

International Installations; Art Crosses Borders, Even While We Can't

MANITOBA, CANADA, April 8, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When Karla with [Frasier Retirement Community](#) in Boulder, Colorado contacted Interlake glass artist Heather Dawson to ask if it was possible to make 200 leaves for a Donor Appreciation wall, Heather knew exactly how she was going to complete the project.

The Frasier Retirement Community was looking for a way to recognize donors that highlighted the ways their contributions supported the community. Turning that recognition into a work of art in itself, bringing beauty to the daily lives of all who live and work there was the perfect fit. Karla Rikansrud, VP for Philanthropy & Social Responsibility at Frasier

Retirement Community, reached out looking for glass leaves similar to a design she spotted on Heather's website. She would be retiring in March of 2021, and was looking for a special way to commemorate their donors before her retirement. The 200 aspen leaves, intended to match the shape of their logo, needed to be smaller than the one from the commercial mold, which would require a different – and custom – ceramic mold.

"Alan Lacovetsky, one of the potters in a cooperative artist group known as the WAVE, had been nudging me about pairing up to make some custom molds for my glass work. At the time I really wasn't sure what I wanted to make, or even what we COULD make," recalled Heather. "So, we hadn't yet connected to make anything." This project proved the perfect chance to work together. "When I reached out to Alan, he was excited to share his knowledge, and to talk through the best options for what I needed for the project," Heather says.



One of 200 colourful cast glass aspen leaves for the Frasier Retirement Donor Appreciation Wall

While Covid has made it difficult for the artist group to connect as they normally would, Heather was able to safely meet with Alan in his studio to learn about working with clay.

“Our first trial didn’t result in something I was able to use, but it led the way to create what I needed. A second trip to Alan’s studio, we were able to get some usable molds to check the resulting size,” Heather explained. “After a trial run, I was able to adjust the mold size to produce the correct size of glass piece. I bought a block of clay, and set to work!”

Working in her own studio, Heather created multiple clay molds to fire in her glass kilns to complete the project. While the clay would normally be fired hotter than the range of a glass-working kiln, using a recommended firing schedule from Alan, she was able to obtain good results firing slightly lower temperature, within the limitations of her kilns. Being able to consult with an expert in another medium was much easier than trying to solve the problem with a string of YouTube videos or a far more extensive process of trial and error.

Using tiny pieces of glass called frits, Heather cast the 200 leaves in batches. “When casting glass, the pieces of glass heat and become molten, flowing together to create a single piece. The glass picks up the texture in the clay mold and retains that texture once the glass cools.” Heather explained.

With Covid and border restrictions, Heather wasn’t able to travel to be on site for the installation. “There is always a worry about whether the install will go smoothly or not, when you can’t be there.” The leaves were installed on site, mounted onto a decorative metal screen. “I think the donors of Frasier Retirement Community will really appreciate the work of art recognizing their support.” Heather added, warmly.

Heather is looking forward to traveling when Covid restrictions are lifted, to see the installation in person. But for now, she has found new inspiration in adding clay as an additional medium to pair with her glasswork.

“It’s really going to open up new avenues for my artwork.”

Heather Dawson, a glass artist in Manitoba’s Interlake, has been part of the WAVE Interlake Artist’s Studio Tour for 5 years. “We are a co-operative of artists from the Interlake region along Lake Winnipeg, from Oak Hammock to Arborg. We have 25 artists in the group this year, each bringing something unique to the co-operative.”

The co-operative shares knowledge and supports each other, meeting throughout the year to plan their open studio tour which happens twice yearly, as well as group shows and events.

To learn more about the WAVE Interlake Artists' Studio Tour, visit watchthewave.ca

For more information about Frasier Retirement Community, visit frasiermeadows.org

See the video documentary of the project at glassbyheather.com

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