

Headwaters Arts presents new show featuring 11 female artists]

By Constance Scrafield

Headwaters Arts latest show 'Reflections', invites artists to show what Canada means to them and is open now at the Headwaters Gallery in the Alton Mill Arts Centre.

The show is running until July 3, in time to celebrate Canada Day.

Eleven female artists are bringing their paintings, photography, sculpture, mixed media, glass, fibre to describe what their sense of Canada is to them.

The Citizen had the chance to chat to artist Rosalinde Baumgartner whose contributions to the new show are her sculpture, titled Equilibrium and a wonderful painting, The Maple Leaf.

In a telephone interview this week, Ms. Baumgartner told us that she and her husband immigrated to Canada with their young son in 1960.

'We love it, Canada is the greatest,' she said. 'When we came my husband went to college in Guelph and I took courses in the University. It was very hard to do that in Switzerland or Austria without starting as a student recently graduated from [secondary school]. It was a difficult time of the war [when she was a child]. Even my parents were educated but after the war, it just wasn't the time to get your children to school.'

Ms. Baumgartner's life as an artist really started when they had their second child. They shared a house with a retired gentleman, trading rent for her caring for him, doing the cooking and the house keeping. He was a craftsman and a member of the Guelph Arts Society.

She told us, 'I would go out painting with him sometimes and I took some courses at the university part time. It's was a slow development but it is certainly making it a rich life for me.'

She has dabbled in many art form, painting, printing making and more. Lately she has been mostly a sculptor, with a piece in Elora's arts festival last month, as she has seven times before. Privately, she has a home studio where she and her husband own a small farm.

To create and assemble her clay sculpture, Equilibrium, the bottom is half filled with cement and she made a hole with a post going up to the top part for stability; only the bottom is filled with cement.

'I had to work on it as I went along,' she commented. 'This is a little different. I smoke-fired it and used [floor] wax on top of it to give it a shine. Most of my other sculptures are figurative.'

At 86 years old, this remarkable lady explained, 'I do yoga. You have to keep at it when you're my age ? you can't neglect it. We have a good family of three sons. I'm very happy about that.'

Having found their home in the area several years ago, Ms. Baumgartner was aware of the Alton Mill being opened, she 'was making the art and now I thought I might as well go and become part of that.'

Art has made a difference to Rosalinde Baumgartner's life; it gives her happiness and she has immersed herself in it.

For another perspective, we interviewed a second artist in the Reflections show, photographer Marion Plaunt who has an interesting take on photography and her beginning in the art world came as an adult as well. Her entrée into her own creativity began this way: 'My daughter thought I needed an artistic event. She went to paint night and said, 'Mom why don't you come out with me.''

In 2018 at the beginning of June, she and her husband went out on the lake by their cottage. She had a basic Sony camera and she started taking pictures.

‘A lot of my work is very primal,’ she said. ‘I give them titles like Stone Arrow and the Mask.’

Settled as a photographic artist, she looks for tranquility in drift wood, dead spruce trees with lichen growing on them.

‘With this collection of driftwood accumulated in a certain pattern, reflected in the water and turned, you see nature’s art,’ was her comment. ‘Most of my art is reflections on still water. There is dead still water in the early morning where our cottage is in northern Quebec on Lac Tee, connected to Lake Kipawa. My husband drives the boat and we go along the shore line of the lake. My brain sees what it would look like if you turn the driftwood 90 degrees which depends on the angle I’m in on the boat. There’s a little bit of geometry.’

‘It’s quite a process,’ Ms. Plaunt admitted. ‘I’ve only been doing this since 2018. It’s more curiosity; nature creates its beauty. Do we need to do too much more?’

Digital photography opens up digital art, which is a whole other way to do photography, she pointed out.

Digital can capture a ‘burst’ meaning the camera takes a picture every second for five pictures. The scene changes constantly and this advantage gives opportunity for choice.

‘On our lake we get the most fantastic colours,’ she declared. ‘With many photos you can see the changes and with fog too.’

The striations on the rock plus a stump reflected in the water looks like a giant sleeping

and becomes an art photo titled ‘Mask.’ ‘All Seeing’ are roots that look like a series of eyes.

‘You see something different. It is all how your eye interprets,’ Ms. Plaunt confirmed. With unlimited images, when she is at the cottage, she is out on the water at sunrise.

Yet art changes as an artist develops and Marion Plaunt is looking at other corners of nature’s endless offers. She is fascinated with small fungi and lichen. Some actual fungi looks as though it is made of glass. ‘They’re my other passion. I can’t walk past something that’s amazing and not take a picture,’ she said.

Some people do not act on their creative side, which Ms. Plaunt is sure we all have.

It means she has opened up a whole new way of looking at things. She still marvels at small things.

What she would say to others: ‘Allow yourself this. It is a luxury to see the finished product but it’s hard work getting there. You have to be patient with yourself.’

As Rosalinde Baumgartner said, ‘Art gives us so much when we do it and then if I can share that’s just a bonus.’

To visit her studio contact her at rosalinde.baumgartner@gmail.com

Marion Plaunt has a presence on Instagram.