

Christina Nick

Sculpture Talk

CASTLEGAR
SCULPTUREWALK

Welcome to our new regular feature introducing the artists behind the sculptures in this year's Castlegar SculptureWalk.

Christina Nick's submission for this year's Sculpturewalk is a large steel workhorse. The sculpture stands about 180 centimetres tall and has a presence that exudes the vast energy and power that these horses are bred for.

'Wheel of Life' is representative of her recent efforts to incorporate moving parts in order to attain her vision of interactive artwork. Her piece represents not just a workhorse in all its power and strength, caught in a moment of stillness, but with a rotating barrel on its side that depicts the drawn phases of a horse galloping. When the barrel is spun, the drawings magically come to life and one can actually see the horse running, instilling 'movement' into her artwork. The barrel and its drawings pay homage to the first animated reels made decades ago at the start of moving pictures.

Nick creates her large welded steel sculptures exclusively from recycled materials. She accesses scrap yards to find metal and sometimes cleans up farmer's fields of steel and old cars that have been abandoned. She feels strongly that the recycled concept of her work has much to say about the finished piece. She uses the steel as a source of inspiration by seeing shapes in some of the forms, and tries to incorporate found objects in

her pieces that add a touch of whimsy or give the sculpture enhanced narrative.

As is the case with 'Wheel of Life', some of the found steel pieces - gears and ball bearings for example - have been incorporated into recent sculptures to permit mobility, either on their own or with the help of the viewer. Nick intends to continue to expand on this idea in future works with the goal of creating increased interaction and interplay between the

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sculpture and the observer. "Increasingly, I'm looking for exploration and energy between my works and the people who view them."

Nick's steel animal sculptures span the animal kingdom spectrum - warthogs, foxes, giraffes, grizzly bears, water buffalo and many others - from domestic to exotic. They reflect her multi-continental traveling lifestyle, as well as the surroundings of her two

'home' bases, rural France and the wilderness around Brackendale.

She divides her time between her studio north of Vancouver and another in Serres Morlaas in the south of France. She creates memorable pieces of varying sizes, usually of animals she has encountered through previous work experiences and her love of nature and the mountains - any place wild and unsullied.

A multi-disciplinary artist, Nick studied Fine Arts at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick before moving to the West Coast. She felt right at home in the Coast Mountains and continues to explore them on skis in the winter and by foot in the summer. Whether working as an art teacher or wildlife guide - or for the Provincial Parks system as a park ranger and naturalist for a number of years - she has gained a deep respect for, and lifelong interest in, nature. In her artwork she reflects upon humanity's role in the natural environment.

Her metal sculpture work has primarily gained re-known in France and Canada, but she is also prolific in cire perdue bronze, carved stone, wood and fibreglass resin. When not traveling or working on sculptures in her studios, Nick paints in mixed media and



drawing from life. Her artwork can be found at galleries from B.C. to Newfoundland and in between too.

"I think metal sculpture will always be my favourite medium," she explains. "I love the scope, the size, the dimensional aspect and the malleability of reclaimed steel. Taking discarded and used metal and making something beautiful from it is something special to me. That I can create likenesses of animals I've seen in the wild while working or traveling is really a joy."

Presently she works for a Canadian adventure travel company leading small groups into the Pyrenees on the French-Spanish border. It's like a backyard to her, but she sometimes branches out to lead groups to the Galapagos Islands off Ecuador and other exotic

locales. All of which gives her plenty of ideas for her art but it does reduce the amount of time she is able to create.

"I've got a couple of big commissions underway this year, so I'm just a wee bit concerned," she says thoughtfully. It passes quickly though. "I have a great life, and an amazing balance of all the things I love to do. It will be fine, though it's a good thing I'm one of those super-active personality types," she says, smiling. Given her impressive artistic productivity and global travel activities, that's a good thing.

www.christinanick.com

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