

Katrina Ewanchuck – *Elements of Nature*

Visual Description

This exhibit by New Westminster artist, Katrina Ewanchuck, is a joyful expression of colour, texture, and pattern inspired by nature.

Katrina says, “Over the past few years, there has been much uncertainty and stress in the world. With Covid, turning inwards to the art making process has helped me a great deal in realizing that it takes courage to make art, and to accept your art where it is. Twenty years after art school, (I attended the Alberta University of the Arts), I am making art again and I am grateful for this opportunity. A lot has changed and I like to think that my work evolves with me as I continue to make changes and grow in my own life. I am happy to share my work with the community of New Westminster.

“This body of work has been completed over the past year and has been highly influenced by my love of nature. Many of the paintings I complete are done when I am listening to relaxing music and are intuitive, in that I will often approach a canvas with a brush in hand, trying not to feel intimidated by the stare of the blank white canvas looking back at me. I have always had a love of nature and small things often stand out to me, the rain dripping off a flower, icicles hanging from a branch, a bird flying above me, the colour of a sunset. Everyday I try to be mindful of my surroundings and appreciate beauty and tranquility in my environment. I am fond of vibrant colours, but I also like ones that are more subtle.

“Often I use colour in an expressive manner to help portray a mood. I gravitate to the colour blue as I find this colour creates a sense of calm and I enjoy the range this colour provides. Several of my paintings are a combination of various mediums, as I like being able to add forms and structure to my work. I use custom made stencils, paint markers, and spray paint in quite a few of my pieces as I like the effect of mixed media. I also love drawing and studied drawing extensively while I was in art school many years ago.”

There are four double sided panels, covered with a beige carpet-like material, stacked in a line, running north-south. The panel faces are north facing and south facing. The panels are numbered 1 through 8, with 1 being the northernmost panel, 2 being the south facing panel on the rear side of panel 1, and so on, through panel 8 being the southernmost panel. I will describe five of the works. The paintings are mostly mounted one to a panel, except where noted.

Panel 1 – Orbital Blue (24”x36”, acrylic on canvas)

This larger, landscape-oriented painting has two large, almost circular objects near the centre of the work. The one on the left has a darker blue outline, dark and medium blue interior and the one on the right has a lighter blue outline, with a very light blue interior. The two circles seem to have textures radiating out from them – above them, lilac-coloured rays, both thick and thin head out from the top circle, and pass the top edge of the canvas. In the bottom right there are more complex textures circling out from the two central circles. The overall colours in the painting are many shades of blue, with a few different shades of purple – lilac, dark purple and medium purple.

Panel 2 – Something About an Eclipse (acrylic on canvas) in the upper position on the panel

This painting is similar in colour scheme to Euphoria. There are various shades of blue and teal, pink and purple. In the upper left corner is a dark section with the pale pink traced outline of a circle. Layered in front are various other circular shapes, some more clearly defined than others, including some that look more like flower shapes. There is a type of division down the centre of the work, though not a straight line. On the right of this line are other shapes that radiate out toward the outer edge of the canvas. Some of these radiating lines are soft curves, some are pointed peaks, some are more like sun rays. In the bottom right there is another dark area, this time textured over top with some thin white curved lines like hills receding in the distance or the scales on a fish.

Panel 3 – Winter Tranquility (24"x24", mixed media)

This work has a very calming palette of colours in a light purple, and green. To accentuate the designs there are also darker purples, darker greens, some yellows, pinks and blues. Just to the upper left of the centre of the work is a large, stylized snowflake shape, somewhat like a mandala. It has 16 points and the inside pattern looks almost like the inside of a flower. Around this shape are other snowflakes, some in relief, some just shadows, some with multi-coloured patterns, some with simple outlines, some that seem floral, some that seem like they have a grain motif. The background appears to radiate out from the main snowflake – with the snowflake images and the background, one almost has a sensation of twirling or spinning.

Panel 4 – Euphoria (24"x24", acrylic on wood panel)

This painting in the dominant colours of blue, purple and pink, has a variety of overlapping natural patterns. The shapes are slightly stylized and look like leaves, petals, grasses and other plant material. In the upper left there is a shape that appears to be scratched into the paint and looks like a birds nest with a round pink object inside. In the upper right there is the outline of a pink butterfly on a teal background. In the bottom right are some pink branches as well as some black tangled lines that look like string or vines. Throughout the work there is a strong diagonal feeling from lower left to upper right (culminating in the butterfly). Overall, the feeling is one of the riot of life.

Panel 5 – Winter Trees (acrylic on canvas)

This work is more angular than the others I've written about. There are two strong vertical lines in this work, on either side of the centre of the piece. The one on the left is darker and the one on the right is a very pale blue. Both have straight branches coming out of them that reach up toward the sky. From the top of each tree are straight diagonal lines reaching down to the very bottom of the frame. Those on the left side are black and those on the right side are white. These lines triangulate the tree shapes and recall more of a simplistic sailing ship shape. In the background on the left are some less defined tree trunks, and on the right are some spiky-looking foliage. Overall the colours in this work are blue, ranging from light to dark, with a bit of teal as well.