



Artist:

Joan C. Urquhart

Credentials:

Honors B.A in Art & Art History, McMaster University
B.Ed, Brock University

Biography:

I live in Burlington, Ontario where I work to combine printmaking and bookbinding processes. I received an Honors BA in Art & Art History from McMaster University (where I was influenced by printmaker/sculptor George Wallace), and a B.Ed. from Brock University (with special teaching qualifications in Visual Art and Special Education). I have taught Visual Art for the Hamilton Board of Education and for the Art Gallery of Burlington.

Before finding my way back to printmaking, I worked with local potters for 10 years to learn about clay. As a result of building a series of large figurative ceramic sculptures, I was offered direct entry into the final year of Sheridan College's Ceramic Arts Program where I learned about glaze technology from Bruce Cockrane.

For me, the creative process matters more than the finished product. Experimentation is a key ingredient in all of my artwork. I believe that each art medium offers unique properties (like learning a language) that need to be exploited for the sake of self-expression; it takes time to become fluent. My work is figurative, representational, and expressionistic. Although I continue to be captivated by portraits, for the past 10 years I have studied the birds of Burlington Bay as a source of imagery.

My artistic process is also inspired by my work with children. Having previously participated in Hamilton's Artists at the Centre project as a Visiting Artist (in Ontario Early Years Centres and in day care settings) as well as most recently in the Artists and Children Together (ACT) initiative, this is where I learned to practice a *pedagogy of listening*. This practice has transformed my perception of teaching; it means thinking of art materials as languages, as tools that make children's thinking visible. It means listening deeply to children's theories of the world, and sharing the art skills (and time) needed to express their ideas. It means also thinking of teachers as co-researchers with children. As such, I am someone who gets to follow their journeys in a wondrous way. By documenting their creative processes in an effort to tell their learning stories, I have met so many unique young minds; through this practice, I am constantly amazed by the rich intelligence of every child I meet, and therefore, continue to advocate for the right to creative expression for every child.

Currently, I am experimenting with book arts, developing a maker space for bookbinders and book artists at Burlington Public Library, and am developing my own one-of-a-kind books. Current projects include: a hand bound book that contains my poetry (called The Smoking Suites), and a hand bound book with small etchings of Trumpeter Swans and Canada Geese (called Birds on Burlington Bay).