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### **Brief Biography**

I was raised in Milwaukie, Oregon. I developed a strong interest in art before middle school, but it was Ann Mckosh, then with Maude Kerns Art Gallery, who finally convinced me that it wouldn't be irresponsible to get a degree in fine art. I took a degree from the Pacific Northwest College of Art in 1987. Victoria Frey of Quartersaw Gallery, gave me an early opportunity to show after graduation. Since then, I have been making space for painting while enjoying my family, and my love for deep snow and mountain spaces, in Bend, Oregon.

### **Brief Statement**

I am fascinated by ancient peoples and how old the earth is. I am intrigued by old stories and myths that give explanations to age old questions. They often portray the natural world with reverence and respect. Painting is my way of working out my questions about life's mystery. I try to keep that feeling of mystery and open meaning in my images.

I paint animals, fish, water and landscape as symbols of the continuity of life's cycles. I begin the process by placing a few marks, varied lines, and smudges. I add wet color washes and draw marks in puddles of pigment. From wet to dry, I build upon layers. A figure catches my eye, and the story begins. Blurring my focus, I can visualize the composition from my gestures, like seeing figures in the clouds.

The greatest motivation for me to paint is the feeling. The images arrive, whispering to my consciousness.

### **Painting Information**

*Raven Brings the Salmon* ~ Triptych painting 42" h by 90" w. Acrylic paint and drawing materials on archival quality hardboard panels.

In Native American myths, all things in nature have a special kind of life, and are personified. Humans and animals move freely between their worlds. These myths tell of a time when the spirits of humans and animals were intertwined. Their personalized view of nature can cultivate respect and reverence for the earth, and effect how we make decisions in using earth's resources. The raven, salmon/water, and fir trees are the focus in my painting *Raven Brings the Salmon*. In native myths and legends, the raven is a powerful creator and trickster character. In one story, *The Raven Steals the Salmon from the Beaver House*, from the Haida tribe, Raven steals salmon from the beavers by turning lakes, rivers, and streams into a roll and carries them away in his strong beak. Some of the

water and fish fell from the roll, and created many lakes and streams along the Pacific Northwest coast. Raven's final destination was the Haida Islands, which were spattered with little lakes and small but rich streams. Even today, those streams are refuge each year for millions of spawning salmon.

Richard Nelson, in *Making Prayers to Raven*, describes stories from the Koyukon people of Alaska, and gives an example of how trees are personified in myth by the Koyukon: Mink-man went to several tree-women and told them that their husband Raven had been killed. When one woman heard the story, she cried and pinched her skin. Then she was changed into a spruce tree, with its rough and pinched bark. When another heard it, she cried and slit her skin with a knife. She became a poplar, with its deeply cut bark. When a third woman was told the story, she cried and pinched herself until she bled. She turned into the alder, whose bark is used to make red dye. These stories contributed to the image of my painting *Raven Brings the Salmon*. There are three separate stories that flow one into the other. There are three paintings, framed as one, combined in a balance to symbolize earth, water, and air, and the interdependence of each.

*Creation ~ Acrylic and mixed media on marine grade plywood 66" x 66".*

Finding a myth to inspire this painting was a great challenge. The committee wanted me to find a story from a local tribe, which required a lot of research. The majority of published stories from local tribes didn't have anything to do with forest issues. The myth that finally filled my creative void was "*How Old Man Above Created the World*," from the Shasta tribe. I found this myth in *Myths and Legends of the Pacific Northwest*, selected by Katharine Berry Judson. The Shasta tribe lived in northern California, and near the Klamath River, but perished when gold miners and prospectors arrived in 1855-1860. (Richard Erdoes, *American Indian Myths and Legends*, p. 516). I found all of the elements I was looking for in this myth. The fish, animals, and grizzlies were created from a stick, and all birds were created from leaves blown by the creator, Chareya (Old Man Above). The tree ties all the species together, which perfectly describes a healthy forest ecosystem.

Myths are a rich source for developing imagery because their symbols are so universal. They speak to a primal source within me which I then express through the creative process of intuitive marks, drawing, and painting.