



Barb Cronk

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Nature & Artistry By Heather White Brittain

Local artist Barb Cronk is passionate about the protection of wildlife and wilderness habitats. "I am dedicated to promoting the protection of all creatures," she reveals. A huge supporter, the artist has donated works to associations that aide in the awareness, protection and rehabilitation of wildlife. As a volunteer at the Hope for Wildlife Centre in Seaforth, a rescue and rehabilitation mission for orphaned and injured wildlife, self-admittedly Cronk shares how, "it gives her the opportunity to get close to a wide range of wild animals." Reflectively she adds, "I do my part to help these beautiful creatures in distress."



Clearly this feeling is conveyed in the artist's work. Subjects of wildlife are beautifully rendered in a detailed style using mediums that vary between acrylic and watercolour. The subjects are also mixed. In single subject depictions the artist will capture the very essence of an animal that is a solitary subject – one that implores the viewer to carefully consider what has gone before them. Easily subjects flit from the solitary to engaging and expressive such as an image of two rabbits who sit face to face. Conversational and intimate, the viewer imagines the whispering of confidantes sharing and communicating.

Amazingly, the artist is largely self-taught. Inspired by reference books, the Internet and by her own photographs, even her own backyard in Gaetz Brook becomes inspirational: "There is plenty of wildlife and nature around for me to appreciate and I find great peace, balance and inspiration here." Clearly it works.

When Cronk considers her path as an artist, she says that it was always there: "According to my mother, I was very creative as a child and among drawing, loved to paint and sing as well." Although she seriously considered studying art and design after she completed high school, the thought was put on hold as she earned a living in office administration. Later, an accident would keep her house bound for a period and during her recovery, painting became a comfort.

Stimulated by this, and urged by friends and family, Cronk took her paintings to Eric Wood who owned the Duke of Argyle Gallery in Halifax. Becoming a mentor, Wood introduced the emerging artist to acrylics. Grateful and reminiscent (Wood died and the gallery no longer exists), Cronks said, "Eric started me on a course of discovery and learning that has continued since." Recently, Cronk is in the company of other talented and local artists. An exhibitor at Art 1274 Hollis Gallery, she is "proud to be part of this team of

talented and gifted artists."

The journey has been eventful and filled with highlights. In 2006, a Cronk painting of Newfoundland Puffins hung in the White House in Washington, D.C. Invited to participate in the Mural Mosaic Project, "Earth's Treasure Chest" for the benefit of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to Natural parks, wildlife and wilderness areas, Cronk was in the company

of artists Robert Bateman, David Suzuki and other Canadian artists. "I am an avid believer in the protection of wildlife and wilderness habitat." says the artist. So often she has donated works to associations that aide in awareness and protection and subsequently, rehabilitation.

"I have never been able to stop being creative," says Cronk. Considering her love of wildlife and nature, with self-examination that is natural and simultaneously determined, Cronk is clearly thinking out loud: "There is something quite beautiful when you see a deer in a field or when you help the healing. For me, it is profound and moving. To actually help and to educate is good... These creatures have feelings and emotions like you or I."

Visit Barb Cronk's Web site, <http://www.wildlife-art.ca/>. Or drop into Art 1274 at 1274 Hollis Street. This month's featured artists are Barb, and Raymond Smith.



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