

THE DAILY MUSE

BRINGING THE WORK OF ARTISTS TO THE COMMUNITY.



Featured Artist: Merie Surkan

Artist Merie Surkan's creative space is an energizing place. The finished projects as well as those in various stages of development strewed about the sun-filled room imply everything is unfolding with thought and purpose. Surkan, a textile artist and painter, gets energy from creating. She transfers that energy into each creative piece to truly give it a life of its own. And yes, it is all with purpose. Surkan repurposes textiles and other materials in her art work

It has taken Surkan a number of twists and turns on her artistic journey to discover her true passion as a textile artist. She grew up with a mother and grandmothers who were creative sewers and craftswomen. She was also influenced by her Miscouche School Home Economics teacher, Rita MacNeill, in developing a love for needle and thread, but outside of a hobby she gave her artistic side little thought for many years.

That would change when she returned home to the Island from Alberta in the year 2000. Looking for a way to overcome the loneliness and grief experienced with the death of a dear friend and to find a way back into community, she enrolled in an adult painting class with artist Maurice Bernard. She was instantly hooked with the process of transforming a blank canvas into a desirable piece of landscape art. She discovered she had a talent beyond that of a hobby, which was validated when people began to buy her work and more of it was shown in exhibitions. Her work has sold across Canada. Her love of detail proved her strong point.

However, the development of a vision issue eight years ago took away that ability to capture the fine details in a painting so Surkan has set aside her canvas and paints until she discovers an opportunity to study with an artist that can teach her a more abstract form of painting. But as that door partially closed, Surkan was able to open another artistic door with her sewing skills and love of repurposing for the sake of the environment. She began to explore creating unconventional funky stuff with fabric and materials destined for the landfill if not rescued for a purpose. And, as she says, "Who knew there would be a market? My ideas were totally in sync with the current trend of customers desiring locally produced products with a light environmental footprint. It is good to repurpose. It is what our ancestors did."

Surkan creates funky aprons from jeans no longer wearable and "Poppy Pillow Pals" (various animals) from gifted materials, clothing, quilts, bathmats, etc. When she sits down at her work table with a piece of material before her she is never sure where her imagination will take her, but she certainly enjoys finding out and creating with a purpose.

Surkan formed the business Bloomin' Momma and is excited about how her repurposed textile business is unfolding and expanding. At times she is struggling to keep up with the demand for her creative products that she sells in Island shops and online, but that also energizes her as she gives way to the fun of coming up with new ideas to offer the public. She is planning in the near future to add a new body of fibre work that will combine her painting and textile skills. She also plans in the future to offer sewing classes to children to help bring out their creative side. Surkan says she has a creative soul and though she doesn't know what is around the corner she does know it will be all about creating with a purpose. She sums it up by saying, "Creating completes my life."



Summerside Arts Festival
Celebrating the Arts in Summerside - Presented by Wyatt Heritage Properties Inc.

Canada
Prince Edward Island
The Gentle Island
City of Summerside
Prince Edward Island

To Learn More on The Daily Muse Call 432-1298