

Program Notes

WHEELS OF TIME - The Early Days

The "wheels" started rolling last year(2009) when Jeff Gardner had a small photography show of some of his "Junkers". Motivated by the interest, he approached two fellow artists, Scott Taylor and Marge Bride, and asked if they would like to collaborate on a project incorporating other old vehicles.

It sounded like a fun and challenging project, and Scott and Marge quickly jumped on board. Since the fall of 2009, they have been creating works for this show; now it is debuting at the Intermodal Gallery in Pittsfield. In February 2011, the show will "travel" to the Old Chatham Country Cafe Gallery, with some new additions.

Our thanks to Lisa Griffith and BCC for inviting us to exhibit here at this fabulous gallery. Also, thanks to Bob Adler's Automotive graveyard in Stephentown, NY for the loan of some of his exquisite automotive sculptures.

About the Artists

Jeff Gardner

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I've long been enamored with and fascinated by the old vintage trucks and automobiles that dominated the roads of this country in the middle of the 20th century. These once magnificent vehicles were big, bawdy and full of character, despite their shortcomings that eventually drove them to their final resting places. Finding and photographing these treasures in various states of decline has fueled a new appreciation for these relics amongst our landscape, and has struck a cord of sentiment that is shared by many other people. I can't tell you how many times these images have excited a viewer and evoked a memory they've obliged to share with me.

And so, I conceived of 'Junkers' that opened in November of 2009 ~ a photographic exhibit of the relics I've passed during my travels across this country. It is essentially a celebration of the memories these cars and trucks still hold for many people and possibly, a final farewell too!

It didn't take much to move from my 'Junkers' photographic exhibit to something more expansive, intriguing and all-encompassing when speaking with my fellow artists and good friends, Marge Bride and Scott Taylor. Together we determined that each of us, working in our own medium, could produce quite an exhibit loosely based on the same theme. Thus was born the inspiration for "Wheels in Time".

Over the past nine months, Marge and Scott have been busy at their easels, while I've been continuing to canvas the region looking for more relics abandoned along the road, in the woods or the middle of a lonesome field. We've compiled a collection of works that we hope will stir anyone's

emotions about cars they remember from their past. I hope all who witness our work get as much enjoyment out of them as we've had creating them!

Jeff Gardner is the founder of www.ArtisansoftheBerkshires.com, the on-line gallery dedicated to showcasing and selling artistic work inspired and created in the beautiful Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts. This site displays the works of 14 Berkshire artists.

Marguerite Bride

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When initially approached by Jeff Gardner to consider this project, I was willing, but a bit concerned as to how interesting it would be to "just paint old cars".

While there were plenty of old vehicles around, I felt I needed to add something else to my part of the show, something more personal or emotional, a connection. I voiced this concern to my 91-year-old mom who then said.... 'silly, take a look through my old photo albums; did you forget your dad was a car man?' And that's all it took. One look at those albums brought back such fond memories, plus it provided motivation and a solution...I would incorporate people into many of my paintings, implicitly or explicitly.

For example, there's a painting of a blue milk truck called Miss Jenny in her prime with her driver, Don, who is now retired and volunteers at the Berkshire Athenaeum; I was able to locate Miss Jenny last summer, retired in a field in Cheshire, soaking up the sun and looking rusty and regal. Miss Jenny is now my hairdresser. (Miss Jenny and Don and Miss Jenny Retired).

Another painting, Ralphie's Ride, depicts my big brother at about 3 years old, standing in front of a then new 1950 Plymouth....Ralphie is now over 70 and a retired professor.

And then there is my dad and his friend Jimmy in a painting called Rhode Island Rogues. Dad was certainly a 'car man'... we always seemed to have the latest Studebaker or Oldsmobile on the block growing up in rural RI. And the red flying horse...that hung in his auto repair shop for years.

A couple of paintings are of the old vehicles in the Becket quarry...the workers are long gone, but when hiking through the quarry, you might sense their spirits.

There's more too. I especially loved painting the old gas station and auto body shop in Chatham, NY. It really challenged my watercolor skills and incorporated many techniques.

All in all, a very fun and personal project. I hope you enjoy it.

Marguerite Bride is a Pittsfield resident and a full time artist with a studio at 311 North Street, where she paints and gives private watercolor lessons. She is a frequent exhibitor in art shows in the Berkshires and throughout New England. Last fall her painting of Dave Brubeck's hands was signed by Mr. Brubeck and was then auctioned during a fund raiser for the Colonial Theatre. Recently an article about her house portraits was appeared in Berkshire Living Magazine (September 2010). Bride moved to the Berkshires in 1995. Wanting to pursue art and painting, she then proceeded to take every art related course BCC had

to offer. Before moving to the Berkshires in 1995, she was a Registered Nurse and then a software engineer/manager outside of Boston.

Scott Taylor

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Over the last several years I have had the privilege of knowing Jeff and Marge both professionally and artistically and have become fans of their work. When Jeff mentioned the next step in the project I jumped at the chance to be a part of it and I must admit it has been a fun but challenging endeavor.

First of all I have a confession to make. I love cars - all kinds of cars...old ones, new ones, big one and small ones, but my most favorite of all are the old ones. In the past I have done a few paintings of old cars and trucks, but never an entire show around old vehicles with wheels! (Well some of them). Visiting Bob's auto graveyard in Stephentown was almost a religious experience for me. To see many of these once regal machines sitting in rows, the occasional factory paint showing through the rust. Hood on the ground, some with engines and some without and each and every vehicle there had a story to tell.

Jeff had taken great care to preserve a moment in time with his stunning photographs. So it was important to me as I interpreted the story that needed to be told about each vehicle that I treat it with that same care. I definitely had some favorites...

"Panama Red" was an old Chevy, somewhere in the early forties. It had a great big grill and a wonderful shape that supported great lines. If I were rich this one I would own! I took Jeff's photograph and added a neighborhood. The piece entitled "The Last Winter" is all Jeff. It was a perfect shot. I painted it just as it was, half buried in snow, but still very proud.

I am honored to put my "style" on some of Jeff's wonderful shots and to work with Marge on a project is always a special gift. I hope you have as much fun as a viewer of this work as we did making it for you.

Scott's painting "Autumn Ridgeline" was recently selected as the 2010 winner of the Millbrook Winery art competition. You can see his painting displayed on bottles of fine red and white wines in wine stores around the region. To see more of Scott's work, "friend" him on Facebook.