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COMMUNITY

'Be awake to the world' Local artist inspires at 85

By Kathryn M. Miller

North Central artist Nancy Kravetz says that beauty and inspiration can be found everywhere; you just have to be open to seeing it.

Born in the picturesque seaside town of Newburyport, Massachusetts, art came into Nancy's life early and she drew inspiration from the natural beauty that surrounded her.

And as a teen, she was encouraged by a teacher to pursue art, and from 1951–1952, she poured her inspiration into oil painting and life drawing classes at the Sargent School of Painting. She continued her education in Boston for the next few years, and in 1957, she married her husband, Bob Kravetz.

The couple came to Arizona for the first time in 1961, and few years later, came back to Phoenix to stay. They settled in North Central Phoenix, where they purchased their first (and only) home in 1967.



Nancy Kravetz at age 17 (photo courtesy of the artist).

Nancy found inspiration in the desert landscapes of her adopted home state, along with some excellent teachers. In 1969, she decided to expand her artistic horizons and delve into acrylics. "At the time, acrylic paint wasn't that popular," Nancy said, "but I wanted to learn how to work with it."

She asked the owner of the art supply store on Central Avenue for a teacher recommendation, "and she directed me to Dorothy Fratt. It was a serendipitous meeting," Nancy recalled. The two-plus years she spent studying with Fratt were crucial to Nancy's artistic journey. Along with acrylics, she learned design and color theory, drawing and watercolor. She gained a teacher, mentor and friend.

"She just was the most amazing teacher, an inspiration. And it wasn't



North Central artist Nancy Kravetz works from her home studio and is still finding new artistic inspiration at age 85 (photo courtesy of the artist).

just painting lessons, it was about art in general, and what was going on in the art world."

During that time, she moved away from realistic art, gravitating toward more abstract work.

"I really wanted to try something different," Nancy said, "and I took very quickly to an abstract expression of what I was either seeing or feeling."

As the years went by, Nancy raised three boys with Bob and became involved in the community, but she always found time to learn new techniques and explore the world around her through her art, which gave her a real feeling of accomplishment.

"You start out with an idea, especially with something abstract, and then you're faced with a blank canvas... I guess it's the joy of creating something. It just gives me a lot of pleasure. And it's calming...it's frustrating also," she laughed.

Nancy still works in her studio every day producing new work. At 80, her work was shown at Shemer Art Center, then at Mayo Clinic last year. Now at 85, her artwork will be shown at The Gallery at Mountain Shadows resort beginning in mid-February with an opening reception March 1. (Visit www.nancykravetz.com.)

After nearly 70 years as a visual artist, Nancy is still trying new techniques and she encourages people of all ages to be unafraid to try new things.

"Just take new experiences!" And keep your eye open to finding inspiration in the everyday, Nancy added, even in a gorgeously colored piece of dryer lint. "Just be awake to the world and look for experiences that move you."