

Camozzi emphasizes “awe factor” of natural world at Eco-Conference

by John Gillis

Antigonish-area-based artist Anne Camozzi holds up a wasp’s nest and then a piece of seashell that a glass-cutter friend has sliced crossways. The inside of the shell reveals a beautiful spiral pattern. Camozzi has always been impressed by the beauty of spirals, and it’s a major symbol and theme that reappears in her artwork which is primarily intricate paintings on silk built on a foundation of line drawing. She’s speaking to a classroom

full of environmental educators (on July 23rd) at the Whycomomagh Eco-Centre’s Coming to Life conference. Her subject is quite appropriate for the location: Nature and the Creative Experience.

“It’s hard not to be in awe of the beauty of these natural objects. Children often have that sense of awe, but why is it we sometimes lose that as adults?” she questions.

Camozzi and others in this room spend a lot of time thinking about issues such as this as artists or



Above: A detail from “Spring Burst”, a painting on silk by Antigonish area visual artist Anne Camozzi.

as educators. They share a challenge in this day and age to have children connect with the natural world when so much of their environment is manmade. Camozzi has been an environmental consultant, an administrator, and an artist who’s participated in the PAINTS (Professional Artists in the Schools) program and has taught art with children. She led a

very busy life until a battle with meningitis forced her to change her pace. Several years ago, she resumed her art-making as part of her recovery.

“We need to re-examine our connection to nature, and we need to have children connect with the natural environment,” she says. On the walls, several samples of her intricate and colourful paintings on

silk are displayed as a slide show of other pieces plays.

“If we look at a spiral closely, we see that there’s an amazing symmetry and order there. The Italian mathematician, Fibonacci, recognized a number system that appears in spirals. It is 1, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21 etc. You add the two previous numbers to get the one after that. I was completely blown away when I discovered this. I believe that one person can truly make a difference. If you impact only one other person in your work you are part of that spiral,” she says. Camozzi went to art school at a time in the early 1970s when abstraction was emphasized. While abstract art was not her calling, she did learn much about colour from that period. She’s also amazed, looking back at old sketchbooks and journals from high school, how her themes have remained similar. She finds that’s she’s merely expanding on interests that were there from very early in her artistic development.

Born in Rossland, B.C., Camozzi spent much of her childhood in Ontario before moving to Nova Scotia in her early twenties.

The natural environment of those two provinces as well as Nova Scotia made a strong impression on her.

Today she spends an average of 25-30 hours on a silk painting, and her work often deals with the subject of the natural world. She finds inspiration from birds, flowers and gardens. “When I paint the human figure in my work it’s often hidden or at a smaller scale from the rest of the natural subject matter,” she says, believing it’s important to de-emphasize man’s egocentric world-view.

“I think it’s my responsibility as an artist to bring colour and beauty into the world. I’ve learned a lot through this illness, and I try to use it to inspire healing in others. We take a lot for granted, especially here in Nova Scotia. We need to be able to accept, exploit and share our gifts,” she said.

To learn more about Anne Camozzi’s art visit: www.annecamozzi.com.

Workshops, public forums and educational excursions continue from July 23rd-25th at the Whycomomagh Eco-Centre Conference.



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