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'Creative Warriors' coming to Manchester

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Special to the Journal

MANCHESTER — The Creative Warriors are coming to town. This dynamic group of artists and writers will be sharing their art and their journey on Wednesday, Oct. 17 as the feature event of the Greater Manchester Arts Council's "Life After Dark" program. The Inn at Manchester is hosting the Warriors with an Exhibition and Opening Reception which will be free to the public from 6 to 8 p.m.

The Creative Warriors is the creation of sculptural gourd artist Serena Kovalosky, who, in 1997, decided to leave "the corporate world" to dedicate herself to becoming a full-time artist. It was a choice worthy of needing to become a "warrior" to accomplish. She started using the term Creative Warrior on her business card and the name was born. Kovalosky rented a loft in Montreal's "So-Ho" District and began fulfilling her dream. But she found she needed the creative and emotional support and reinforcement from other artists to keep her motivated and inspired. Creative Warriors was born out of a need to network and a need for encouragement from a peer group. The goal of the first group was to "raise the bar" on their creative work, to be able to network, to co-mentor and co-motivate each other, and most of all, to share ideas of marketing and selling their work.

In December 2006, she created a Creative Warriors Challenge: For one year they'd work with only one group, to co-mentor each other into achieving their individual creative goals. The five who responded to Kovalosky's original challenge are all represented in this exhibition which is the culmination of the first Warrior Year.

Sandra Archbold and Mary Ward are two fiber artists dedicated to their individual visions of the art of quilting. Archbold, from Granville, N.Y., has a background in Fashion Design and has worked in the fashion industry where she discovered her passion for fabric, quilting and wearable art. Her goal as an artist is to create beautiful, functional clothing that will stand the test of time and will be a piece of art as well. Her goal with "the Warriors" was to design a unique line of kimonos to be worn or hung as art. She will exhibit her quilted wall hangings as well as a



COURTESY PHOTOS

Above, a wallhanging made by Mary Ward, one of the "Creative Warriors." Below, an example of Serena Kovalosky's gourd art.

prototype of her kimono. Archbold has won awards in many national shows and last year won Best in Show at the Hildene Needlecraft Show. She currently gives workshops and lectures on "Where Ideas Come From."

Mary Ward is a self taught artist born on a dairy farm in Argyle, N.Y. In her quilted wall hangings she invites you into her "enchanted world." She tells a story and communicates her artistic vision in her fabric and design choices. Her Warrior goal was to create a series of quilted art pieces to be shown in galleries.

Ann Butwell is an abstract watercolorist who explores the process of healing in her work. A car accident radically changed her life in 1992. The experience continues to influence her work as she looks for a universal language to communicate her feelings and discoveries. She sometimes uses a variety of two dimensional media to get a full range of values and expression.

"My primary goal as a Creative Warrior was to do a solo show. I never would have believed that by the end of the year, I not only got to exhibit in a very successful show, but I was offered the perfect job where I'll have plenty of time to work on my art."

Butwell has recently moved to Minneapolis but is being represented as the show by several paintings "which will move and touch a piece of your soul," she said.

Portrait artist Winnie Pino explores in her oil paintings the question and seduction of physical beauty.

As a girl she was fascinated by how girls, herself included, loved to play with make-up, hair and dress.

"Two decades later, I'm still fascinated by these obsessive masquerading rituals. But what you see isn't always what you get," said Pino.

"The support of the Warriors helped me to persevere when I started questioning if I should continue writing." — MARY HOLLAND



Her oil paintings are intense, powerful and passionate. A recent graduate of Maryland Institute College of Art, Pino has exhibited at the Hyde Museum in Glens Falls, N.Y. and the Corcoran Museum of Art in Washington, D.C. She has done undergraduate studies at Sage College in Albany, Skidmore, and Parson School of Design in Paris. She came to the Warriors to develop her creative network and "to get her work out there."

Creative Warrior and author Mary Holland will be reading excerpts from her upcoming novel, "The Spaces In Between," a fictional journey towards a world we have yet to discover. Holland's journey began in Sandgate. She has been involved with international corporations, been a restaurant owner, a community organizer, typesetter, and a writer. As a result of a physical trauma, she was drawn to the study of ancient healing practices. Her many life's experiences and an underlying desire to affect social change has inspired her first novel.

"The support of the Warriors helped me to persevere when I started questioning if I should continue writing," she said.

Warrior Founder and gourd artist Serena Kovalosky will exhibit her organic and earthy hand-carved dried gourd sculptures and vessels. Using gold and copper leaf, special stains and unusual pyroengraving techniques, she pays homage to her passion for natural materials and the primitive form.

"In my gourd work, I prefer to respect the 'wonkyness' of the gourd's organic shape," she said. "I'll work for hours carving the rim of a bowl so that it enhances the gourd's primal form."

The Creative Warriors Exhibition at the Inn at Manchester in Manchester Village celebrates the end of the first Warrior Year and will continue until Nov. 15.