

RECENT GRADUATES OF FIBRE ARTS-TRADITIONAL RUG HOOKING

by Pam Langdon, with contributions from Jayne Nevins, Carol Shewan and Kim Slade

“Honouring Recipients of Fibre Arts-Traditional Rug Hooking” said the Master of Ceremony Doug Roughton, Campus Dean, as he introduced us one at a time to the audience—Pamela Langdon, Jayne Nevins, Carol Shewan, and Kim Slade. Cheered on by the crowd, we walked across the stage to shake the congratulatory hand of Glenn Vollebregt, President and CEO of St. Lawrence College (SLC) on the 29th of May, 2015. A glorious moment in the sun in recognition of our achievement! An amazing marker for the significant amount of work and fun we had throughout the program! While poignant, the Convocation included a slight irony: Earlier that day some of us were mistaken by the volunteers of SLC as parents of our 120 fellow graduates from other programs. We shared a good laugh about that!



*Photo of graduates and instructor, Laura Boszoermny, of the Fibre Arts-Traditional Rug Hooking at St Lawrence College. L to R: Kim Slade, Laura Boszoermny, Carol Shewan, Jayne Nevins, Pam Langdon**

The Fibre Arts Program at St. Lawrence College Brockville is the brainchild of now retired OHCG teacher and guru, Joan Boyle. Encompassing 10 courses, this program includes on-line and classroom instruction. Five are rug hooking design courses – Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, Specialities; and Contemporary. Another is a Colour Theory and Dye Course. Four additional courses crossover to the Fine Arts program. These include Crafts as a Business, Digital Photography, and two courses that can be taken on-line: Realistic Drawing and Art History & Appreciation. Students are permitted to work at their own pace to complete the Program which is an added bonus when life's responsibilities and obligations hinder steady progress.

The Program stretches and challenges all students. From time to time we were pushed out of our comfort zones designing and producing pieces of art or when learning theoretical concepts and putting those into practice.. All teachers encouraged, supported, and lead students through the difficulties so that we were

** Photo credit: Bill Langdon*

all successful. Laura Boszormeny was outstanding. She kept everyone informed on what classes were upcoming, worked with each student to ensure credits were in place, and acted as our champion when dealing with the Administrative body at the College. Her qualities as a teacher made all the rug hooking and dyeing classes fun and interesting. Her patience and encouragement allowed students to move at their own pace while still managing to keep everyone on track..

Experiences

Although we graduated together, we began the program at different times and took few courses together. Our experiences, while different, include the themes of new horizons, meeting challenges, and enjoyment as described below.

Jayne notes:

The on-line courses were interesting and challenging to do. Although I worked in isolation, they did allow you to study independently at a time when it was convenient for you. The Art History course exposed me to the Masters and added to my visual awareness of colours, styles and techniques

The dye course was very thorough and provided formulas and samples for future dyeing reference.

The contemporary class was very exciting and invited creativity in rug hooking design.

The photography course was interesting too. We were dropped down by the waterfront in Brockville and left to take pictures of anything and everything. I look back on these photos with a different eye and remember fondly all the things I saw that I probably wouldn't have noticed without the use of the camera. A real learning and memorable experience.

Laura Boszormeny often went beyond the call of duty! While staying in residence, she took some of us to the local thrift shop in town after class. There, I purchased wonderful wide-mouth dye jars that I coveted, and an antique rug hook that was buried in a jar along with knitting needles! Quite the score.

Carol notes:

My favourite courses were Dabbling in the Dye Pot, Art History & Appreciation and Basic Drawing (this one challenged me a lot), although I loved them all.

Kim notes:

Living in close proximity to College I have taken all but one Course there. The exception was Colour Theory and Dyeing. It was taught by Laura Boszormeny at Trent School of Rug Hooking and the credit easily transferred to SLC. Most often, I took the rug hooking courses twice as it gave me time to complete the projects.

The Stained Glass class was really enjoyable. The piece turned out remarkably well. During the 12 weeks we were required to hook and complete the piece. At one point I had to attend a funeral in Nova Scotia - so with a snip-bag stuck to the side window in the van, I hooked all the way down and on the way back, and had the mat completed by the time I was home.

I took Art History & Appreciation with the full time Fine Arts students who were a lot younger than myself. However, I really learned a lot from them and the course opened my eyes to an appreciation of all forms of Art.

Laura gives students the freedom to include a personal idea in all rugs so that these hooked pieces are particularly meaningful and gratifying to the artists. Her courses are offered in the fall, spring, and summer, and I will continue to take Laura's courses whenever I have the time.

Pam notes:

I really enjoyed designing and colour planning in all of the rug hooking courses. The support and encouragement from Laura Boszormeny and Joan Boyle were second to none. They made me realize I was an artist.

Realistic Drawing online was outstanding. With no requirement to travel and no classroom distractions I had lots of time over the winter months to produce the 13 detailed drawings. The teacher's step-by-step instructions and timely responses to my queries were extremely helpful. This course reinforced the use of values in creating realism. I still marvel at achieving 3D with only one graphite pencil and an eraser!

Art History and Appreciation became the most challenging and exhilarating of all courses. It was held over three weekends at SLC and included a student body of 18 fine artists, one potter, and two rug hookers. The historic journey from 4500 BC Mesopotamia to the Romantic Era 1850 was fast paced yet manageable. In addition to exposure to the Masters and increased appreciation about colour, design and painting techniques, I sketched and then created an original hooked piece that incorporated a number of features of my mentor artists' works and trends in art that still exist today.

Rug Hooking Bios

Jayne began hooking in 1996 and became immediately enamoured with the art form. She became certified as an Ontario Hooking Craft Guild rug hooking teacher in 1999. Wanting to learn more techniques, Jayne enrolled in the McGown teachers' programme in the United States and graduated as a certified McGown teacher in the spring of 2007. She has also contributed her time in fulfilling positions on the Ontario Hooking Craft Guild executive; Ontario Hooking Craft Guild - Teacher's Branch executive; and as Director of Southern McGown workshops in West Virginia. Jayne is pleased to add that she has now obtained her Fibre Arts certificate to her accreditations.

Carol has been rug hooking since 2000 and at the first Annual Conference she attended she enquired about the OHCG teaching program and completed the OHCG TTEC program in 2010. Her experience in both the Teaching and Fibre Arts certificate programs has resulted in her pursuing rug hooking as a full-time business as teacher, vendor and just recently author of a new dye book.

While the Fibre Arts program is not a "learn to teach" program it has enhanced her skills both as a rug hooker and a teacher.

Kim began hooking in 2005 while she was still working and enrolled in the the Fibre Arts-Traditional Rug Hooking Program in 2007. She belongs to OHCG and the Nova Scotia Guilds, and enjoys taking courses while travelling whenever or wherever possible – Ancaster, Halifax, and Newfoundland. Her passions include volunteer work: as past President of the Brockville Thousand Islanders Branch; as the silent auction Coordinator at the 2013 Annual OHCG Conference in Kingston; with Brockville Habitat for Humanity-Restore she celebrates five years as a volunteer this year.

Kim complements her love of rug hooking with the art of knitting. As a retired teacher and a retired RCMP police officer, she is committed to a life of learning and advancement.

Pam began rug hooking in 2002 and joined the Ottawa Olde Forge Branch so that she could learn more about this fibre art. She has and continues to play multiple roles at Ottawa Olde Forge including as a past President, and as Annual Display Coordinator. Pam's first and last Fibre Arts courses were Advanced Rug Hooking with Joan Boyle in 2004 and Contemporary Rug Hooking with Laura Boszormeny 2014. In 2006 Pam became an accredited OHCG Teacher. With a passion for design, colour, and for teaching, all of her courses include an art-history overview, design composition, and practical approaches to understanding colour, value, and rug hooking and dyeing techniques. She notes that the Fibre Arts-Traditional Rug Hooking certificate proved to be a perfect partner for her passions and is a dream come true.

Closing Remarks

The Convocation provided an excellent time to reflect. While proud of our accomplishment, we are all grateful for the tremendous support received over the years from course teachers, course colleagues, the rug hooking community at large, and family and friends. Our new title, Fibre Artist, is not to be taken lightly. During the Graduation Ceremony we were 'Charged To' good conduct as new alumni. We highly recommend the Program to rug hookers and rug hooking teachers alike.

To quote Andrea Mossop, SLC, Art History & Appreciation teacher: “Certification in the Program reassures the recipients they have the broad knowledge and tools that are key to making them operational artists”.

In total 32 rug hookers have graduated from the Fibre Arts-Traditional Rug Hooking Program. Fifteen have been OHCG teachers.