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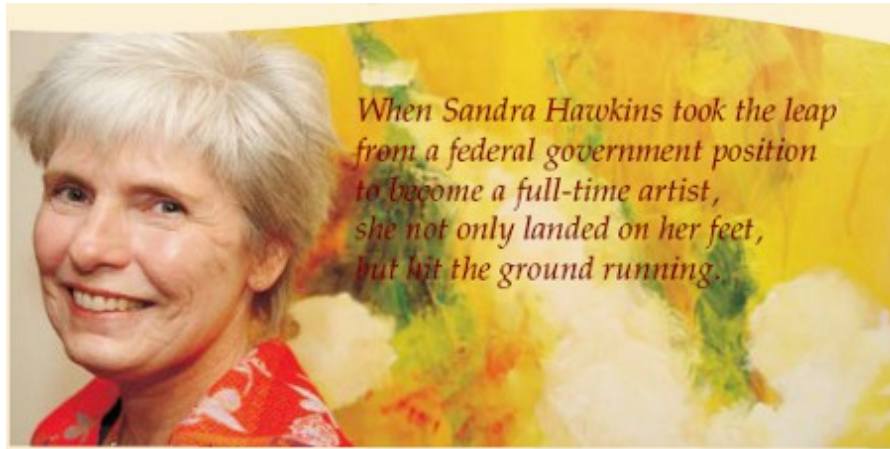
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ALUMNI PROFILE



Sandra Hawkins

By Tyler Forkes

"In the spring of 1997, I left a career in the federal government to pursue my art fulltime," explains Sandra. "I had been a social scientist with a career specialization in socio-cultural policy issues relating to federal-aboriginal funding policies."

While she was still enjoying her career as a social scientist, Sandra took the occasional workshop in painting, drawing, or ceramics. Then, in 1994, she painted a portrait of her grandson Mackenzie, and it gave her such a wonderful feeling of fulfillment and joy that she never looked back. In 1997, Sandra earned her Certificate in Fine Arts from the College's Brockville campus and followed that up two years later with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, magna cum laude, from the University of Ottawa.

"It seemed that whatever I wanted to do concerning my art, the answer was always yes," Sandra says. "I worked hard but it was as if I had been by this way before and just needed reminding, yet it I was full of wonder at seeing a new way."

"In addition to my studies in fine art studio practice and theory, an apprenticeship at the National Art Gallery working on the 1998 Crossings exhibition of art installations provided me with a solid foundation to "come-out" so to speak as an emerging contemporary Canadian artist in 1999." Since then, Sandra's visual and media artworks have been shown across Canada and internationally at commercial and public galleries and at video festivals. She combines her art career with her love of travel and learning about new cultures.

One of the highlights of her artistic career occurred in 2004 when the prestigious X'ian Academy of Fine Arts in Xian China held a solo exhibition of her paintings, photographs and videos. The Canadian embassy in Beijing and Chinese government, Academy and artist representatives spoke about the exhibition during the opening ceremony, which was attended by over a thousand people. "I was absolutely flabbergasted at all the attention," she

says. "I also delivered two lectures on the business of art for Canadian visual artists to more than 400 Chinese art students and presented a painting demonstration at the Academy. Two Ottawa-area artist-run galleries, the Ontario Art Council and Foreign Affairs Canada contributed in my obtaining financial exhibition assistance. I find it particularly encouraging to have had so much recognition by my own city, province, and country."

When asked what drew her to the arts, Sandra explains that "intellectually, I'm drawn to my new career as a contemporary visual and media artist for the room it gives to discuss and push established boundaries about how we see ourselves as human beings. Emotionally, I enjoy creating and being in the flow of the moment."

Sandra is true life-long learner, with an impressive academic resume which includes: Certificate in Fine Arts, St. Lawrence College, 1997; Bachelor of Fine Arts, magna cum laude, University of Ottawa, 1999; Post Graduate Studies, Sociology of Culture, Carleton University, 1983; Masters in Environmental Studies, York University, 1978; Bachelor of Arts, Sociology & Architecture, Carleton University, 1975.

In addition to being a self-employed visual and media artist and teacher, Sandra is also the author of *The Business of Art for Canadian Visual Artists – Third Edition* (ISBN 0-9731049-1-0). This book is available in Kingston and Ottawa at Wallacks Art Supplies. She maintains ongoing professional affiliations with Gallery 101 in Ottawa (Board 1999-2001), CARFAC (Canadian Artists Representation/Front des Artistes Canadiennes) Ontario (Board 2001-2002), the Canadian Artist Representation Copyright Collective (CARCC) and V-Tape Distributor Toronto.

Sandra says that St. Lawrence College played a pivotal role in her developing as an artist and in pursuing it as a career. "Shifting from an identity as a hobbyist to full-time professional artist required the insight that what I was doing was part of a visual discussion that had historical roots, and that it was ongoing. Through the College's art history courses, I gained insight that there was a broader social context in which I could participate."

She has very fond memories of her St. Lawrence art instructors. "In 1995, I met Henry Vyfinkel at the Symposium of Canadian Painters in Watercolour, held in Gananoque. I learned to consider my natural movements in space and to incorporate this as part of my painting process. During the next two years, I took another of his workshops and also completed the Certificate program that he had spearheaded at St. Lawrence College. He planted the seed of my current practice and philosophy that painting is "performance-based," a trace of action in time. Also, I very much enjoyed Margaret Gauthier's course, Figure Gesture Sketching. She showed us how to capture the essence of people's personality through using blobs of colour and pencil to render their actions in a split moment in time. Andrea Green's courses in General Art History and Modern Art History were especially pivotal in my decision to pursue the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the University of Ottawa and subsequently begin a career as a fine artist."

"In summary," says Sandra, "Brockville campus's 1000 Islands Summer School of the Arts and the Certificate in Fine Arts contributed to my confidence to take the leap of faith and to begin a new career as a contemporary fine artist."



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