,” says Ron.
The museum is appealing to the community and ex-community
members to donate relevant artifacts for the exhibition.
“Research like this allows us to put the present into context,”
says Ron. “We’ve been through this and survived it before.”
Fernie Museum, 491 2nd Avenue, 250-423-7016, ferniemuseum.com

A new exhibition at the Fernie Museum will examine Howser,
how a boom-and-bust mining town in the Crowsnest Pass, and place its
history in the context of present-day extraction industries.
In the early years of the 20th century, communities sprang up across
the Crowsnest coalfield with great hopes and aspirations. Howser,
Montrose, Corbin and Frank were just some of the towns that
appeared on the map as exploration and mining boomed in the
region. These were not small communities. For example, Montrose
at one time had a population of 1,100.
The Howser mine is an example of a stereotypical boom-and-bust
town. “In the case of Howser, we’re looking at the history of the early
mining exploration that led to coal mining and coking,”
says museum director and curator Ron Ulrich. “Once workers got into
the mine, it turned out that the gross yield was quite high, but the net
yield after processing costs were factored in was substantially lower.”
In 1913 a recession hit and the bottom dropped out of the coal
market. The problem was made worse by the high cost of moving coal
to market. Workers were given four to six months’ notice before the
mines closed, in the case of Fernie, half the workforce was laid off.
“The mine closures are one reason why the Elk Valley had such high
numbers of men going to war in 1914,” says Ron.
The big questions for the museum researchers are how did 1,300
people create a community and what happened after the layoffs? One
long-time resident, Mr. Fink, has donated items to the museum, and
the work of early researchers Fred Lightfoot and Margaret Kennedy
will supplement existing archival sources.
These include the Howser Times, which published from 1910 to 1913,
and a Howser map, hotel register and police blotter.

“Tides of Fortune: A Community History of Howser”
by Margaret Tesman

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Art Gallery of Golden Studio
Gift Shop

A true reflection of our western mountain culture…direct from the
artist to you. Please come in and browse our selection of fine art and
home-grown gifts that give everyday pleasure and support the community.

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and enrich the cultural life of Kicking Horse Country.
Find us downtown next to the CIBC at 516 9th Ave. N.
VISIT US AT KICKINGHORSECULTURE.CA

Owned and operated by Kicking Horse Culture – a not-for-profit community arts council.

To learn more about our programmes and get involved, visit our website at:
www.kickinghorseculture.ca

Kootenay Gallery

120 Heritage Way. Castlegar, BC 250.365.3337 | kootenaygallery.com

The Kootenay Gallery is dedicated to the promotion of the visual arts in the Kootenays.
We are a not-for-profit, volunteer run gallery, administered by the Kootenay Gallery Society.

Kootenay Gallery presents diverse and stimulating exhibitions throughout the year.
Our permanent exhibition features work by local artists and traditional First Nations artists.

Kootenay Gallery offers a range of services and programs to the community.
We are open Tuesday to Saturday 10am - 5pm, and welcome everyone.

Kootenay Gallery Homegrown Gifts

Homegrown Gifts.
Unique Gifts.
Artistic Gifts.
Hand Crafted.
Unique."
IMBIBE: VESSELS OF ILLUMINATION

by Anne DeGrace
photographs by Jeremy Addington

It’s the early 1960s, and a young girl who should be in bed is hiding behind the living room door listening to philosophers, monks, saddhus and other thinkers discuss the world through the lenses of history, ethics and spirituality. The evening’s host is the girl’s father, a professor of philosophy at the University of Hawaii, who will later take his daughter with him on sabbaticals around the world. One day she will let these experiences shape the pots she throws.

“When I grew up and fell in love with clay, I was always looking for the historical roots behind form,” explains artist Pamela Nagley Stevenson, whose newest body of work, entitled IMBIBE: Vessels of Illumination, is now touring Kootenay galleries.

An intensive investigation into human history through the ceremonial drinking cup, IMBIBE is also the culmination of a lifetime of inquiry and two years of dedicated research. Through the journey Pamela discovered a shared visual language across time and cultures. Clay, an ancient medium for art and function, was the perfect vehicle.

As commonalities emerged across disparate cultures, Pamela’s creative expression was being revealed. “Every firing is an offering. Each piece of wood that goes into the kiln, one Gaza vessel was cracked right through—in half,” she says. “One that represented a later time period made it, however. ‘There were so many mysteries.’ Just one Canadian vessel survived, referencing the Onieda people in the Great Lakes region, although the North American first peoples are represented through cups from other regions.

Every project must begin somewhere, and Pamela’s began with a dream: a mala in which every bead was a cup; a world family of drinking vessels. It was a beautiful marriage of the philosophies and sacred texts she was introduced to through her father and her chosen form of artistic expression.

The cups themselves are contemporary interpretations of traditional forms and symbols, and they span centuries—from the Neolithic era to pre-Industrial Revolution—and continents. Every vessel references an actual artifact, specific to date and place, and exemplifies a golden age of ceramics for that era. Within that framework, Pamela allowed herself space for artistic discovery.

For each cup, Pamela immersed herself in the place and the time, poring over museum artifacts and regional histories in books and online. She tried to absorb the culture and let it influence her hands. Listening to music such as Ethiopian or Tibetan, “I let that inform my sense of place,” she says. As she did she began to see connections. Indian ragas, for example, embody the mathematical golden ratio, and in African music, “There are syncopated rhythms that you can see in the patterns in art.” A universal kinship in creative expression was being revealed.

As commonalities emerged across disparate cultures, Pamela’s excitement grew, so much so that at times she couldn’t sleep—and when she did, she’d dream. “I made pots even when I was sleeping,” she says.

The decision to allow herself the freedom of interpretation elevates the work from reproduction to artistic, personal exploration. Surface imagery honours the iconography of the world’s great faiths and philosophies, with resulting amalgams that are unique. Explains Pamela, “You can see spirit a hundred ways in a hundred different cultures and the symbols will be similar, will embrace the same essence.”

A single shared liner glaze for the interior of each vessel represents “our essential unity as one human family. One intention, one family of cups with one glaze, one essence, one vision, one firing, one chance, one life, one offering,” she says.

Firing the pots together at once was “an act of faith,” Pamela explains. “Every firing is an offering. Each piece of wood that goes into the fire is a prayer, an intention.”

Pamela Nagley Stevenson invites us to sip from the cup of time

Pamela Nagley Stevenson is a professor of philosophy at the University of Hawaii, who will later take his daughter with him on sabbaticals around the world. One day she will let these experiences shape the pots she throws.

As an instructor at Kootenay School of the Arts for 17 years, Pamela told her students stories of history through the pots they studied. “If history was taught by the art people made, rather than the wars told her students stories of history through the pots they studied.

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Pamela worked with photographer Jeremy Addington to document the body of work, and this resulted in a beautiful book named for the exhibition entitled IMBIBE: Heads of Illumination. The book, like the exhibition, is an invitation to take a historical and geographic journey through a celebration of a basic human act: to drink, replenish, restore and honour.

Through the artistic approach closest to her heart, Pamela invites us to imbibe in our collective humanity. IMBIBE premieres at the Kootenay Gallery of Art in Castlegar on June 17, 2016. In August it moves to the Grand Forks Gallery, where it will remain on exhibition until November.

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IMBIBE: Vessels of Illumination
Finding Our Way Back Home is her latest body of work. Inspired by a three-week excursion during which she followed one of British Columbia’s largest recorded sockeye salmon runs, the series begins where the salmon break from the Fraser River, then head west into the teal blue waters of the Chilcotin River system between Bella Coola and Williams Lake. Each painting depicts key moments along the migration route that flows over the vast, mountainous terrain from Bella Coola to Chilko Lake. During this time she camped in remote areas where dozens of grizzly bears had gathered, also drawn by the abundance of salmon. She admits that being in the presence of such powerful creatures can be scary at times, but says that deep wilderness immersion makes her a better artist by sharpening her senses.

“Broken Wings Cannot Fly,” her first exhibition of acrylic paintings, was shown at OurGlass Studio in Nelson in August 2010. Selling most of the pieces in the show validated the time she spent honing her skills. Since then, Stephanie has become a force in the Kootenay art scene and beyond. She has had numerous café showings throughout the region; participated in group exhibitions at Touchstones Nelson and the Kootenay Gallery in Castlegar; was a muralist in two of Penticton’s street arts festivals and ArtWells; has created interactive installations incorporating metal sculpture for Shambhala Music Festival and Burning Man; and has hosted several single-night multimedia pop-up gallery events that include paintings, sculpture, video, music and dancing, all centred around a specific theme. Two illustrated collections of essays for this writer are under her belt, and in 2014 Stephanie organized the massive Winlaw Mural Project, a collaboration with her favourite local artists Vanessa Bate, Mogli Squalor, Pixie Johnson and Bubzee, a group of women whom she considers the “new wave” of place-based artists in the Slocan Valley. “I chose to work with those women not only for their artistic skill and sensitivity, but also for their way of being on the land.”

On Kellett’s horizon is a larger body of work that begins where Finding Our Way Back Home ended. Ten more paintings will be created, expanding the series to 20 pieces. Fittingly, Stephanie intends to call the series Landscape, Migration and Wildness. The exhibition is scheduled for viewing at Pynelogs Cultural Centre and Art Gallery in Invermere in September, and at the VISAC Gallery in Trail in January 2017.

To see more of Stephanie Kellett’s art, visit her website, stephkellett.com, Robert E. Livingood resides in the Slocan Valley. He is a writer, grizzly bear researcher and music producer/DJ who performs as The Sugarbear. His latest book, In Wonder and Warpaint, was illustrated by Stephanie Kellett and is available on Amazon. Visit his blog at thedevilsclub.blogspot.com.

by Robert E. Livingood

Encountering the work of Stephanie Kellett immediately gives one a sense of her wild vision. She uses a variety of mediums such as acrylic paint, oil pastel and pen and ink to render both landscape and its non-human inhabitants with a sensitivity derived from experiencing them up close.

Finding Our Way Back Home is her latest body of work. Inspired by a three-week excursion during which she followed one of British Columbia’s largest recorded sockeye salmon runs, the series begins where the salmon break from the Fraser River, then head west into the teal blue waters of the Chilcotin River system between Bella Coola and Williams Lake. Each painting depicts key moments along the migration route that flows over the vast, semi-arid Chilcotin Plateau. She chose to paint this section of the route not only for its stunning aesthetic qualities, but also for its ecological richness. “It’s one of the only dry-land ecosystems left in North America with all of its pieces still intact—largely due to the Tillhopt to First Nation’s effort to maintain it,” Stephanie explains. “That facet was crucial in choosing a place to work.”

Unlike plein-air painters, the artist doesn’t create on site. “I’ll take reference photos and jot down some notes, but I don’t produce while I’m on a trip. When I’m out there it’s more about having a direct experience with the place. The inevitable result is art, but I have to really feel it before I can paint it.”

To gather material, Stephanie spent days at various points on the riverbank observing tens of thousands of sockeye salmon persevere against baffling odds as they swim toward their place of origin, Chilko Lake. During this time she camped in remote areas where dozens of grizzly bears had gathered, also drawn by the abundance of salmon. She admits that being in the presence of such powerful animals can be scary at times, but says that deep wilderness immersion makes her a better artist by sharpening her senses.

Her direct experience with nature’s raw beauty is evident in her work. To gather material, Stephanie spent days at various points on the riverbank observing tens of thousands of sockeye salmon persevere against baffling odds as they swim toward their place of origin, Chilko Lake. During this time she camped in remote areas where dozens of grizzly bears had gathered, also drawn by the abundance of salmon. She admits that being in the presence of such powerful animals can be scary at times, but says that deep wilderness immersion makes her a better artist by sharpening her senses.

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In B.C., Eileen observes, “we have closed-in valleys with so many montane environment, where prairie juts up against alpine. the vastness, expansiveness and diversity of the surrounding Studio in Crowsnest Pass, both women enthusiastically embraced within the landscape.” As month-long residents of the Gushul that she was immediately drawn in by “the patterns, repeated shapes that she was immediately drawn in by “the patterns, repeated shapes in all their autumnal splendour, her cohort, Eileen Gidman, says that she was immediately drawn in by “the patterns, repeated shapes within the landscape.” As month-long residents of the Gushul Studio in Crowsnest Pass, both women enthusiastically embraced the vastness, expansiveness and diversity of the surrounding montane environment, where prairie juts up against alpine. “In B.C.,” Eileen observes, “we have closed-in valleys with so many trees. In Crowsnest, it’s more open but also everything seemed tortured by the wind.” The wind didn’t deter the two women, however, from venturing every day to paint outdoors, although Karen describes having to sit closer to the ground for protection. Acquainted and renovated by the University of Lethbridge in 1991, the Gushul Studio is the original home and atelier of renowned photographer Thomas Gushul (1891–1962), who emigrated from the Ukraine with his wife, Lena, in 1906. Thousands of Gushul’s black and white photographs that depict the lives of Canada’s earliest immigrants and the coal mining industry, with the stunning Crowsnest scenery as a backdrop, are housed in the archives of Calgary’s Glenbow Museum and the Crowsnest Museum. “I felt so honoured to have been able to stay there,” Karen says. “I loved the historical connection of the studio to Thomas Gushul,” Eileen agrees. “We met lots of people who knew the Gushuls.” A registered historic resource, the studio fulfills an indispensable role in promoting culture and artistic expression in the community. The gallery gift store features the work of over 50 artists. More recently, an Artists’ Collective, with some artists sharing studio space in historic downtown Coleman, has formed. It was at a Collective creative minds brainstorming session that I met Eileen and Karen, and where they, in turn, became immersed in the local arts scene. “We’ve applied for another residency in 2017,” Eileen says. In the meantime, they’re staying connected with Collective artists through social media.

Eileen and Karen resided during September of 2015. Managed by the Gushul Residency Program Committee, the residency attracts artists from across the globe. Steeped in history, the Gushul Studio and the thousands of images it generated are a testimony to the resilience of Crowsnest residents. No strangers to tragedy, in 1903 and 1914 respectively, many residents lost their lives in the Frank Slide and Hillcreek Mine disasters. More recently, the Lost Creek fire of 2003 forced the evacuation of Hillcreek Mines and Blairmore residents, including the artists at the studio. Venturing beyond the eastern boundary of Crowsnest Pass to paint on the rangelands of neighbouring Municipal District of Pincher Creek, Karen and Eileen encountered firsthand the resiliency of the people native to the front ranges of the Rockies. “The ranchers were just so obliging, accommodating to our requests to set up our easels on their rangeland as long as we assured them that we’d keep the cattle gate shut,” says Karen. “I just found something so sturdy and resilient about them.” She compared them to the 100-year-old grey weather-beaten outbuildings that litter the rangeland and often formed the focal point in a landscape composition. When applying for the residency the two women already knew they would get along, as they’d both trained and worked as nursing practitioners at the same hospital in Creston, and at one time even job shared. Since leaving their profession to pursue vocations as landscape artists, Karen and Eileen have been drawing upon the experience and energy of other artists in honing their craft. At Emily Carr University of Art + Design in Vancouver, where Eileen earned her four-year fine arts certificate, she was introduced to the rigours of the work of Carr and the Group of Seven,” Eileen says. Karen, on the other hand, attributes the development of her unique style and technique in painting to two American watercolour artists: Zoltan Szabo (1928–2003), who many refer to as the father of watercolour painting; and Katherine Haynes (1926–2007) from Bonner’s Ferry, Idaho, under whose tutelage Karen worked for 14 years. Their shared residency at Gushul culminated, according to Karen, “in a synergy that can only be experienced from being with another person.” Even the studio’s proximity to the railroad tracks in Blairmore ignited their imaginations. “After a while you could tell who was driving the train based on how he blew the whistle and we imagined drawing upon those individual train whistles in painting each of the conductors’ portraits,” says Eileen. When I asked Karen and Eileen to identify the amenities that Gushul Studio has to offer residents, both women emphasized the local artists and arts organizations. The Crowsnest Pass Art Gallery in Frank, funded largely by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, fulfills an indispensable role in promoting culture and artistic expression in the community. The gallery gift store features the work of over 50 artists. More recently, an Artists’ Collective, with some artists sharing studio space in historic downtown Coleman, has formed. It was at a Collective creative minds brainstorming session that I met Eileen and Karen, and where they, in turn, became immersed in the local arts scene. “We’ve applied for another residency in 2017,” Eileen says. In the meantime, they’re staying connected with Collective artists through social media.

Barbara D. Janusz is a Crowsnest Pass-based writer and the author of the novel Mirrored in the Caves.
Sue Kelly is a fabric artist from Sebastopol, California. Asked why she decided to participate in the Made on Monday project, she explained: “I thought, five inches square, that’s a manageable size and a task well beyond my abilities. One morning, as I was enjoying a casual scroll through Facebook, I came upon a picture of a collection of exquisite yarn- and thread-covered balls—temari. I visited the artist’s website, forwarded the link to my friend in England and, within days, India Tresselt was commissioned to complete the work on his project. Not only that, but Tresselt is now a MoM contributor, using her yarns to create complex and intriguing two-dimensional pieces.

“I simply wouldn’t have any audience for my art—beyond my friends and family—without social media and the Internet,” writes Tresselt. “In the three years that I’ve been active with an artist page on Facebook, an Etsy shop, and now my own website. I have developed a worldwide audience for my work and found an international network of artists who inspire and encourage me. I have been mentored and encouraged to pursue my art in a way that would never have been possible without social media.”

Emma Siedle-Collins lives off the beaten track on the Isle of Skye and when she is not busy running her holiday B&B, she is at work in her art studio. Like many of the MoM participants she joined the project because she finds the weekly challenge gives her something to focus on and keep her engaged. When I asked her about her experiences with social media, she replied: “Facebook is an excellent way of communicating, of staying in touch. Working in a rural area, I can still have access to groups who share my interests, receive information about exhibitions and even visit them virtually. It can be very distracting with too much inspiration sometimes, but I wouldn’t be part of this MoM group without social media.”

Clearly, as portals to like-minded people, inspiration and a global audience, social media provide invaluable tools. With no geographical or cultural barriers to limit access, the Internet allows individuals living in small or isolated communities to participate in the world’s largest think tank. But like most things, moderation is the key—after all, we still need time to create something worth sharing.

Made on Monday is an ongoing project and, despite what appears to be a preponderance of women and textile artists, all artists—painters, sketchers, collage makers, stained glass artists, photographers—are invited to join in anytime. To find out more, visit katebridgerwix.com/madeonmonday.
Making second-hand art
by Alison Masters

One thing led to another. Blame it on good cheer at New Year's. Blame it on Andrea's dress from Gleaners. Blame it on a little idea igniting like a firecracker and exploding in a million directions. Idea: Take the outdated, the outlandish, the terribly polyester clothing from Creston's beloved Gleaners thrift store. Use it as inspiration for an art exhibit.

Signing up: Four friends, each with her own strong art practice: Andrea Revoy, potter, creator of Curio du Pouler and keen Gleaners volunteer; Sandy Kunze, painter/potter, creative mind behind the Art Bus, the Statue of Liberty necklace and numerous community art shows and projects; Alison Bjorkman, portra, creator of reupholstered furniture and co-owner of Puffin Design; Alison Masters, painter with an upcoming show, Little Houses in a Large Landscape.

Fun concept, talented artists, great materials but no home. The artists found themselves at the Creston Museum requesting space. Did they hear right? Could they take over the museum for a month, weaving their work through the museum installations? "Just don't break anything," said Tammy Hardwick, curator.

Next lucky break, the appearance of an art collection looking to move, an art collection looking for a home. Forty works by Irwin Croswait, weaving space and hanging. Could they help? Born and raised in Creston until age 14, Croswait lived and worked in Paris. He was a fashion illustrator in the 1950s and 1960s but was also known for his abstract painting. The Gleaners-inspired project joined forces with the Creston Art Bus to give life to Irwin Croswait retrospective. Irwin & the Retro Girls was born.

All fluff and no substance, because really, what were they going to do with all of that clothing? As one of the Retro Girls soberly remarked, "Unfortunately we don't know how to sew." Meanwhile, Andrea's basement was filling with bridesmaid dresses, chiffon negliges and clothing labeled "100% virgin acrylic." She was soon going to drown in a quicksand of clothing.

A year of play dates had added up to some fun experiments with cement and duct tape, some great lunches, but nothing to show. It was time to get serious. Sandy dove in deep, brushed off childhood sewing skills and taught herself how to apply snaps from crestomuseum.ca. Andrea, buried deep in the volume of clothing, pulled herself out, one chiffon nightie at a time. Lampshades they became, as cheeky and pastel as they had ever been as nightwear.

So it is that the artistic process unfolds. Artists experience ignition with an idea that sizzles and is multiplied by their combined energy. Then the real work begins as each artist untangles imagination and reality and follows the ups and downs of her own pathway. Somewhere along the route, each artist found what she needed and new life crept into the old stuff. The alchemy of making art, a mixture of magic and hard work, began to happen. Irwin and the girls did a happy dance. It was finally coming together.

Irwin & the Retro Girls, June 18 to July 9 at the Creston Museum & Archives, open 10–5, Wednesday to Saturday. Website: crestomuseum.ca

Her recreational sewing races (what else do you do with a collection of Gleaners sewing machines?) were not, however, enough to inspire the others. Alison B. proceeded to do what she does best. She took a chair apart. She flopped clothing on it. She adjusted this way and that way and it became clear that she had a series of chairs in the making, "un-reupholstered" and redressed. Andrea drew a dress at Alison M. and said, "Hey, it's just a blank canvas, paint something." she did. The painted dresses found models and Alison M. did what she does best and painted new images over recycled paintings. Andrea, buried deep in the volume of clothing, pulled herself out, one chiffon nightie at a time. Lampshades they became, as cheeky and pastel as they had ever been as nightwear.
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Crafting on the farm
by Margaret Tessman
Beth Swalwell’s husband Colin is a helicopter engineer who worked on a firefighting crew in Australia during the 2014 bushfire season. Beth joined him there for six weeks, and on a side trip to Tasmania they happened upon the port city of Burnie, the site of an old paper mill. Closed in the 1970s, the mill was repurposed, renovated and reopened in 2009 as the Makers’ Workshop. The building is now home to 80 artists and artisans, from cheese makers to hat makers to glassblowers, along with a gallery, retail spaces and a café.

For Beth and Colin, the highlight of Makers’ Workshop was the old Hollander beater that was still in situ, and in earlier days was used to pulverize fibre for making paper. Colin fell in love with the Hollander and in the fall of 2015 found a used beater on Craigslist for $2,000. He had it installed in the workshop on their Creston acreage (“He’s a big thinker,” comments Beth) and the inspiration for the Art Barn was born.

The 300-square-metre workshop is divided into a self-contained suite for Beth’s father, room for Colin’s mechanical shop, and a 5.5-by-12-metre studio space for crafting. The couple did much of the work themselves, designing and building the space with an eye to the future. “We have a five- to ten-year plan,” says Beth. “When dad isn’t able to live independently anymore, we’ll open a restaurant and cater art retreats.” (Beth is a big thinker, too.) The concrete floors with radiant heat are great for drying paper; glass garage doors on the front of the building can be opened wide for shows and markets (featuring the wide variety of berries that Beth and Colin grow); and the adjustable steel worktables were locally made. Beth was inspired by a woodworker and her mother a quilter. “Our home near 100 Mile House always had art everywhere,” says Beth. “I only later realized that my dad collected to help support the artists in the community.” Beth’s mother operated the quilt shop in Creston and realized that my dad collected to help support the artists in the community.” Beth’s mother operated the quilt shop in Creston and realized that her dad isn’t able to live independently anymore, we’ll open a restaurant and cater art retreats.” (Beth is a big thinker, too.) The concrete floors with radiant heat are great for drying paper; glass garage doors on the front of the building can be opened wide for shows and markets (featuring the wide variety of berries that Beth and Colin grow); and the adjustable steel worktables were locally made. Beth came by her love of craft through her parents: her father was a woodworker and her mother a quilter. “Our home near 100 Mile House always had art everywhere,” says Beth. “I only later realized that my dad collected to help support the artists in the community.” Beth’s mother operated the quilt shop in Creston and Beth was the organizer of the Creston Valley Quilt Festival for four years, bringing in international teachers for workshops that drew thousands of participants.

Looking for a spark to motivate her art, Beth fell in love with the work of quilter Nancy Crow, who became a teacher and mentor and “got the art quilt bug going for me,” says Beth. “She told me, ‘You just go home and do the work.’ I took all the positives I could from the practice.”

Another technique that Beth has embraced is art journaling, which entails taking any materials at hand and recycling them into a piece of art. Beth organized a group of eight women who each made art journals with watercolour paper and collage, then mailed them once a month to each other. “We did our own thing with the contents,” says Beth. “I add writing about the process, about where it can take me next,” she says.

The Art Barn offers a “Mommy and Me Get Our Art On” workshop, with a trunk-full of paper material that participants use to make a personal book with a quilted cover and sewn-in pages. Beth also teaches classes in machine and art quilting, mixed media and doll making. Her “day job” as a rehabilitation assistant in a seniors’ facility inspired her latest idea, a therapeutic hammock that can be suspended over a piece of paper on the floor. People can spend time swinging in the hammock and making marks with a tool on the paper, which can then be made into a book.

The old Hollander beater was fired up in January for the Art Barn’s “Hobo Bee Project,” with a trunk-full of paper material that participants use to make a personal book with a quilted cover and sewn-in pages. Beth also teaches classes in machine and art quilting, mixed media and doll making. Her “day job” as a rehabilitation assistant in a seniors’ facility inspired her latest idea, a therapeutic hammock that can be suspended over a piece of paper on the floor. People can spend time swinging in the hammock and making marks with a tool on the paper, which can then be made into a book.

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Remembering those who have passed away
by Greg Nesteroff
Cemeteries are as much about the living as they are about the dead. It’s a point emphasized by two of West Kootenay’s most picturesque graveyards, where ceremonies are held to remember departed loved ones, inspired by a centuries-old Mexican holiday. The Day of the Dead traces its roots possibly as far back as an Aztec festival. Before Spanish colonization in the 16th century, it took place at the start of summer but has since come to coincide with All Saints’ Day in the fall.

Despite the venue, it’s neither a sad nor scary occasion. The event always involves a potluck meal, huge bonfire and altar, and is held annually on the last Sunday in October from mid-afternoon until early evening, when tea lights are placed on the graves. “The whole cemetery gets twirly,” Mackenzie says. People are encouraged to bring photos, fruit and flowers. Other ideas have also been embraced: last year artists created installations around the cemetery’s edges, “which were quite lovely and thought-provoking,” while on another occasion a man rang a bell that echoed around the cemetery’s edges, “which were quite lovely and thought-provoking,” while on another occasion a man rang a bell that echoed through the woods.

The cemetery, in a secluded area of Lancaster Road in Winlaw, currently averages three burials and three or four inurnments of cenreins each year, whereas several years used to go by between burials. Mackenzie says that change reflects the age of the people who established the cemetery in the early 1980s and are still connected with it—it will probably be even more frequently used in the coming years. A second clearing, larger than the present one, has been set aside but hasn’t seen any burials yet.

Unlike municipal lawn cemeteries, the burial society doesn’t get hung up on rules around headstones. “It’s the Slocan Valley, so people have lots of artistic ideas,” Mackenzie says. “They put what they want on the graves, so there are some very interesting and unique things.” The same can be said of the markers in the cemetery at Argenta, which held its first Day of the Dead celebration last November. Residents told stories about departed citizens and several local singers and musicians performed. Noemi Kiss led a community choir in praise for and r

By tradition, it’s an opportunity for family and friends to gather, pray for and remember loved ones who have passed away. Colourful altars are fashioned out of photos, food, candles and personal items to encourage souls to visit and to hear prayers directed at them. By tradition, it’s an opportunity for family and friends to gather, pray for and remember loved ones who have passed away. Colourful altars are fashioned out of photos, food, candles and personal items to encourage souls to visit and to hear prayers directed at them.

The society’s first Day of the Dead celebration last year featured colourful altars dedicated not only to past citizens, but pets and lost buildings. “It was ‘done by community for community’ events I’ve seen and am truly excited to encourage more of this in future.” Borsos says. “It was one of the more successful truly ‘done by community for community’ events I’ve seen and am inspired to encourage more of this in future.”

It goes to show how paying tribute to the dead can often pay dividends for the living.

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PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR ART: PART II

by Colin Payne

In Part I of “How to Photograph your Art,” we looked at setup and tips for photographing three-dimensional craft media. Part II is geared toward painters and other creators of two-dimensional works. We’ll take a look at some simple techniques for lighting and tips for photographing three-dimensional craft media. Part II of “How to Photograph your Art” is focused where it should by making sure the dots or squares that allow high-quality printing, and use a shooting mode that turns the exposure compensation feature in P mode to make it brighter or darker.

What to do after you shoot

As your camera does most of the processing work for you, the main editing tasks you should have to do afterward are adjusting the brightness, cropping and resizing for print or online submission. If you’re serious about working with your images after shooting, you can pick up a program like Photoshop Elements or Lightroom (for Mac). If you’re not, use your photo-editing program to make your images brighter or darker, so they match your original artistic intent. But be sure to use a gentle touch and don’t try to push them too far in either direction.

When cropping, make sure your image includes only the artwork and not parts of the background or edges of a frame. Also make sure not to crop in too much, or you will lose a significant amount of resolution that you need to make high-quality prints.

Finally, if you plan to upload your images to the Web or submit them with funding or gallery applications, you’ll need to resize your images to a lower resolution and smaller file size. The size for your website varies depending on how your site is set up, so ask your Web developer or check your WordPress/Shophify/etc. theme for details. If you’re submitting to galleries, check to see what size each individual gallery requests with their applications. And if you’re submitting an application for funding, here are some details for major funders:

BC Arts Council – JPEG format; maximum dimensions are 768x1024 pixels

Canada Council for the Arts – JPEG format; RGB colour; file size no larger than 1.5 MB

HOW TO

Photographing two-dimensional art

Whether you’re a plein-air painter or otherwise, the best place to photograph your two-dimensional artwork is the great outdoors. There, you will find an abundant source of natural light, without the glare and colour casts induced by various kinds of light bulbs and wall paints you find inside. In order to successfully photograph your art outside, there are a few things you’ll need to have in place:

• A sturdy easel that won’t easily fall over or be knocked off kilter by a gust of wind;
• A stable tripod that is at least as tall as the top of your artwork when mounted on the easel;
• The pieces you want to photograph, preferably without frames, glass or any other coverings that might reflect light and create a glare.

To get the right natural light to photograph your work outdoors, you’ll want to photograph on an overcast day without rain. The clouds act as a diffuser, and you can pick up a program like Photoshop Elements or Lightroom (for Mac). If you can’t quite eliminate some of the background from around the edges, don’t worry as this can be cropped out when editing.

Set your camera’s white balance function to the cloudy setting, and then press the shutter button halfway to focus. After you’ve checked the focus, press the shutter button all the way down to capture the image. Review your image on the LCD and zoom in to ensure accurate focus. If your image is too dark or light, you can use the exposure compensation feature in P mode to make it brighter or darker.

After you’re zoomed, move the camera on the tripod and place it so your work is taking up the whole frame of the camera’s viewfinder. If the easel and artwork are on a slight angle, tilt your camera on the tripod to match that angle. This will ensure the whole piece is in line with the camera’s plane of focus, and will come out sharp. If you can’t quite eliminate some of the background from around the edges, don’t worry as this can be cropped out when editing.

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What to do after you shoot

As your camera does most of the processing work for you, the main editing tasks you should have to do afterward are adjusting the brightness, cropping and resizing for print or online submission. If you’re serious about working with your images after shooting, you can pick up a program like Photoshop Elements or Lightroom (for Mac). Otherwise, there are plenty of free programs that you can use, such as GIMP, Picasa and Apple Photos (if you own a Mac).

Use your photo-editing program to make your images brighter or darker, so they match your original artistic intent. But be sure to use a gentle touch and don’t try to push them too far in either direction.

When cropping, make sure your image includes only the artwork and not parts of the background or edges of a frame. Also make sure not to crop in too much, or you will lose a significant amount of resolution that you need to make high-quality prints.

Finally, if you plan to upload your images to the Web or submit them with funding or gallery applications, you’ll need to resize your images to a lower resolution and smaller file size. The size for your website varies depending on how your site is set up, so ask your Web developer or check your WordPress/Shophify/etc. theme for details. If you’re submitting to galleries, check to see what size each individual gallery requests with their applications. And if you’re submitting an application for funding, here are some details for major funders:

BC Arts Council – JPEG format; maximum dimensions are 768x1024 pixels

Canada Council for the Arts – JPEG format; RGB colour; file size no larger than 1.5 MB

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It was an immediate hit. About 700 people attended the festival, which featured violin, piano, vocal and drama, as well as a visual art display, held at the Catholic Church hall, and included 10 performances, mainly by students. Jo Anne Knobbe, in November 1986, and enlisted Elizabeth Hutton from her home in Regina, where she moved in 1988.

Anderson started the festival with another private piano teacher, Monte Anderson, a co-founder of the festival, that year. “It’s a testament to how we get along in this valley.”

Anderson has the cooperation between private teachers and the school district, with local “VIP” MCs hosting the concerts, which spanned all grades, including the Prince Charles Secondary School debate club.

The joint school district-private teacher concept has remained intact through the years, with local “VIP” MCs hosting the concerts, which focus solely on participation rather than competition. “That’s a big aspect of it—building self-esteem and confidence,” says Anderson.

“There will always be one person sitting in the back who is afraid to perform,” he says. “It’s always good for kids to do something other than just for their parents and grandparents to enjoy.”

For some, the festival gave them a chance to demonstrate passions that turned into careers. Miriam Anderson, for example, became a professional classical musician in Europe. Pascale Hutton now has many movie and TV credits, and was the star of CBC’s Arctic Air. And Sarah Kapoor launched her film, The Bad Mother, partially shot in Creston, at last year’s Hamilton Film Festival.

Those passions couldn’t have been fuelled without the community members who diligently attend the concerts—they’re not just for parents and grandparents to enjoy. “There’s always something about each performance,” says Goodsir. “There’s always some child whose talent surprises you.”

Over the past three decades, thousands of students have taken part in hundreds of performances as part of Creston’s annual Focus on Youth arts festival. The thirtieth anniversary of the festival runs May 2 to 6.

For piano teacher Monte Anderson, a co-founder of the festival, that year, “There’s no other place in Canada that I know of that has this kind of thing, that has the cooperation between private teachers and the school district,” he says. “It’s a testament to how we get along in this valley.”

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“The following school year, the private teachers joined forces with the Creston-Kads school district (prior to becoming the Kootenay Lake school district upon amalgamation with Nelson), and held 17 concerts in the Prince Charles Theatre, with student performers spanning all grades, including the Prince Charles Secondary School debate club.

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For example, Donna starts the chapter entitled “Women’s Work Is Applied to the 16 chapters of the book. Each chapter begins with..."
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