

INTERVIEW WITH ROSE ANNE FEATHERSTON

Q: What attracted you to participate in this exhibition?

A: I was approached to participate in this exhibition by Kathleen Moles, Curator of Art for the Whatcom Museum. She had seen the work I did last year, 42 Months, an installation of chalk outlines of 2.664 life-size figures on 27 lineal blocks of Bellingham. I was honored to be asked to participate.

Q: How did the parameters set for the exhibition (work must relate in some way to Old City Hall building site) affect the approach you took to creating the work for this exhibit? Were the parameters a hindrance to your creativity, an inspiration, a challenge?

A: I thought it was exciting to be pointed in a direction. For me, making art can often be like solving a puzzle—you begin with an idea and try to find a way to express it. In this case, because I was dealing with the issue of site, I spent time in “my” room- just getting a feel for the space. It is very cube-like and that dictated my overall design. I also asked questions and did some reading about Bellingham’s history, in particular near 1892 when the building was constructed. My space was initially used as the Mayor’s office. Learning this influenced the directions I pursued with the artwork.

Q: Can you describe the work you are exhibiting?

A: It can best be described as a mixed media sculpture. I am utilizing a variety of ways that I make art. I have “painted” scenes by joining and juxtaposing various “found” objects to form meaning, combined drawing with sculpture elements. I included photographs and created imagined photographs. When challenged to create site specific work for this show, the idea of dreaming emerged as a lens through which this work was created. Dreams have no sense of linear time. Seemingly insignificant images from of our superficial, everyday lives populate our dream landscapes. But these are often inexplicably coupled with buried memories from our childhood, as well as elements that seem to belong to the universal experience of being a human in this world since its inception.

My installation utilizes this dream vocabulary to explore and inter-relate the everyday, our unknown past, and the universal experience of this site: the particular room, the building, the land, and on Whatcom County. This work explores ideas relating to abundance and greed, timelessness, art and law.

This is the largest scale installation that I have created. It has been a challenge! Most of the pieces relate in some fashion with other pieces in the room. One piece actually flows from one wall to the next, just as dreams can flow together. Also, images show up repeatedly in the different pieces within the installation.

From reading Bellingham's history, I was impressed with the enormous courage, adventure-some spirit and resourcefulness of its citizens. For example, I have included a photograph and a small sculpture of Alfred Lee, the architect who designed the 1892 Old City Hall building. When the Old City Hall building was constructed in the 1890s, it cost \$50,000—this at a time when the town's population was a mere 10,000. Before moving to Bellingham, Lee had been a wagon-maker. Without formal education, he simply reinvented himself as a respected architect. And his building is still standing! For me, Alfred Lee became the “father figure” of the site.

Q: How much of the work for this exhibition is completed ahead of time versus created on site?

A: I have constructed much of the work ahead of time in my studio. My installation is comprised of many elements and inter-related pieces. Some of the work was simply too large to set up as a whole in my studio. I imagine that as I install the work in the Museum, I may have to work with repositioning some of the elements, to create the balance I want to achieve.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY: Rose Anne Featherston has lived in Whatcom County since 1986. She holds a MFA from the University of Washington. She has had solo art exhibitions in Bellingham, Seattle and on the East Coast and has participated in multiple group exhibitions throughout the country. Rose Anne is a Mediator in Dispute Resolution, works in digital photo editing and restoration, and has a small photography business: freegoingphoto.com. Her eclectic background includes running a bed & breakfast, being a trial lawyer, and teaching. In addition to creating mixed media sculpture, she has self-published an art eBook, *A Journey of Roses*.