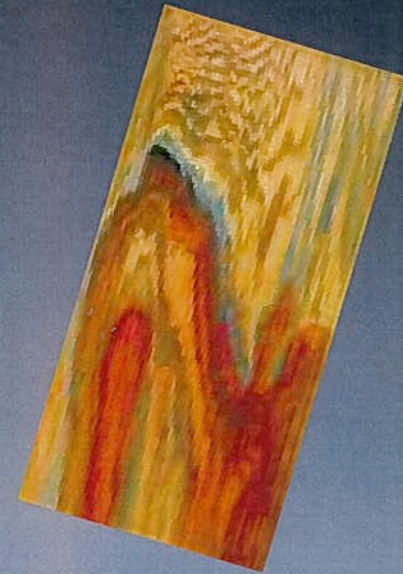
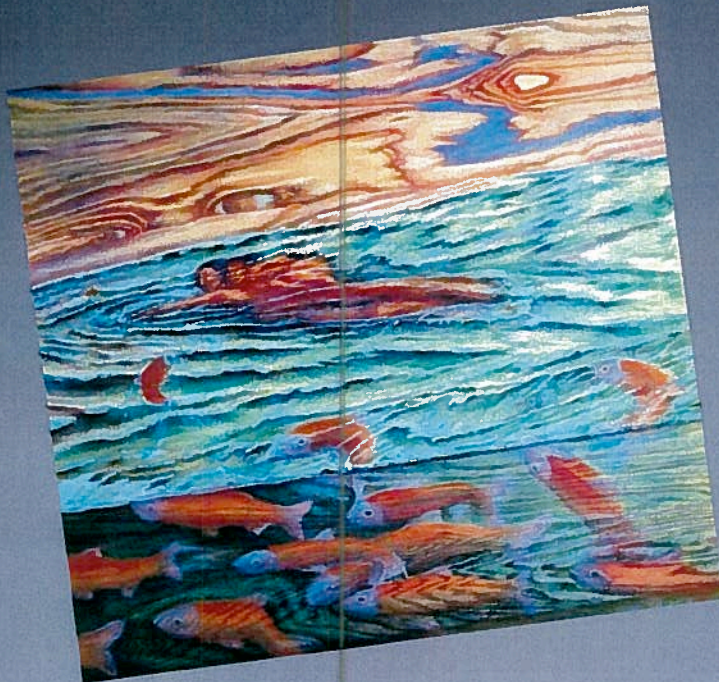


A Deeper Look into...
Lauralee Harris



By: Roman Belli



1) Ten points about her life that are interesting:

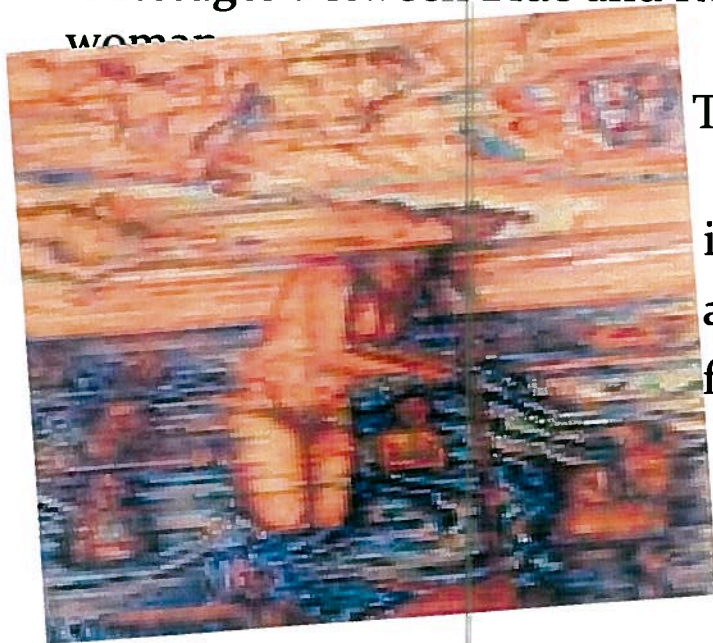
- Lauralee's mother, father and grandmother all were interested in art, which encouraged her artistic development.
- As a child she moved around a lot, which exposed her to many different art instructors, who introduced her to various styles of art (sculpture, copper enameling etc.)
- In the seventies, she was living in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where her father brought her to private art lessons, which enabled her to explore new areas of art.
- After meeting her husband, she attended the Forest Hill Art School, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Ontario College of Art and Design.
- Lauralee's first solo art exhibition was in 1988, and in 1993 she was nominated as Honour Student at the Ontario College of Art and Design.
- In 1994, she discovered that part of her heritage had been hidden when an unknown uncle came along. It was revealed to her that she was part Aboriginal.
- This Native exposure was not unique and the sadness and goodness of her people was what inspired his work.
- By 2000, Lauralee was showing internationally, and had won numerous awards (Award of Excellence and the Special Recognition Award in Omaha, Nebraska).
- Lauralee was represented by the Agora Gallery in Soho, New York, in 2001 and in 2002, had exhibits in both the US and Canada.
- Her work has been televised, in magazines and in collections worldwide and on news channels, as well as being in newspapers,



2) Discover her inspiration. What drives her to create such works of art?

What inspires her to create such works of art is the story the grains of wood are telling. She searches inside of God's creations to find the story they are telling. The wood gives her shapes and images from its grains, visually expressing the imagery, which is then echoed by an accompanying poem. Lauralee is also inspired by her Aboriginal heritage. For example, her painting

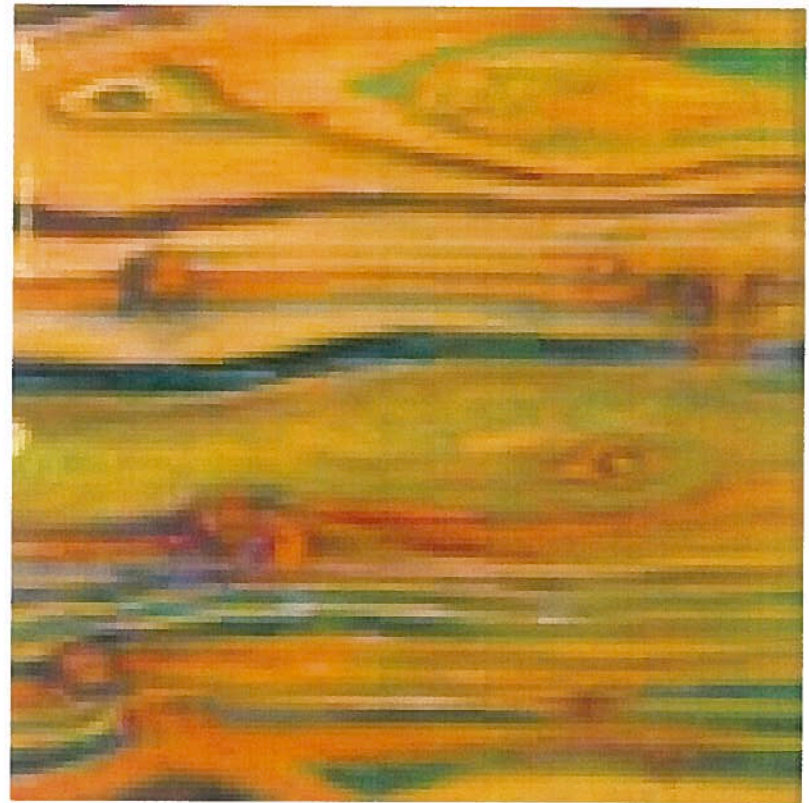
“Messages Between Blue and Red”



The discovery of her Aboriginal heritage has inspired her to search for meaning and take a deeper look inside herself to find her true feelings. Also, her father's death has taught her the meaning of irreplaceable and forever. Which has allowed her to appreciate the story the wood is telling.

3) Select your favourite piece of art made by Lauralee, and discuss it.

Deep Silence is truly remarkable. There are many faces and eyes hidden within this painting. I'm always discovering new things within this painting, which makes every viewing experience surprising. Also, the use of different hues adds contrast, and the warm and cool colours add different feelings throughout the painting. This painting also displays value because a pattern is created which leads the eye to the top of the painting. The poem for this painting describes how things change over time, as day goes into night and how new days bring new adventures and journeys. This painting introduces the idea that we keep our experiences and learn from them. Another thought I received from this painting is that the time we have with people is precious and should not be taken for granted. Lauralee's painting reflects a story almost everyone can relate to. I know I am definitely able to relate to this painting. My story was coming into high school, it was definitely something that had brought me new experiences with new lessons learned. I have greatly enjoyed coming into high school, which has made me realize that the time I have in high school is short. Time moves quickly, and I should seize every day as much as possible.

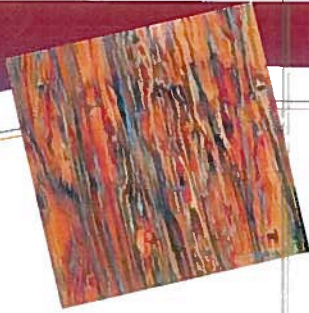


4) Select your favourite poem of Lauralee Harris and discuss it.

“Disappearing Into Her” is my favourite poem that Lauralee has written (<http://www.lauraleekharris.com/disapearing.html>). I chose this poem because it really shows her close relationship with her mother and grandmother. In this poem, the person is feeling another person within themselves (which is her mother and grandmother) and how they are becoming them. Although this poem makes reference to her mother, I think Lauralee wrote this more towards her grandmother. Her grandmother was the one who taught her about Aboriginal stories, without letting her secret out (<http://www.lauraleekharris.com/aboutartist.html>, paragraph 3), which inspired her to paint. After discovering her Aboriginal heritage Lauralee feels herself becoming her grandmother because all of her teachings became more meaningful. Also, this unknown heritage was able to live on in Lauralee because her grandmother had kept it a secret until her death. Another reason why I like this poem is that it switches from 1st to 3rd person. When in 1st person, we are able to feel how Lauralee is feeling, but in third person we get to observe and come up with our own thoughts and conclusions. The use of poetry with the painting is an expressive combination because the poem enables the artist to further emphasize the story the painting is telling. Poems that accompany her paintings echo what she was trying to visually express.



“I am disappearing into her
Lost in her grip
In all her glory”



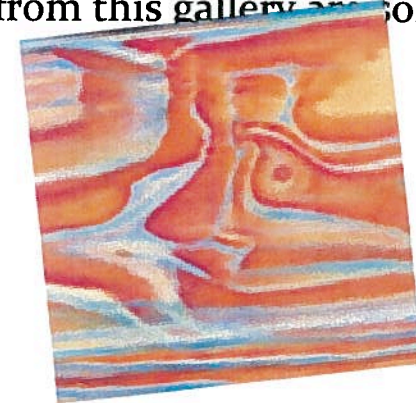
5) If talking to someone who didn't know Lauralee Harris, how would you describe her art? What would you say?

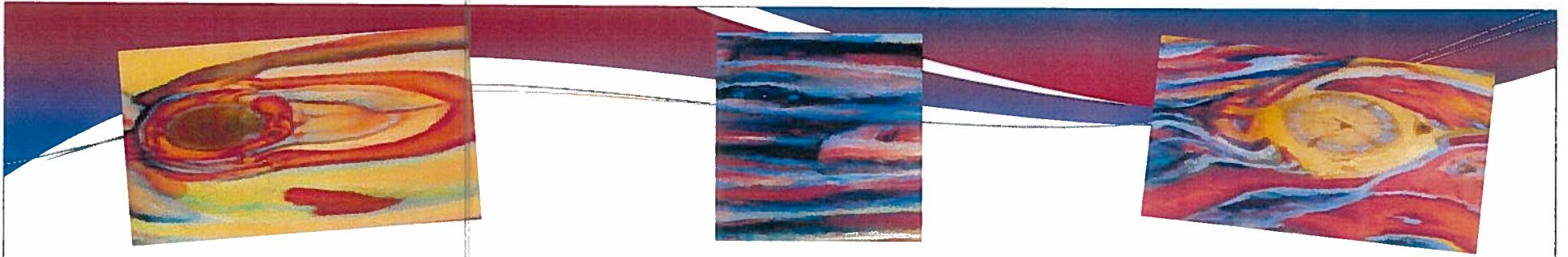
Lauralee's art is unique, creative, original and meaningful. Her work is unique, creative and original because I have never seen anything like it before. She uses grains in the woods to create a story! It is also unique because she adds a poem to each of her paintings. The work of Lauralee is meaningful because through the grains she finds stories that reflect her own life. She has lived a very artistic and eventful life, which would make each painting meaningful. Discovering about her Aboriginal heritage has also brought meaning to her paintings. Her work is also incredible because being limited to just the grains that inspire her to paint, she still comes up with masterpieces. I personally think that Lauralee is an outstanding artist, and her art work leaves me speechless. For how difficult it must be to paint the way she does, I have great respect for her. Her paintings can inspire anyone to put more meaning and creativity in everything they do, including art!



6) Go to her website and explore one of the virtual galleries. Write about the tour experience. What gallery did you visit? What were the reviews? What are her latest projects?

I toured "The Gallery of Messages Between Blue and Red." The reason why she named this gallery "Messages Between Blue and Red," is because blue is spiritual and red is physical. It is through the physical of the tree that she finds the spiritual meaning. I see in this gallery that blue and red are main colours in almost all her paintings. This gallery was excellent and I personally loved it. All the reviews I read were positive, even the reviews from the guestbook. Some people said her artwork was breathtaking. The Edmonton Journal said, "...But Lauralee goes out of her way to accent the woods prominent grains..." and, "...The wood grain of the plywood is enhanced rather than painted over..." The University of South Dakota said, "...Lauralee Harris developed her art into a meaningful way to convey life and its stories..." Her latest paintings are "Messages," "Lifting Up," and "Bear Moon." Over all, this is an incredible gallery. The reviews on this gallery are great and most of the paintings from this gallery are sold.





7) What differences do you think Lauralee has made in Canadian art? How has she been an advocate for Aboriginal art and expression?

Lauralee has made a difference on Canadian art because of her unique style. Her creative style has put a different image of what Canadian art is seen as. Therefore, her style of art will be done by other artist in the future and will be a style that will not be forgotten. It also made a difference because it is and will continue to inspire other Canadian artist to bring more meaning to their art work, just as she has done. Her work has had such great success, that it has most likely made people interested in other kinds of Canadian art, which would have a positive effect in an economic way. Besides having an effect on Canadian art, she has had an effect environmentally because her art teaches us to appreciate God's creations (animals and most importantly trees). She has been an advocate for Aboriginal art and expression because Aboriginal people have been living under the shadow of the other races of Canada (her own family had to hide their heritage). After discovering her Aboriginal heritage, she used her art work to express her heritage. Through this, respect and hospitality was created towards the Aboriginal people. Therefore, she became the voice of the Aboriginals. She has also been an advocate for the Aboriginal people because her art gives the message, its what we do that defines us and not what we are.

8) Why is it that Lauralee feels the need to contribute part of her earnings to the Anishnawbe Health of Toronto? How do artists use their works as ways to expose and address social issues?

Lauralee feels the need to contribute part of her earnings to Anishnawbe Health of Toronto because a big part of her culture was and is about giving back to the community. Doing this is what has sustained her culture because everyone is contributing for the better of the community. She choose the AHT because of the nature of the health program. It helps people in traditional ways, and helps where her people are hurting the most (the Aboriginals have gone through a lot of painful events throughout the years). This is a part of herself she didn't know about as a child (her hidden heritage), so donating is her way for catching up for the lost time. Lauralee doesn't use her art to address social issues. She thinks of her work as the healing of the social issues, because pointing fingers creates bitterness. Although, some of her earlier work does address social issues. "Reflections of 1497," "The Whisper," and "The Day the Order Changed" are her paintings that address social issues of racism, abuse and poverty of the Aboriginal peoples. Lauralee wants to put aside the social issues and work together with everyone for the greater good of the world (and Mot

