

Ann-Rosemary Conway:

A creative endeavour

BY CAROLE AUDET



Photos: Carole Audet

Spending time with Ann-Rosemary Conway, one quickly becomes aware this is no ordinary woman. An indescribable force with an infectious laugh, and whose spirit is simultaneously young and wise, she's an artist in a

class all her own.

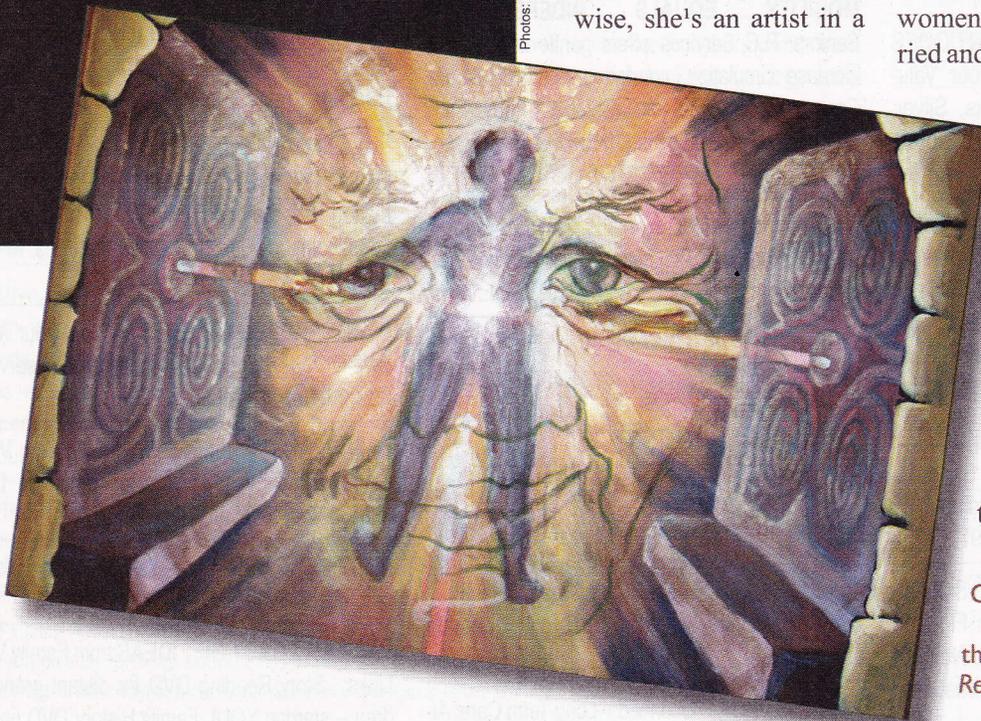
Born 71 years ago in Victoria, Conway's artistic exploration sprouted at the age of three when she drew on the walls of her home. Even at that impressionable age, she felt her art should be permanent and wouldn't co-operate when asked to clean the walls.

Following the path many young women took at that time, Conway married and started a family. She continued

to create and experiment with her art during this time, more for honouring her need than as a way to make a living. The birth of her fourth child, a daughter born with a physical handicap, propelled Conway's life on a different course.

"When I was handed a handicapped child and they said leave it in this vast institution, I said 'no.' I can do some-

Conway rarely names her paintings. She says she'll only name them if someone asks. This one is *Reconnecting with the Ancient Ones*.



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thing," she recalls. "I can give her my love, if nothing else — and my creativity."

In 1967, after many years of living in eastern Canada and the United States, she packed up her children, left her marriage, and moved back to Victoria. Five days after her arrival, she signed up for lessons to obtain her pilot's licence, a passion she hadn't been free to pursue during her marriage. Then, two years later, she enrolled at the University of Victoria and, by 1972, completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree.

"Going back to university was like a lifeline," she says. "It made sense. It supported me so then I had something to give to my children."

Throughout her artistic career, Conway has worked primarily with acrylics. Using her skills in printmaking and papermaking, Conway's pieces offer form and texture that is

entirely unique. From her home studio in Saanich, Conway has now started exploring another medium in her so-called retirement.

"Artists don't get to retire — there's no such thing — you just carry on," she says. "But I have made a new turn... I was looking to do something different so I plunged into sculpture using my print-making ability."

One thing, however, has remained constant in Conway's creations.

"To me, art is not just a medium or a surface thing, it's a message. I'm more interested in the meaning or depth of the piece.

"I take creativity into every facet of my life," says Conway. "I'm an artist and I don't consider that stops with just the canvas or the sculpture. I see my whole life as a creative endeavour."

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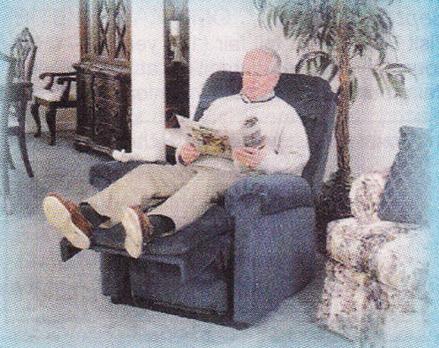
"Going back to university was like a lifeline."
—Ann-Rosemary Conway

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