

Crystal artisan sculpts frozen light

By Katy Yoder
Correspondent

Sisters Country attracts gifted artists, who are inspired by the beauty and “feel” of the landscape. There are all kinds of hidden gems in our area; some easier to find than others. These world-renowned neighbors may live just down the road, but they keep a low profile, preferring a quiet existence conducive to a life of creativity and contemplation.

Lying in the shadow of the Cascade Volcanic Arc, the Three Sisters are monuments to an eruptive history that quieted thousands of years ago. The allure of these majestic volcanoes radiate enormous power. Beneath the earth’s surface another world exists, created by the heat and compression of earth’s formative geology.

In volcanic regions around the globe, incredible crystals have grown and emerged during volcanic events. When magma cools slowly, large crystals form in rock deep underground. The word “crystal” comes from the Greek “krystallos,” meaning clear ice. These crystals can grow in various sizes, colors and formations. The process of crystallization signifies the transition from chaos to organized crystalline structure.

Over the last 35 years, local sculptor Lawrence Stoller has been at the forefront of the medium of rock crystals and gemstone carving. Stoller describes himself as a sculptor, crystal artisan and lapidary. His materials, collected from around the globe, range in size from pieces small enough to be worn around your neck to giants weighing a ton or more. In Stoller’s Crystalworks studio, he is pioneering the new art form of cutting and polishing megacrystals and large gemstones.

Stoller has published two coffee-table books that

illustrate the magnificence and scope of his art form. “Primal Beauty” and “Frozen Light” reveal his philosophy of creating beauty as portrayed through thoughtful words and magnificent illustrations of his works of art.

Primal Beauty was recently named a finalist in the 30th annual IBPA Benjamin Franklin Award program in the category Art & Photography. The book is available at Paulina Springs Books in Sisters.

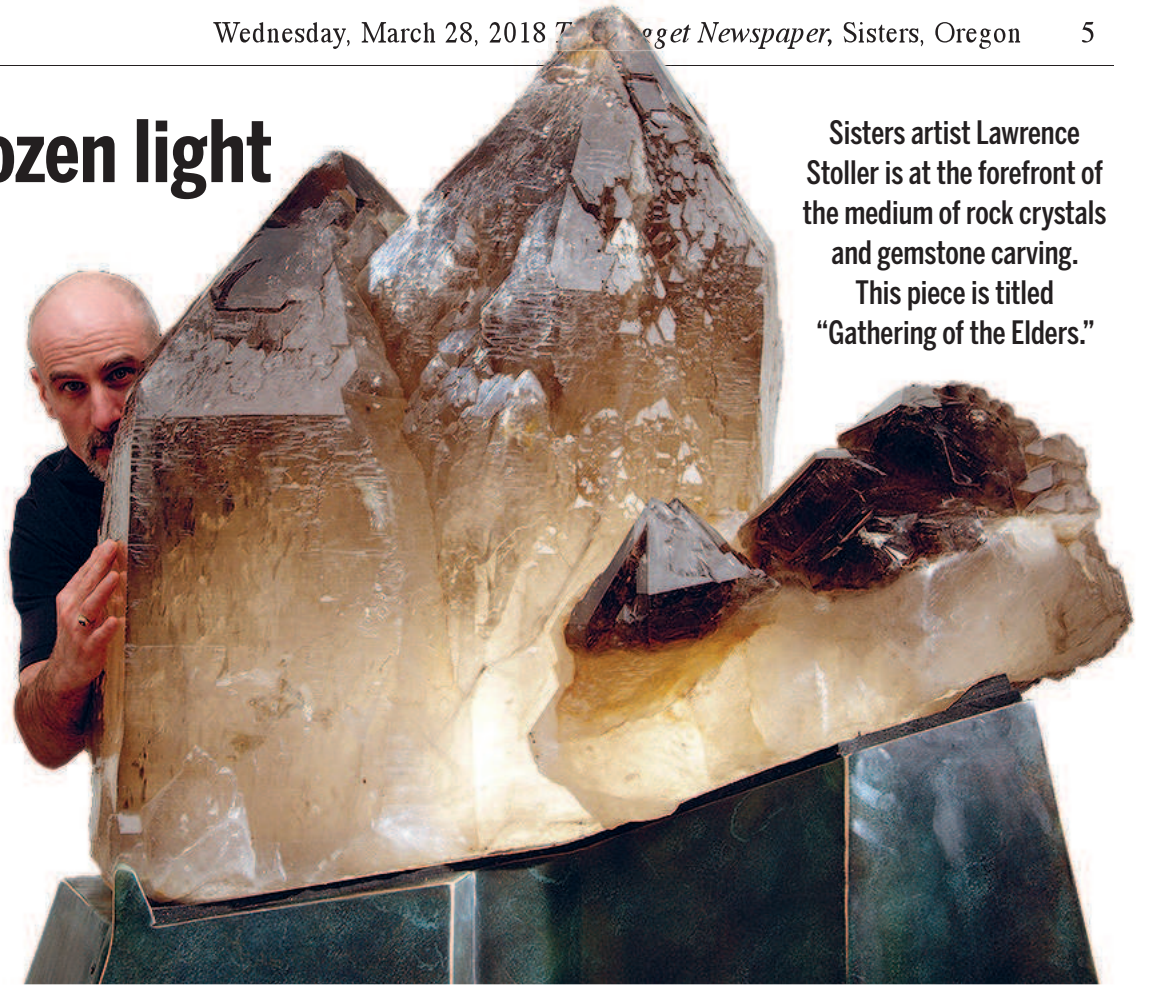
Stoller’s method of revealing hidden beauty and crystalline light is achieved through a process of co-creation. A deep appreciation and reverence for these natural wonders has honed his creative process, which is deeply spiritual and methodical.

“I begin a relationship with the crystal, working to find its highest expression,” he said. “Before beginning work, I explore its worn and broken surfaces, touching and discovering its history and agreeing on a way to further reveal the beauty that lies within.”

Touring Stoller’s studio is awe-inspiring. The gently flowing space is filled with radiant crystal forms, in a myriad of geometric shapes. Smaller pieces are stored on shelves, the heavier crystals lie on the floor — colorful, orderly and mesmerizing. Many are museum-quality while others have a transparent density so pure they could be used for advanced technology.

When a crystal “starts talking,” Stoller begins a process to find the answer to what lies within the stone. A journey that may take years begins. Included in his design and mental blueprints, Stoller envisions a base, usually formed in bronze, to present the finished piece so that it holds, lights, and enhances its beauty.

According to Stoller, humans interact with these multifaceted crystals through



Sisters artist Lawrence Stoller is at the forefront of the medium of rock crystals and gemstone carving. This piece is titled “Gathering of the Elders.”

PHOTO BY GARY ALVIS

four different fields of interest: mineralogy; technology; art; and healing/metaphysics. Beauty is the shared ingredient that bridges all four disciplines. Stoller acquires materials from around the world, bringing them back to his studio where he waits and asks for inspiration and listens for direction. His methods are unconventional for some but timeless for those who understand the connection between all things.

Once a relationship is established with the crystal, Stoller says the inspiration is combustible. “We agree about the work to be done, and I envision a blueprint of its potential form. I won’t make a cut until I feel a ‘yes’

fill my body, clearing me to proceed. To change the state a stone has been in for millions of years can be daunting, yet also serious fun. It is my task to elicit beauty from matter. The crystal trusts me. Beauty is the primal force, emanating from, and amplified by, the crystal. I focus on activating the flow and force of beauty.”

Stoller has an international following of collectors. He recently returned from The Fine Minerals International Show in Tucson, Arizona, where he showed a plethora of creations from jewelry to crystals and megacrystals. Many of the pieces were merged with bases that enhanced and lit the gem capturing its gifts of color,


radiance and spell-binding design. Collectors appreciate Stoller’s philosophy: “The beauty of nature inspires the heart to pursue the nature of beauty.”

Stoller has a highly skilled team of local artisans who assist him in this arcane art. Timothy Turco and Ingrid Mrencso are world-class crystal artisans, Justin Kelchak is a highly skilled bronze artist, Lawrence’s wife, Sunni, daughter, Mukti, and sister-in-law Casey ensure all other functions of the operation work smoothly.

To experience more of Lawrence Stoller’s work, visit his online Resonant Art Gift Shop at shop.lawrencestoller.com.

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