



Sheryl Crowley

Sheryl Crowley is a mosaicist based in Saint John, NB. She has been creating mosaics since 2005, working in glass and ceramic along with metal to create images of whimsy and introspection. As the first of our series of August guest artists, Sheryl was interviewed to discuss her place in craft, and what she has coming up next.

How did you get started in your practice?

I came at it sideways. I have three children and when my youngest was 3 or 4 I decided to get into something creative that didn't cost much that I could play around with, and drop it and go when my kids needed me. I had done mosaic as a young child... so I bought some ceramic tiles and took them into the basement with a hammer and beat the heck out of them and started playing around with some shards. I'm mostly self-taught, plus some wonderful courses along the way. I've always liked doing things with my hands and getting messy and all the stages you go through in mosaic making - playing with mortar and grout is like playing with mud pies. Who doesn't enjoy that?!

What inspires you?

I'm attracted to the quirky, the different, in nature and human-made. I have anxiety and depression, so I've done some abstract pieces in the past trying to articulate those feelings, but my show, "INSIDE-OUT", is taking that headspace-y feeling and portraying that emotion on the structure of the body. The photos, and later the mosaics and paintings, capture the frantic feelings inside.

What role does a craft artist have in society?

I grew up going to craft shows and knowing craftspeople, and love the direct connection between people and raw materials, the earth. You can feel the lineage - thousands of years of creating. How people can take clay from a riverbank and make these beautiful things that we can take home and use, and every time we look at it - it isn't just a mug or a vase - someone has taken the time to get it just right. The objects that I prize most in my home are those handmade pieces someone took their brains, heart and hands to create.

What's going on now or in the future for you?

I'm currently working on a wonderful commission to do a donor wall for the Imperial Theatre in Saint John. It will be 10'x6' and done using stained glass in mosaic technique. I have done a number of mural commissions in the past few years including a large piece done with children - now hung at the Jubilee Cruise Ship Terminal in Saint John - and a Donor Wall at the new YMCA in Saint John. The Y piece really pushed me to a whole new level - portraying human figures in mosaic. That was a huge developmental leap for me and gave me the technical skills to be able to articulate the emotions of "INSIDE-OUT".

(See Sheryl's "INSIDE-OUT" exhibit in the Saint John Arts Centre, in Saint John, NB, from July 6 - August 31, 2018.)

**Visit Sheryl's website at
www.fracturedartmosaics.net
and find her on Facebook at
"Fractured Art Mosaics by Sheryl Crowley".
This interview has been edited for
clarity and brevity.**