

arts

*Unlimited Possibilities***SHEA STANFIELD
ARTS COLUMNIST**

Author Stephanie Perkins wrote, "A blank canvas has unlimited possibilities." For local artist Barbara Drake, the realization of the "unlimited possibilities" came very early in life. Her first experience with artistic success was realized in kindergarten when she won the best of class award for her painting. That award set young Barbara off on a life filled with fun, creativity, and the realization that being creative was not just a hobby, it is a way of life.



Growing up in the town of Toledo, Ohio, known as the glass capital of the world, provided young students with a multitude of cultural and fine arts experiences. School field trips to the Toledo Museum of Art, according to Barbara, "were mysterious forays into other worlds." Within its walls were a Greek revival version of the Parthenon, a replica of a medieval home, and cases of



Pictured: Barbara Drake

Egyptian mummies, all vying for the imagination of their young viewers. The museum exhibits also introduced students to the enchantment, romance and turmoil of later worlds in art through the works of Rembrandt, Rubens, Van Gogh, Monet, El Greco, and Picasso.

Barbara earned her B.A. degree from the University of Toledo, Magna cum laude, specializing in business and labor relations. To balance out her creative side, she went on to earn a certification in interior design as well. Barbara reflects on her "art education" as, "beginning by painting local parks and historical buildings, plein air, with her children



in tow," with guidance from Life and Look magazine artist George Jensen.

Today, retired in Goldfield Ranch, near Fountain Hills, AZ, Barbara continues her education, attending workshops offered by local instructors; Bill Lundquist, portraits, Tom Haas, David Flitner and Becky Joy, with landscapes.

Currently, Barbara works for her home studio in Goldfield

Ranch. She would describe her current work as, "influenced by the subtle nuances of light and atmosphere in the landscape." Barbara derives inspiration from a number of sources around her; sometimes it's a face in the crowd, a lush field of wildflowers, or fuzzy little critters that occupy space with us in the high Sonoran desert. She considers creating art as an intense experience, just you, the canvas, imagination, and hope. In Barbara's case, a whole lot of natural talent and years of perfecting her skills are the magic ingredients that successfully pull the process into beautifully rendered works.

In an effort to have fun and stay connected with her community, Barbara reserves Tuesdays for a "Smilz with Frenz" day. A group of artists, from the Fountain Hills Art League, join her for a day of play, experimentation with new products, and sharing of newly discovered ideas. This way they keep their skills and their arts community fresh, alive, fun, and supportive. As a result, Barbara enjoys the patronage of collectors across the country; many have been with her for years, decorating their homes and offices with beautifully rendered, inspirational works.

Barbara will be participating in the Fountain Hills Art Fair, Feb. 24-26, 2017, booth 39. During March 3, 4, and 5, 2017, Barbara Drake will be participating in the 6th annual Fountain Hills Artist Studio Tour "Tour d' Artistes" from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. each day. Her studio will be located at 15203 E. Ridgeway Drive, off Palisades Blvd. Maps are available at www.fountainhillsartleague.com.

To view a wide selection of artist Barbara Drake's work, keep up with her schedule of events, or to contact her, visit her web site, www.barbaradrakefineartgallery.com.

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