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For Phoenix artist Nancy Kravetz, 85, age is but a broad brush stroke

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Artist Nancy Kravetz exhibits a lifetime of her art work for “Sunshine in the Garden,” on display through March 31 at Mountain Shadow Art Gallery.



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By Delarita Ford (/browse.html?byline=Delarita%20Ford)

Mail (dford@inusa.org) | Twitter: @AzNewsmedia (https://twitter.com/AZNewsmedia)

As local artist Nancy Kravetz exhibits a lifetime of her work for “Sunshine in the Garden,” on display through March 31 at Mountain Shadow Art Gallery, she recalls an ever-changing, evolving color palette over time.

The octogenarian, originally from Newburyport, Massachusetts, paints almost daily in her Paradise Valley studio. Her preferred medium is acrylic, and she continues to show her masterpieces throughout the region, some were viewed at the Mayo Clinic last year.

Among her biggest fans is her husband, Dr. Robert E. Kravetz, who marvels how his wife of 65 years can illustrate the most complex objects in life and transform them into simple structures.

Robert champions his wife's ability, calling her an inspiration to artists of all ages, especially women.

"I started to paint at age 16 and have continued to paint intermittently since then," said Nancy Kravetz. "I have always had a passion about painting and have continued to pursue it at age 85."

The abstract artist known for her use of color recalls how times have changed for better and for worse, contributing to lots of abstracts in society from family to technology.

"Women who never were acknowledged for their contributions are now being recognized. Electronic devices have made life and all types of communication easier," she said.

The artist has captured change through elements of form, color, shifts of light not only on canvas but on the pallet circle of life. Inspired by nature, she studied art at the Sargent School of Painting, the Prize Program of the School at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and at Simmons College.

A Temple University graduate, she was a homemaker who cooked a lot while she raised "three very successful sons."

"Thirty years ago, my son David took my brownie recipe and started Fairytale Brownies and I worked there during the busy seasons. Now I paint on a more full-time basis," Nancy said.

Noting how difficult it is to earn a living as an artist, she is pleased more arts opportunities have opened like website and graphic design careers, which provides more access to art worldwide through electronic devices.

She added how she would have been a women's clothing designer if she chose another profession.

"Over the years, I have designed and made my own clothes," Nancy said.

Nancy and Robert, now grandparents, enjoy spending time with each other. Mixed together, they form tertiary colors on an artist's pallet, their blended complementary colors of lifestyles, experiences makes a collage of stories, emotions on their own family canvas.

In addition to compiling a cookbook of family recipes, Nancy has "written a comprehensive family history," which she and her husband share common interests since relocating to Arizona 60 years ago.

"Now I like to do the cooking and find new recipes," said Robert, describing how some of the roles reversed for him and the Sunshine in the Garden artist.

While blending primary colors together on their pallet, the couple's portrait consists of a new-found love of gardening for Robert who has a greenhouse, and over 100 potted plants.

Likewise, Nancy continues to practice what is considered the lost art of letter writing as people are surprised to still receive hand-written letters from her in the mail. Writing letters is how she and Robert courted before marrying when they were students attending different colleges at a time when "it was so expensive" to make phone calls.

They only went on three dates, the couple stated.

"We have lots of love letters," said Nancy.

The two encouraged youths to get an education, develop meaningful friendships, go on group activities, develop good social skills, do not be discouraged, learn a profession, find a good mentor/role model, work hard and follow your dreams.

"In our family there is no such word as failure. It is a learning experience," Robert added. "The worst thing that can happen is someone says 'No,' but keep trying."

"Follow your dreams and don't be afraid to take a chance trying new things," Nancy said.



Delarita Ford

Reporter | Scottsdale & Town of Paradise Valley

@AzNewsmedia (<https://twitter.com/AzNewsmedia>)

dford@iniusa.org (<mailto:dford@iniusa.org>)

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