

“A Gushul Studio Encounter
Crowsnest Pass, Alberta”
Angelique Gillespie

Since 2008, when the Alberta Society of Artists introduced its members to the beauty of the Crowsnest Pass, I have had the opportunity to visit many times since. In 2014 I decided to stay at the Writers cottage for my first residency at the Gushul Studio. My project was to record the history of the Crowsnest Pass through sketches and Paintings. I managed to find a painting location near the cottage in order to paint. The Cottage was where I did my sketchbook research work. The entire month of 2014 was exploring the area and recording my experiences which resulted in my 2015 exhibition called “In Conversation” at the Crowsnest Pass Public Art Gallery.

Feeling very connected to the Pass, I returned in 2018 for another residency, this time in the Gushul studio. The luxury of the space was limitless. I had to confine myself to my next exhibit focus. This time it was “Crowsnest Encounters” with my main medium, painting, being enhanced by my new found passion in clay. My first project was a female bust which I had already created. In order to reconnected me back to my last residency, I carved into her bodice historical drawings from the 2014 Residency. While this was drying, I started a new sketchbook on abstract inspirations in the area. Again, something different for me. Taking advantage of the space, I laid out collage papers and revisited my crows with a new zest linking paper collage and abstract painting. My focus was on the energy, the essence, rather than the likeness of my encounters.

As the time came to an end, I was delighted and exhausted with the results. The biggest discovery for me was the need to disengage from my everyday life in order to engage with my own creative process. The studio residency was the best gift to give myself. It started as a journey towards discovery, acceptance and completeness and ended as my “joie de vivre”. Through having the time and the space, I was able to capture the wonder and delight to explore different approaches with new and old mediums in order to expressed myself in a new enlighten way.

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