

# Judy Leila Schafers nurtures Art and a Country Garden to share with others

by Dolly Bolen

Blooming in Sturgeon County for the second year in a row artist Judy Leila Schafers hosted Art and a Country Garden as a gift for her collectors, subscribers and the community July 9 and 10 at Prairie Sky Studio located at her home. Schafers invited anyone interested to take a short drive out to the country, tour her gardens, enjoy refreshments and enter their name for door prizes. The event featured many of her new artworks, a draw for an original painting, live music, hands on garden art project, painting demo and Artist Talk.

Schafers said, "The gardens were built as a getaway for myself and I knew that if I worked out there they would leave me alone because they don't want to be put to work so that is how it was. I got to spend time just to be creative out there. I love to just do that kind of work, like gardening. So it started out as just a getaway and a nice place to look at through the window, a beautiful view. I didn't like to see the road. I wanted something else. I visited the Butchart Gardens and was inspired by that so wanted something like that."

"A few years later a friend of mine in Villeneuve had an Art in the Garden event that I was part of. Then they decided to sell that place and move and they said to me, you know you can do this and I was like oh, no

way. I can't do this it's too much."

"So then after a few years it started to grow on me, this idea and I thought I am doing all this work; I might as well share it." Relatives or friends who came to visit would look at her garden and just enjoy it. "And then next thing you know I started taking photographs cause I love flowers and certain things. I was inspired by these photographs and start painting them. They are actually the garden so next thing you know the art starts to tie into the garden and start to be part of the package," revealed Schafers.

"I started to see that and it comes to mind that maybe I should do an Art in the Garden but I should do a little bit of a twist. Art and a Country Garden because if it is raining then there is art and then the garden but they are not tied together in the garden necessarily. I took some time off in 2014 to start preparing for this."

Last year was the first Art and a Country Garden event that Schafers hosted and she had big dreams about musicians and food. "I was going to tone it down this year but it ended up being a little bit more toned up instead of down." Lots of friends and family support Schafers, she said she couldn't do her event without them.

Schafers said she paints old buildings, farm equipment, mailboxes and fences, just the trees and everything to do with Alberta.

"I had such a great childhood and I had a lot of time to think as a kid. We lived a ways from town so we didn't go in for a lot of activities and stuff, I occupied myself drawing and just being in nature."

Kiona Ligtvoet attended Art and a Country Garden because her first job was Schafers' Artist Assistant when she was 15 years old. Now 19, Ligtvoet is a Fine Arts student in her last year at Grant MacEwan University. This is the second year Ligtvoet dropped in to the event because she said she loves Schafers and her art. Ligtvoet took part in the collaborative painting project by painting a sunflower on a tree in the garden.

Schafers currently is a member of the Visual Arts Studio Association of St. Albert. In 2015 Schafers won First and Third Place in the Masters Category and in 2014 won First and Second Place in the Masters



Sturgeon County artist Judy Leila Schafers hosted Art and a Country Garden as a gift for her collectors, subscribers and the community July 9 and 10 at Prairie Sky Studio located at her home. Demonstrating how she starts a painting on July 9, Schafers painted on two prepared canvases in different stages showing various techniques she uses. Schafers said she changes things from her photos in her paintings, takes away or adds things, embellishes or makes colours more vibrant otherwise she might a well just use the photo she has taken.

--photo by Dolly Bolen



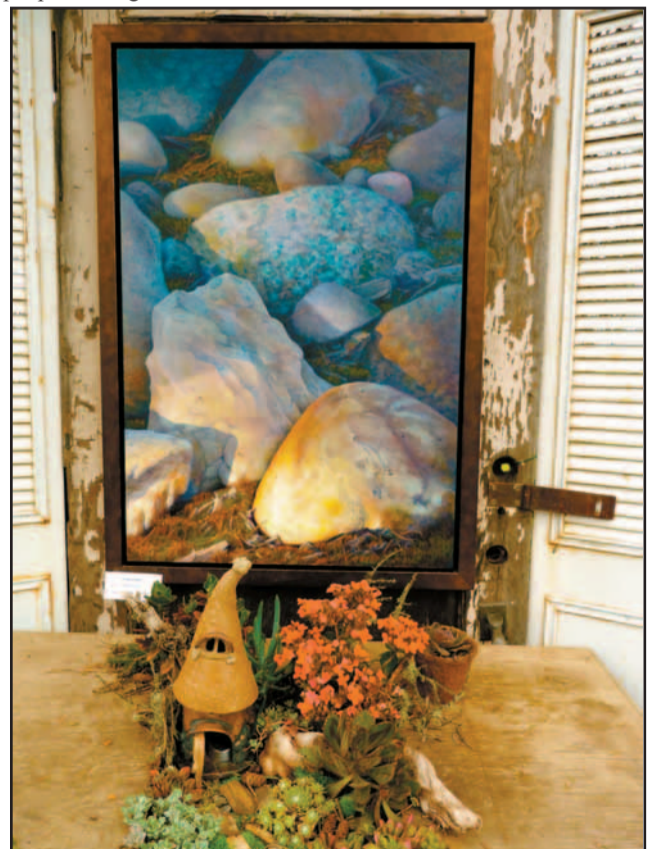
Karis Schafers, niece of artist Judy Leila Schafers painted rocks at the collaborative painting area outside during Art and a Country Garden on July 9 at Prairie Sky Studio in Sturgeon County. --photo by Dolly Bolen

Category at the Allied Arts Council of Spruce Grove (AACSG) Open Art Competition. She was a member of the AACSG for about 15 years but she let that go because she said she couldn't be everywhere and do everything. "I was a member of the St. Albert Painters Guild for 20 years. I thought it was just time to make time for other things. You have to keep growing and not hang out with the same people throughout your whole life. It is just different personalities to get to know, ideas and opportunities because each group offers different opportunities over others," mused Schafers.

"I think 2018 I will probably do this again and it will of course evolve into something different." Schafers will not host the event in 2017. "I need to space it out for family reasons and my own health because it is very intense to put this together. I love doing all of it, I love the promotion, getting the gardens ready, painting the paintings, and I love all of that. If I space it out then I will have more time with it. That way people will be more interested in coming if I am not doing this every year."

"I have been showing my work since 1995. In the end I have seen the whole thing is a piece of art in itself, the garden, the collections, the paintings, the event and the pieces they are actually also a creation of art. How people feel when they come here

and how we connect that is all part of this thing and I don't really know what to call it. It has just been really interesting to start with something and have it evolve into this at this point and I am kind of amazed by that. Art in a Country Garden grows every year, evolves, changes, some things die, some new things are planted. You can take that garden analogy forever," reflected Schafers.



Realistic looking rocks painted by Sturgeon County artist Judy Leila Schafers were hung outside during Art and a Country Garden on July 9 at Prairie Sky Studio located at her home. Schafers hosted the event for a second year in a row as a gift for her collectors, subscribers and the community opening her garden, home and studio to anyone who was interested in attending.

--photo by Dolly Bolen



A decorative bird nestled in a potted plant with purple empty picture frames behind exemplifies a different kind of art at Art and a Country Garden on July 9 at Prairie Sky Studio in Sturgeon County. --photo by Dolly Bolen