



Barbara Barkley Copper, Feathers & National Pride

Ottawa artist, Barbara Barkley is celebrating her love of Canada one feather at a time.

For Ottawa artist Barbara Barkley, it has been six months since she made the decision to dedicate herself fully to her what has been her passion for the last 15 years — copper.

From the roof that graces our Parliament buildings to the cables winding through all our homes, the soft, malleable metal is quintessentially Canadian. It seems only natural that Barkley chose to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday by creating 150 unique, handcrafted copper feathers.

A completed feather is something to experience in person. For Barkley, the feather is the ideal canvas. It is a symbol

of peace, inspiration, and healing, as well as, it recognizes our country's Aboriginal origins.

Barkley brings to life a series of themes and symbols that include landscapes, livelihoods, landmarks, plants, wildlife and individuals, all part of the Canadian identity. This natural connection and challenge is exactly how Barkley was drawn to copper in the first place. "Prior to discovering copper-tooling I had tried every other traditional medium...mainly pencil, and pen and ink and calligraphy," she explains.

In fact, her work in copper is a natural progression but the paper sketch

is just the beginning of a detailed copper creation. Once a drawing is complete, the image is outlined on the copper and the tooling work begins.

Barkley utilizes countless tools of every shape, size and edge to manipulate the metal and achieve a certain result. She describes it as a battle, a constant struggle to keep control of the metal, as she flips the sheet back and forth, ensuring it doesn't buckle.

In addition to honouring our country, Barkley has also created personal tribute feathers. "I created legacy feathers to acknowledge those who

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have devoted their lives in support of our country, like my proud father who served in WW2 and worked his entire life to keep this country safe and free." From unknown to distinguished and respected, the feathers are a symbol of each individual's love for our country.

"I have completed about 25 feathers so far," said Barkley. "The personal legacy feathers can be quite complex. At about 80 hours each, they require the most time. To capture the essence of a person's life is difficult. I want to ensure that I create a piece that will be a meaningful and lasting tribute, honouring a proud Canadian."

To make the Canada 150 feathers truly shine Barkley collaborated with a young woodworking entrepreneur at CNC Ottawa to create custom display boxes that showcases the feathers in their full glory.



"My hope is that these feathers will be displayed as symbols of pride, either by individuals or organizations," reflected Barkley. "And on a personal level, respected for what I have created and the love that I have for this country."

With 125 feathers to go, Barkley has enough ideas and inspiration to last a lifetime but she still welcomes suggestions for themes.

Order your own feather or make an appointment and drop into Barb Barkley's Copper Tree Creative Studio ■

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