

Artist Profile

Laura Tesar

writer

FORT ST. JOHN — To writer Laura Tesar, “getting the thought down quickly” is the important first step in creating a short story or poem.

She may go back and edit, but she doesn’t look for perfection in the initial writing process.

Tesar took Writing 12 at North Peace Secondary School and went on to take several English and creative writing courses at Northern Lights

College, where she is currently in her second year of undergraduate studies in English. She plans to go on to finish her degree at the University of Northern British Columbia next year.

Some of her favourite writers are the 19th century Romantic poets. With the cadence of these writers firmly in her mind, Tesar looks to create poetry that is more contemporary.

This emerging writer has already been published — in the well-known feminist journal *Room of One’s Own*, as well as in UNBC’s *Reflections on Water*, an online quarterly publication showcasing work by northern B.C. artists and authors. Laura’s short story, “Something Warm”, appears in the March issue, which can be accessed at the following Web site: otaku.unbc.ca/row/v2n2/prose/tesar.html.

A versatile writer, Laura often works with different genres, writing a short poem or a longer narrative poem and then turning it into a short story.

Laura says that she uses her writing to comment on society. “I like to think it has a deeper message, and that it’s not merely for entertainment,” says Tesar.

Some of the themes she deals with are the discontentment and isolation that people feel.

“There are so many books written — if you’re going to write something, you might as well say something,” she says.

Asked whether she writes from real-life situations, Tesar says that the things she sees around her come out in her writing. “I fictionalize people around me. I start with a grain of truth and exploit the situation.”

Laura says that she doesn’t find writing difficult, but “knowing what’s not good writing is hard”. She is learning to edit her own work, to “come back to it” to improve and polish it.

Laura has submitted an entry to the B.C. Festival of the Arts literary arts section, otherwords 2001, in the poetry category.



Laura Tesar

— contributed

Artist Profile

Brenda Wakely

carver



Brenda Wakely

Isolation does strange things to people.

For Brenda Wakely, life in the north provided the time and opportunity for her to begin and perfect her craft of carving. Although her early works were created from wood, the past 15 years have seen the evolution to bone, antler and, most recently, marble.

A long-time resident of northern B.C. and mother of three grown sons, Brenda has had

no formal training in carving but has always enjoyed “making something out of nothing”.

Brenda starts with a piece of antler, such as caribou, studies it “until I see something in it” and then begins to carve. She leans toward contemporary expression rather than traditional northern works like wildlife carvings.

Her latest piece, entitled “For The Moment”, is entered in the B.C. Festival of the Arts. Carved from caribou antler and set on a marble base, Brenda describes it as a hooded male whose arms are tentacles with suction cups on the ends, wearing a flowing cloak and partially exposing his face. His upper torso shows protruding ribs and his body turns into a tongue, which eventually twists into the form of a woman. In her interpretation, anything can happen with these two, but “for the moment” they are in harmony.

Once she has chosen the antler, Brenda uses a dremmel tool to sand and smooth it. The tool operates at such a high speed, she must use caution or a day’s work can be easily lost. From there she proceeds with hand tools — a file, sandpaper and a scalpel. Once finished, her work is polished to a high gloss, either with a chamois or with oil from the hands. The average piece takes a minimum of three weeks to create.

Brenda’s skill is evident in her work, but her talent, she says, is patience. She once spent two months on an island, sitting by the ocean, carving. “That’s my greatest gift — patience. And a good pair of gloves,” she says.

Her carving future may include glass and something she calls the “lost wax process”, but her real dream is to be able to make a living selling her artwork. She says, “My goal is to live through my art.”

Brenda’s work has been entered and acknowledged in three previous competitions. Brenda’s carvings are showcased throughout the Peace, and can be viewed at Peace Gallery North, the Dawson Creek Art Gallery, the festival office and, after May 24, at the visual arts exhibit in the Kids’ Arena.

— contributed

B.C. FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 2001

Five dancers to represent FSJ at festival of the arts

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Where in the world is Arthur Festival?

Mr. Festival will soon be on the move in Fort St. John and you can participate by telling us where you saw him by entering your name in a special prize draw.

Keep watching for further details as this fun contest develops.

The Festival is banking on your support.

Specially designed Loonie-Toonie banks will be on display at various locations around our community. Please show your support for the B.C. Festival of the Arts by donating a loonie or a toonie to help us raise funds for this exciting event.

Fancy an Easter egg? Or should that be would you like a fancy Easter egg?

Whichever your pleasure Friday, April 13 is Good Friday and the Totem Mall is the place for kids 12-years-old and under to learn how to decorate eggs for Easter.

Join fellow egg decorators from 1-3 p.m. There will be prizes!

The B.C. Festival of the Arts will be at the CKNL Trade Show, April 21-23.

Let us entertain you with a variety of live performances. We will be on stage at the annual trade show, and so will Mr. Arthur Festival.

Community stage needs your talent!

Show off your talent at our outdoor stage, May 29 to June 3. Interested performers only need apply.

Call the B.C. Festival of the Arts office at 785-1400 or pick up an application form at 10120-100 Street, in Fort St. John.

Fashion yourself in the park.

Wearable art is the theme at On Stage in Centennial Park, June 2 at 3 p.m.

Come to the park as a work of art and be part of the wearable art fashion show! Dress your pet and your friends.

Prizes will be awarded for most creative, most unusual and best dressed pet.

Delegate Dance will be a fun and exciting evening of dancing and socializing for all of the festival youth delegates and community youth.

Systems by Trail will present a video dance 7-11 p.m. on Thursday, May 31 at the Fort St. John Curling Club. Tickets are \$5 and are available at the following locations: North Peace Secondary School, Bert Bowes Junior Secondary

School and Dr. Kearney Junior Secondary School.

In other festival news:

The qualifying provincial delegates for the dance division of the performing arts portion of the B.C. Festival of the Arts who will represent Peace River North are as follows:

- Level I, Ballet, 10-12 years: Shiau Jeun Kao-Phan;
- Level II, Ballet, 13-14 years: Megan Green;
- Level III, Ballet, 15-18 years: Lindsay Schneider;
- Level III, Modern, 15-18 years: Mackenzie Guy;
- Level I Stage, 10-12 years: Breanne Boettcher;
- Level II, Stage, 13-14 years: Emry Ziprick;
- Level III, Stage, 15-18 years: Jodi Stevens.

Next Thursday watch for the profiles of the above budding artists that will represent the North Peace B.C. Festival of the Arts.

— contributed



B.C. Festival of the Arts to be held in Fort St John

The Launch of the 2001 BC Festival of the Arts took place at the North Peace Cultural Centre in Fort St. John, B.C. on October 14, 2000 at 8 pm.

The Launch event is the official kick off to the 18th BC Festival of the Arts, the province's largest multidiscipline event for emerging artists from across British Columbia. Hosted in 2001 by B.C.'s "energetic city" the Fort St. John Launch, entitled "Change The World", features an impressive line up of some of the area's best artists and performers, each representing a taste of what's to come during the Festival from May 29-June 3, 2001.

The BC Festival of the Arts offers exciting workshops, master classes and performances in theatre, visual arts, literary arts, song writing, media arts, performing arts and the Indigenous arts. Each year also sees a new initiative in multicultural programming.

Emerging artists should watch for the annual Festival Call for Entry poster distributed throughout the province starting the first week of November.

Fort Nelson News
Oct 17, 2000

AT A GLANCE



AROUND AND AROUND WE GO

Mike Heintzman photo

Mary Tylosky spins romney wool on a louet spinning wheel at the 'Cultural Corridor' at the North Peace Cultural Centre on Saturday. The Fort St. John artistic community is gearing up to host the B.C. Festival of the Arts 2001 from May 29 to June 3. The sneak preview was capped off by an evening performance of "Change the World", directed by Cultural Centre manager Gordon Grant. The performance featured local dancers, musicians, and First Nations performers.

Editorial

Bad choice by council

Not to beat a dead horse, but ...

Fort St. John city council's financial policies are as baffling as ever. Just this week the council handed over \$30,000 to the B.C. Festival of the Arts.

Granted, the B.C. Festival of the Arts has the potential to put Fort St. John on the map and maybe open up some Vancouver eyes as to the beauty and productivity of the Peace. However, the Festival has just as much potential to be an utter flop.

Organizers have, not surprisingly, had trouble convincing local hoteliers to hold rooms during the duration of the event for visiting delegates. As a result organizers have turned to Dawson Creek for accommodation guarantees.

If delegates have to be ferried between the Mile Zero and Energetic Cities during the event you can bet they won't leave Fort St. John with anything but a sour taste in their mouths.

If councilors wanted to really help the B.C. Festival of the Arts they should have sat down with local hoteliers, or if they wanted to be both innovative and radical

they could have offered the hoteliers a tax break or some other monetary incentive (seeing as how they clearly have tons of money to toss around, even though they can't fork over \$7,500 for a summer student for the local RCMP detachment) in exchange for holding rooms.

But that's neither here nor there. What is even more worrisome is that council opted for the risky short-term investment over the guaranteed long-term one.

When the B.C. Festival of the Arts is long dead and gone, not to mention forgotten, the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association, which is devoted to promoting Fort St. John and the rest of the Peace region, will still be here ... hopefully.

The NRAHTA is suffering financially and may be forced to cut back on their services. An extra influx of cash could prevent that.

\$30,000 spent on the NRAHTA is a blue chip investment, not a Bre-X deal. You have to ask yourself, would you tolerate your financial advisor taking Bre-X over Microsoft?

—Wade Tymchak