

Cobourg fibre artist says career path was 'inevitable'

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COBOURG -- From sewing doll clothes to weaving artfully planned cloth, Cobourg artist Veronica Derry has always been intrigued by the tactile elements of fabric.

Ms. Derry's mother and grandmother were both skillful sewers, and as a child she quickly picked up the skill herself, learning to sew clothes first for her dolls and then for herself.

"I was always surrounded by sewing, so it was kind of inevitable," she said. "I don't know why I work with fabric instead of paint or pencil. It's just the way I express myself best. When I was younger I drew a lot, I liked the lines, now fabric is my line. I really like the tactileness of fabric. I think that's what appeals to me."

After graduating from high school Ms. Derry attended Sheridan's school of crafts and design and immediately fell in love with weaving.

"I just loved the method, I really enjoy building the cloth from the thread up," Ms. Derry explains.

"There's so many things you can do with weaving and I just loved being at the loom."

For a while Ms. Derry focused only on weaving, creating rugs and runners and an occasional tapestry. As time went by, however, she found herself more intrigued with the creative process of the one-of-a-kind tapestries and began incorporating found cloth and paper and framing them. It was at that time that she joined the Colborne Art Gallery.

"It was time to leave the loom. It had become too confining for me, (and) I wanted something more open and playful" she said, noting joining the gallery helped by providing a community of like-minded individuals.

"School was such a wonderful community but when I came back I didn't know many people who were artists or were trying to make a living by doing something off the beaten track. Joining the gallery helped, and now I find there's such a community of like-minded people and everyone's so interconnected, it's very supportive and inspiring that way."

Ms. Derry has watched her work grow and evolve over the years, from a series of works based around houses into more



Karen Longwell / Northumberland News

COBOURG -- Artist Veronica Derry works on a loom in her home studio. Ms. Derry works with fabric and needlework.

abstract designs.

"Inspiration comes from a lot of different areas," she says of her creative process, emphasizing it's hard to explain.

"It could be emotions, something I'm feeling or experiencing or the materials themselves. I use a lot of vintage materials and sometimes I get ideas just by looking at them. It can also come from looking around the studio, the way light hits the wall or the way a hole is in a piece of fabric, and sometimes the work just evolves completely on its own. If you try too hard on a piece, it just doesn't work. It's really all about growth and exploration."

Ms. Derry's works are currently on display at the Edward Jones office at 609 William Street in Cobourg. She will also be participating in the upcoming 'In a Garden' show in Port Hope on July 16 and 17 and will be the focus of a solo exhibition at the Colborne Art Gallery in October.

For more information or to view Ms. Derry's works, visit www.thecolborneartgallery.ca.