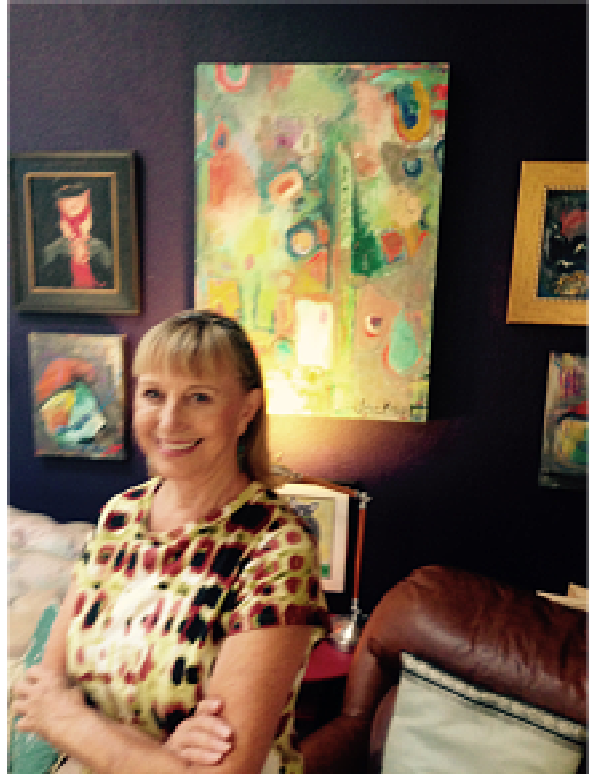


Art From The Heart

by Bruce Evans and Peg English

When you step over the threshold of Judy Muller Jackson's condo in Marysville, you enter an amazing world of art and artistry. Dozens and dozens of works of art—oils, pastels, acrylics, inks, encaustics, collages, ceramics, mosaics, pieces in clay or glass—hang on the walls, line the floors, and fill storage drawers in all rooms of the unit, an expressive testimony to Judy's energy and her ever-questing spirit.

"I've been at it 20 years," she says passionately, "and I feel like I'm just beginning. I'm not even close to winding down."



For Judy, her work is a means to self-discovery. "I have no idea where my ideas come from," she says. "You start with a blank canvas and you're just in the moment and letting it talk to you. Being spontaneous is more important than being accurate. The perfect is not interesting to me. Imperfections make us unique. I'm like a child playing with color and texture. I paint my life, I paint my heart." Sometimes she'll get so absorbed in a piece that she'll work on it for eight or nine hours at a time. Once she redid the canvas of an abstraction in mixed media with collage elements 16 times before she was satisfied with it.

It was in mid-life that Judy found that she had a zeal and a talent for art, after having been a wife (three marriages, two children) and a full-time employee. After high school, she worked at the Henri de Navarre/Cafe de Paris restaurant in Edmonds. Moving on to a second career, she became a mechanic at Boeing, working on the assembly of 747s and also battling a "sexist culture," a "good old boy network." Once, for example, she had a lead job but her supervisor failed to support her, challenging her by giving her "two days to prove myself in building the airplane physically. I stayed on to do just that and later trained to be an electrician in interiors where I worked."

At 55, Judy retired from Boeing and began taking classes in art and acting at Everett Community College "to explore what was in me." She appeared in four plays at the college, taking the lead in one in a role that required her to shave her head. In the process, she gained an appreciation for actors and the craft of acting. Her art classes—in drawing, design, and clay—led to a 1997 showing of her work in an Everett art gallery. The showing "spurred" her

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growth as an artist. She also participated in workshops in Oregon, France, and Mexico. She has sold some of her pieces and has produced a commissioned cover for a book called *Thersites at Troy*. She hopes to show her work on the Internet in the future. Meanwhile, enthusiastically, she keeps producing art at her home in Marysville. When gray winter comes to the Northwest she slips away for four months to Puerto Vallarta, where she also has a studio in which she makes prints and works with clay.



Judy makes art, she says, "for the joy of creating and a sense of purpose in my life. I don't dwell on negative events; my focus is always on the solution of what is in front of me. I'm pretty intuitive in what I do. I break rules. I don't want to be in a box. I'm an eclectic kind of girl."