

'The Evolution of Human Consciousness'



Lisa Britton/Go! Magazine

Tom Novak made "list after list after list" when deciding what words to feature on the book spines of this sculpture, which stands 11 feet tall.

Baker City artist Tom Novak unveiled his newest public art piece on Oct. 28

By Lisa Britton
Go! Magazine

BAKER CITY — You won't find any familiar book titles in Tom Novak's newest creation.

The bronze tower of stacked books, winding in a DNA-like spiral to a height of 11 feet, is his way of showing the progression of humankind.

He calls it "The Evolution of Human Consciousness." The sculpture was installed Oct. 28 in front of Betty's Books, 1813 Main St. in Baker City.

He started it in 2018 and spent about eight months carving book shapes out of dense foam. Blue Mountain Fine Art took the creation from foam to bronze this fall.

Novak has designed a brochure to explain his process. The inspiration, he writes, was "what I feel is an increasing level of intolerance in our society, an intolerance that lies at the root of all chauvinism,

bullying, bigotry and racism; all forms of separation, toxic states of being that lead to aggression, suffering, violence and even death."

The bottom book, the base, is titled "Physicality" — the beginning of the journey of life.

The titles wind upward through "Joy" and "Curiosity." Then the tone changes to "Differences," "Ego," "Competition" and "Prejudice."

"Then you get up here halfway — to war," Novak said.

Next are "Worldwide Suffering," "Treaty" and "Surrender."

"Then it gets into more transformative thoughts," he said.

Titles take on a different tone, moving through "Empathy" and "Compassion" to the very top where we find the book titled "Oneness," with a tree growing out of it and a small sign next to the tree that reads "Many leaves, One tree."

"You discover your true nature,"

Novak said.

The tower is made of 39 volumes. Near the middle are three smaller ones with one message: "We change the world ... one act of kindness ... at a time."

Novak would like to see this sculpture, and others like it, installed near libraries and college campuses. It is for sale. For information, contact him at tnovak@eoni.com.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Novak attended the Art Institute of Chicago and moved to the Baker City area in 1975. He opened an art studio in 1979.

"I've done nothing but art ever since," he said. "The people of Baker have supported me all that time."

Until recently, he was primarily an oil painter. He currently has paintings on display in the Room 31 Sculpture gallery at Churchill School in Baker City.

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