

The Armature



The Sculptors' Association of Alberta Newsletter

November 2021

Animal sculptor Kay McCormack



My name is Kay McCormack and I am so happy to be part of the Sculptors' Association. I have been involved with art for most of my life, though much more so in the last 15 years. As with many artists, I did not have a lot of time when working and raising my family. I jumped in by joining my local art society in Strathcona County, starting with watercolour painting, a bit of pottery and then eventually soapstone carving. I took a small class and knew right away that sculpture was where my interest and my talents were.



Now, after more than 10 years of soapstone carving, I have developed my style and process. I primarily carve wildlife as that is what is comfortable for me, being that I worked as an animal health technologist and clinic manager for 30+ years. I also was involved in horse and dog showing for many years and have been a volunteer and board member of Wild North our local wildlife

rehabilitation society, for 25 +years. The animal form comes easily to me and is why I sculpt them the most. I have been selling my work locally with my art society, many smaller venues and art walks. In the last 5 years, I have been teaching beginner soapstone carving for several organizations and find a lot of enjoyment in that.

What is the best advice you have ever been given?

The best advice was to try many things initially. When you are exploring a variety of mediums, it opens the door to skills you didn't know you had. Until I tried carving, I didn't know I easily could think in 3D. Also, if you pick something you are familiar with, animals for me, then there is one less thing to learn initially and you can concentrate on the new skills. I do believe you need to like what you are producing, see the value in it and then you find your confidence in your new skills.

Why art?

Most artists can say they get lost in their art and that is true for me as well. Time flies once you get immersed in a piece and there is a never-ending supply of ideas to keep you busy.

What mediums do you work in?

I do still paint but now mostly in acrylics, most often landscapes in keeping with the nature theme. Along with soapstone, I have been sculpting in clay in the last couple of years. Clay gives me a lot more detail and has been fun to learn all the difficulties and tricks. Clay is the opposite of stone carving, one being a subtractive method, the other an additive. Clay is more forgiving as you can correct errors by adding it back on, moving it or simply changing the shape.

What inspires you?

I'm inspired by other artists' work and skill. I find myself viewing other people's work and working through how they constructed it, what



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President's message – Ellie Shuster



Another SAA exhibition?
Another SAA sale? They
will soon be upon us!

The Artrium

We are gearing up for the group show at the Artrium in Sherwood Park which will run from Nov. 23 to Feb. 18. As I write this, there is one spot remaining. Shawn Olander, Debbie Laninga, Kay McCormack, Keith Turnbull, Wanda Resek and Carrie Carbol-Ritcey have all submitted their applications. So.... if you are interested, don't delay! There is a \$10 fee to participate.

Christmas Market at the Army & Navy on Whyte

Our intrepid team of Carroll Charest, Bev Oliwa, Keith Turnbull and I are working out the details for the

Christmas Market at the old Army & Navy store. It will take a minimum of eight sculptors to make it work... 10 is optimal. Again, at time of writing, we are still determining if this will go ahead, but if you want one of the last few spaces, NOW is the time to let me know!

The sale will run for two weekends: November 26-28 and December 3-5. There is the cost to participate as well as a commitment of time over both weekends. The COVID Restriction Exemption Program will be in place.

It is hard to believe that December will be upon us soon... and with it our Christmas Ornament Exchange. In past years we have had a Christmas Pot Luck; but,

thanks to COVID last year we were limited to a Zoom party and an entertaining ornament exchange. We each made something unique, shared the work and our process on Zoom, drew names for the exchange and had a great visit. (Wine encouraged but, unfortunately, not supplied...) This year, given the current restrictions, plans remain the same... but if we are able to move the party to Harcourt House, we will let you know!

We have a must-see speaker planned for the November meeting – one of our new members will share his unique and amazing creations. I look forward to seeing you there!

Stay safe,
Ellie Shuster

Newsletter submissions

We are always looking for your submissions to the newsletter. If you are showing your work, teaching a workshop, working on something special, have an update you'd like to share, or any story ideas, please contact me. Also, please keep the photos coming, they are greatly appreciated.

Submit your items to me, Shawn Olander at: shawnolander@gmail.com by the 25th of the month or contact me with any questions!

SAA Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2021
7:30 pm

Speaker: Thomas Jacob on his work as a Micro Artist.
www.thomasminiatures.com

On Zoom: [LINK HERE](#) Meeting ID: 840 2844 1497 Passcode: 160357

Agenda & Minutes from the last meeting (Oct. 5) have been distributed by email. Check with [Maria Koulouris](#) if you haven't received them.

Exhibitions update (plus those mentioned above)

Night of Artists – March – waiting for submission/application

VASA Show – possibly May – waiting for confirmation

Western Gallery, Drumheller- June

Kay McCormack: con't



gave it that expression and how best to make that in my own way.

What makes you smile?

I have gone back to some older pieces and redone them and know that I have progressed as an artist and made them better. When you can look at something and know it's good, maybe better than previous work, you can find satisfaction. That's why I have turned down offers to make corporate gifts as they have wanted many of the same thing and I am not into production over innovation.

What is your dream project?

Not sure I have a dream project. I am making what makes me happy now, just hoping that I can continue as I age. Working with stone is challenging at times and both clay and stone require different

workspaces. So, for now, it's working and keeping me busy enough.

What is your outlook on life?

In retirement from my working career, I am just wanting to be creative, helpful to others and worthy overall. I hope I can say throughout that I made a difference to those around me and to things in my life.

How has your work evolved over time?

I'd like to think that I have improved the movement in my pieces. I want them to all tell a story with their body position.

What role does the artist have in modern society?

There is no doubt that art is the thing that soothes, excites, and motivates people. As we have found this

past year and a half, art entertains, consoles and inspires us.

What is the best thing about being an artist?

Artists work when they are moved to. That is a curse and a blessing as we all have deadlines but for the most part your best work happens when you are in the mood to create.

What is the worst?

It takes more work and skill to sell your art than to create it. Finding a venue, learning new skills in social media, hauling hundreds of pounds of stone around, setting up and sitting for hours, is all taxing and not necessarily what you enjoy doing. I do love talking with people and kids at these venues, but the logistics are physically taxing.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Find the time and push for your individual space in your life. Your mental health and ability to decompress, be inspired and find satisfaction in personal growth will give you balance in your life.

Where can we see your art?

I usually show in the Loft Gallery, 501 Gallery and many local smaller art shows.

I have completed my latest project in clay (rabbit below). Hand built, newspaper armature then bisque-fired. I painted it with acrylic and metallic paints. It's about 10" H x 11" D x 9" W. - Kay





I am excited that this collaboration with artist Jani Galarneau is going to be featured in [Adco Power's](#) 2022 calendar! Every year Adco purchases an artwork which is hung at the Edmonton office and is the centre of a poster-size calendar. I was asked if I'd seen any artists that would suit the Adco calendar and so I suggested my piece! It was still bare, but they asked if I would paint it. I called Jani. She brought it to life with the Northern Lights dancing in the sky and my favorite part - the little inukshuk's shadow in the snow. I can't wait to have it hung on the wall, see the calendar, and collaborate with Jani again!



Meet metal artist Maggie Slater

Tell us about yourself and what you do.

I'm Maggie Slater and I make metal sculptures out of both new and reclaimed/scrap parts.

Have you always wanted to be a sculptor?

No, and even after I started creating it still took me a while to actually call myself a sculptor or an artist.

What is the best advice you have ever been given?

Don't quit!

Why art?

Art because there are no rules. No drawings to follow or tolerances to work within. I get to be self-expressed, and I have found an amazing art family!

What mediums do you work in?

Metal of all types. Recently I have been exploring ways I can stay creative at home, so I've been playing with polymer clay and also practicing drawing.

What inspires you?

Nature and (human) energy. My personal feelings typically come out in abstract pieces.

What other work have you done besides sculpting?

Honestly, not a ton! Just starting to venture out into new things.

What makes you smile?

Getting to share an art experience with the kids that are in my life.

What is your dream project?

A huge abstract metal sculpture outside, surrounded by beautiful plants and flowers.

What is your outlook on life?

That there is good everywhere. And that there is always something to be learned.

How has your work evolved over time?

I used to be more spread out, I think. I made metal jewelry, scrap metal animal sculptures. And even though I still make these pieces sometimes, I find I always want to create abstract pieces.

Do you have a favorite work of art or artist?

I don't think I can pick!

What role does the artist have in modern society?

Bring joy, start conversations, get people thinking.



What is the best thing about being an artist?

Freedom of expression! I think it keeps me in a state of wonder, looking at things newly.

What is the worst?

Not quite being able to take what's in my head and make it tangible yet.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Don't quit piano, don't quit drawing, say yes to art sooner than you did.

Where can we see your art?

My Instagram account is @industrial.growth. Thanks for checking it out!



Ice & snow – Barb Marcinkoski

It's that time of year again, when we begin to think of snow... and ice (carving).

So far, I have a group of seven sculptors who have expressed interest in commissions this year and they are some of our strongest ice and snow artists.

There are also opportunities for up-and-comers, such as working with a more experienced carver on a piece.

We also have tentative plans for a snow workshop at Snow Valley or perhaps an ice workshop for those who are complete beginners or want to improve. If you're interested in any of these things, please email me at barbmarcink@gmail.com.

To date, we have one confirmed commission which is two one-block sculptures at the Skate with Santa event in Edson on Sunday, Dec. 19 from 3-6 pm. We are currently discussing an ice slide for Strathcona County on New Years Eve, and an ice bar for Luminaria (University of Alberta Botanic Garden) for Nov. 27.

Brighten Up Beaumont, usually held in late November is not going ahead this year due to COVID, however, it appears that Christmas in the Heartland (Nov. 27-28) which provides an opportunity for several of our sculptors to participate, is going ahead. I am waiting for confirmation from them.



I have also provided information for a couple of other queries, and reached out to some previous clients.

If you're a snow carver, applications are now being accepted for Silver Skate Festival (see below).

Now we just need some snow and colder temperatures! - Barb

December Photo Call



This month please send us a photo of the ornament you created for our 2nd Annual Christmas Ornament Exchange to shawnolander@gmail.com.

Deadline for submissions is Nov. 25. Thanks for your participation.

Applications deadline Nov. 19



The Silver Skate Festival will be hosting the 16th Annual International Snow Sculpture Symposium, February 11-13, 2022, at Hawrelak Park in Edmonton. The sculptures are made from 8' X 8' X 8' snow blocks and require teams of 2 or 3.

The festival is also seeking fire sculpture and installation art applications.

You may download the applications from the homepage of the website, www.silverskate.ca

The application deadline is Friday, Nov. 19, 2021.

Note: Silver Skate Festival requires full COVID-19 vaccination or a negative test, as per AHS or City requirements, for all staff, volunteers, contractors and partners.

For more information contact Erin Di Loreto, Executive Producer at producer@silverskate.ca





Sculptors'
Association
of Alberta



It's time to get ready for our 2nd Annual **Ornament Exchange**

Join us for a fun evening.

To participate: Make a Christmas ornament in your chosen medium. Ornaments will be exchanged at our December meeting.

- ✓ You do not have to be present at the meeting to participate.
- Ornaments can be exchanged by porch drop off or mail if we are not meeting in person. www.sculptors-alberta.com



Studio time with Keith Turnbull by Shawn Olander



This work of Zodiac Animals which greets you as you enter the backyard is the best thing my eyes saw that day. Each has its own personality and Keith's sculpting abilities are impressive.



As I approached Keith's house on a Saturday afternoon, I was greeted by a cute goat in a COVID mask. As I walked up, I saw sculptures everywhere. They are in the yard, on the deck, hidden in the plants, lining the driveway and hanging on the fence. I knew it was going to be a great day.



Keith is an amazing artist for whom I have a great deal of gratitude and respect. He is the person who invited me to join The Sculptors' Association and he has really fostered confidence in me. He is a kind, warm and generous man. He is forthcoming with helpful tips and advice. I know he is willing to help fellow artists with his knowledge and connections.



Keith's tips

- Attach small clay balls to the bottom of your sculptures with Elmer's glue to prevent sticking to the shelves when glazing and also allowing the glaze to completely extend to base.
- Fire tall, heavy pieces in two parts and glue together after firing. Use a base for stability.

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Karen Klassen: Large scale rock

Earlier in the year, I applied for and was awarded, an individual art grant from the Edmonton Arts Council. The focus of this project was to explore the artistic potential and the technical challenges of working with large scale rock sculptures. I had three summer months and with a last-minute change of plans, ended up working on the sculptures in my front yard driveway!

This grant gave me the opportunity to see how my current art practice and mosaic skills would aid in my artistic vision and exploration of this material and on this scale. After doing some research, we came up with a plan on how to move the heavy stone. We (my husband and I) built a wood tripod and attached a chain hoist to the top. This would allow me to lift the stone with ease, and hold it in place for me to work on it. It was quite an empowering feeling lifting up a 500lb stone by myself.

The reaction from the neighbours was awesome. This crazy-looking contraption on our driveway was met with a lot of curiosity, questions and visits from the people in our neighbourhood. There was so much interest in what I was doing, I often had to stop working to explain, which lead to



meeting so many new people in my neighbourhood and so many amazing conversations.

Once I figured out the challenge of moving the stone, the next step was to explore and experiment. It's so easy to think, just go for it, but when you have this beautiful stone in front of you, I was afraid to mark or damage it with the tools. I wasn't even sure where to begin. I thought about what this grant was about - explore and experiment - and most importantly, with no expected outcome. "No expected outcome" was the key phrase for me.

I started with the hand tools, chisels, grinders and drills, it was important to learn what they felt like in hand, their capabilities and limitations. I watched tutorials and videos of the power tools I was using, to see how they operate, and how to be safe while using them. I've learned from my

past public art projects, and safety courses, it is imperative to be safe while working and spotting the potential hazards of the work site. I treated my driveway as my job site.

I made cuts and holes, added lines, extracted bits of stone, and before long, I felt more confident and comfortable using the tools. Having my studio so close was wonderful, I could try different types of materials and colours with the stone, and get an instant visual of what I liked. I was so fueled with inspiration, and ideas, I could hardly sleep at night, waiting for the next day to get at it again!

This grant gave me time. Time to experiment, learn, and play. This is my artistic process - time allows you to get your mind in it; to go for it. Knowing that I had three months to experiment with this new art form was a dream come true.

- Karen



Studio time (con't)



Keith is an expert at sculpture repair. He recently repaired this bull sculpture that broke at the Raku workshop. He uses a variety of adhesives, epoxies and high-quality acrylic paint.

This is my favourite piece from Keith's studio. It is a tribute to his lovely wife Kathy. It is her family waiting for the train to take them east, representing the exile of Japanese Canadians from the west coast in 1942. Some 20,000 were sent to concentration camps in the BC interior or to work the sugar beet fields of southern Alberta and Manitoba. Families could only take a couple of suitcases of their belongings with them. Many, such as Kathy's mother, were born in Canada and those who migrated from Japan were Canadian citizens. This is another sad chapter in the history of our country.



There must be a thousand sculptures in Keith's studio. I'm very impressed with his creativity. My eyes kept darting around in amazement. There is so much to see. It was impossible to select a favourite which I normally find easy.



These sculptures (three above) now have a new home with me.

You can contact Keith at keithtur@telus.net.



Keith's sculptures evoke happy feelings. He did a series of mixed-up animals during COVID that just make you smile. Keith has an abundance of sculptures at the moment. Due to the coronavirus, his studio sales have been postponed.

When I asked Keith to summarize his sculptures in one word, he said "friendly". I couldn't agree more. It's the perfect word to describe both Keith and his work.

Thanks Keith. I had a terrific day.
- Shawn

Shawn Olander



My elephant sculpture is now finished and glazed.

Gordon Pengilly



I'm working on a new series of abstract, organic clay sculptures. Moving away from naturalism toward abstraction is challenging and captivating.

Beginner soapstone carving class

Sculpture bases

Is anyone interested in marble or granite slabs for sculpture bases? I have access to some counter cut outs - so about 1" or 1-1/4" thick and various widths and lengths - some may be all even sides and other broken sides.

Let Carroll Charest know at saaexhibitions@gmail.com



Kay McCormack will be teaching a 2-day class Nov. 13 and 20 in Sherwood Park to learn how to carve a 7" X 5" grizzly bear in brown or green stone (TBC). Click [here](#) for registration and more information.

Audrey 19 – at Market Off Whyte

Last year, Barry Kostiuk and I partnered on a piece we called Audrey 19. Barry created a beautiful soapstone vase and I sculpted a Covid flower – imagining what it might look like if growing in the wild and plucked in its prime. The piece sold through the Old Strathcona Arts Emporium. This year, I have been taking pottery classes.

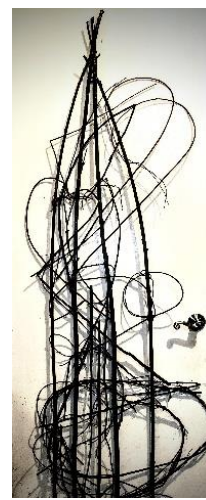
And while I am very much a novice – and enjoying it immensely – I thought I would try to build on our success and create a vase of my own. This new *Audrey 19 – Plucked from the Wild* will be at the Market Off Whyte on Saturday, November 13 from 10 – 4 pm at the Strathcona Performing Arts Centre. I hope you come to say hello! - Ellie Shuster



Correction

These six willow artworks shown in the June *Armature* should have been credited to **Carmen Colbourne**. I regret the oversight; it was not my intention.

- Shawn



The Armature is published by the Sculptors' Association of Alberta. Images have been supplied by artist members and may not be reused without permission of the artist(s). For more information contact Maria Koulouris, SAA Administrator at sculptorsab@gmail.com.

This newsletter was prepared by Shawn Olander and edited/formatted by Barb Marcinkoski. If you have anything for the newsletter, please contact Shawn at shawnolander@gmail.com

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