

THE DAILY MUSE

BRINGING THE WORK OF ARTISTS TO THE COMMUNITY.



Featured Artist: Carolyn MacKean

Carolyn MacKean is a highly skilled rug hooker.

When a friend asked Carolyn MacKean back in 2007 if she would like to try rug hooking, MacKean had to admit she wasn't really sure what the art was. That quickly changed. Within minutes of following the instructions of rug hooking teacher Linda Marchbank, MacKean was hooked and knew it was something she wanted to pursue. She put aside her other crafts pursuits, other than quilting, to dive into rug hooking and has been immersed in it ever since. She speaks the language of rug hooking and has invested in quality tools that, combined with her talent, result in beautiful pieces of art. She has taken a variety of rug hooking courses including: Bringing Animals to Life, Portraits, Geometrics, Celtic, William Morse, Maud Lewis and Large Flowers. On her agenda is a course in fine shading.

For MacKean it is about more than the actual hooking of a rug. She creates her own designs and has a good eye for colour. She takes immense pleasure in crafting rugs that are both beautiful and practical. Her design work leans towards an old fashioned look as she likes to produce a creation that looks like it has been around forever. She prefers to design and hook large rugs that go on the floor over smaller pieces that serve other purposes. **She counts a hooked portrait of her mother who was in her late nineties at the time of its creation as one of her most prized pieces.**

MacKean says rug hooking can be an expensive endeavour. She uses linen backings for her rugs as she finds it easier on her hands than burlap. She works strictly with one hundred percent wool fabric for the rug hooking strands. She does some dyeing of wool fabric, but when possible prefers to purchase the material, which she then cuts to the desired strand size. MacKean says she has enough wool for the next twenty years. "I see a lovely piece of material and though I have no idea what I might do with it, I find myself buying it knowing I will get to it someday."

MacKean's favourite place to hook is the special corner of her house that she has permanently set up. She spends a lot of time in that corner as well as hooking with the Lady Slipper Rug Hookers who meet on Wednesdays at the Lefurgy Cultural Centre from early fall to late spring.

MacKean has never sold a mat. She says her reason for not selling is that the cost of the materials and time invested makes the finished product expensive and not many people understand its true value and thus are not willing to pay the price. So rather than allowing her mats to go for a mere fraction of their value she prefers to give them away to family, and as donations to charitable organizations to use for fundraisers. Anderson House and The Prince County Hospital are her top charity choices. But now that she does have a small pile of rugs rolled up in a closet, she is giving some consideration to selling. But her wish is that following her death all her mats will end up in a second hand store and people with knowledge of the history of rug hooking and a love for the art will walk through the doors and say, "Oh my God, look what I have found. I have struck gold." But hopefully that occurrence is many years down the road.



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