

Big River artist to show at Raven Makes Gallery

For 15,000 years “the big river” to the North — Wimhal, Nch-i-Wana, Swah’net’qhu or Columbia — has sustained, supported, and inspired humans.

Oregon artist Lillian Pitt, raised on the Warm Springs Reservation of which she is a tribal member, first and foremost considers herself a Big River person.

“My ancestors were traders and innovators,” she says. “They traded goods and exchanged ideas with people from many Native traditions. I honor my ancestors by carrying on this tradition of exchanging goods and ideas through my art.”

Pitt will be offering a presentation on Saturday, June

23, from 1 to 2 p.m. at Raven Makes Gallery in Sisters.

Long before she became a distinguished artist, Lillian owned and operated a successful hair styling business. But eventually, as many people with artistic inclinations will do, Lillian took a class.

I honor my ancestors by carrying on this tradition of exchanging goods and ideas through my art.

— Lillian Pitt

She remembers one aspect of it quite clearly: “Once my hand touched the clay ... I knew!” This calling merged with her sense of heritage, and that combination gradually but steadily developed. In time, it became a force of nature within the art world of the Pacific Northwest.

The Portland Art Museum offers the finest collection of Native American Art in Oregon and beyond. These works span both the North American continent and its history, from ancient times to the current era. The works of Lillian Pitt are displayed prominently at the entrance to the expansive collection.

The Museum at Warm Springs has held exhibitions honoring Lillian’s work and displays her pieces at the

entrance to the Collections Room. The High Desert Museum also exhibits her work. The Smithsonian’s Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. and The Burke Museum in Seattle, hold yet another nationally respected collection of her pieces. The list of awards, shows, and exhibitions for Lillian’s career is over three pages long. Books have been written that include her works; books have been written about her works. Her place as the preeminent living Native American artist of Oregon is unquestionable.

These distinctions, however, may place a certain kind of artistic perimeter around Lillian, creating a perception that her Native American roots and artistic traditions are what enabled her to be so successful. While she does not shy away from those connections, a single opportunity to see Lillian’s pieces at a show, one chance to meet her, quickly broadens the perspective a person might hold regarding her

ability as an artist.

Lillian has come to understand, incorporate, and master many of the concepts and techniques of contemporary Western art. Her range of media — glass, clay, metal, jewelry, printmaking, multimedia — establishes an exceptional breadth of skills for any artist.

“Everything I do, regardless of the medium, is directly related to honoring my ancestors and giving voice to the people, the environment, and the animals,” Pitt says. “It’s all about maintaining a link with tradition and about honoring the many contributions my ancestors have made to this world.”

Lillian has travelled far beyond the region of the Big River to New Zealand, Fiji, The Marshall Islands, and Japan. This came about for sharing, learning, and experiencing the tradition and art of their First Peoples. What she came to understand in these far-off worlds, more than anything else, was the sense of

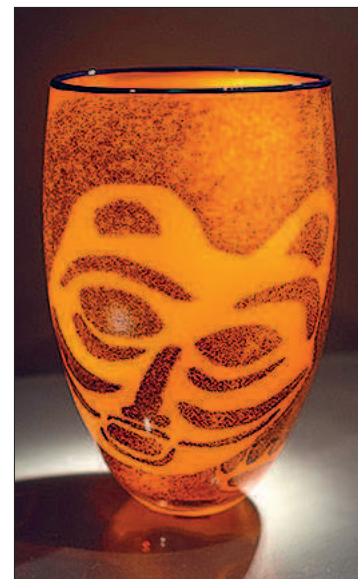


PHOTO PROVIDED

Lillian Pitt’s most recent work will be featured at Raven Makes Gallery.

shared connections regarding ancestral roots. These travels served to deepen her own sense of place and belonging to the Big River of the Pacific Northwest, which she shares through educational funding and projects.

Her new works will be on display at Raven Makes Gallery, 182 E. Hood Ave.

Pitt will be holding a show in Sisters June 22-24 with an artist reception on Friday from 4 to 7 p.m. and a presentation on Saturday from 1 to 2 p.m.



Lillian is a master of many media, including glass.

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Lillian Pitt

Distinguished Artist of Warm Springs and Portland

in person Artist Show

June 22 – 24
Artist Reception
Friday, 4 – 7 pm

Raven Makes Gallery
182 E Hood Ave
www.ravenmakesgallery.com