



City of Maple Ridge News Release

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For further information, contact:
Yvonne Chui at 604-467-7415
ychui@mapleridge.ca

Environmental Artist Robi Smith Opens Studio to Public on Nov. 15 at Fern Crescent Artist Residency

Maple Ridge, BC: Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows welcome its third artist, Robi Smith, to the Artist in Residence Program at the Fern Crescent location (23740 Fern Crescent in Maple Ridge). The selection panel chose Smith after reviewing other candidates from across Metro Vancouver as her proposal and experience were a good fit for the Silver Valley and Alouette River area. Smith will officially open her studio to the public to show her work and invite feedback on residency ideas on Saturday, November 15 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Visitors can also take this opportunity to help build a community-based art map of nature in Maple Ridge, adding locations that are personally significant. Everyone is welcome to drop in to this free event. .

Smith is a self-taught painter, mixed media and installation artist working with environmental themes and materials. Born and raised in the Vancouver area, her artwork has been exhibited in Canada and the United States. In 2012, she was awarded a commission by Vancity Credit Union to create original artwork for its redesigned South Burnaby Branch. She has been successful in receiving Downtown Eastside Artist Grants, funded by the Vancouver Foundation. In 2004, she received an artist fellowship from the Earthwatch Institute to create artwork about the diversity of plants, animals, birds and insects that support salmon-bearing streams. In addition to her art practice, she's a professional writer and editor specializing in communicating science to diverse audiences.

Smith's interest during her residency is to engage with the local community and create a series of mixed media paintings that explore the connections between the people and history of Maple Ridge to the natural environment, and vice versa. She explains her creation process that "by layering/embedding, human experience into the landscape, I comment on our complex and evolving relationships with nature... I use found materials that speak to a particular place and its history/geography and embed those materials into the painting. For instance, I'll take a letter written to someone in the community and cut it into the shape of a tree which then becomes part of the forest. In this way, the finished art embodies community stories and become highly textured. I look forward to exploring the region, inviting community members to share their stories and knowledge."

Please come and join her to help launch this exciting new residency and be part of the planning for this site specific project on Saturday, November 15. Follow her progress and activities on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FernCrescent or blog at ferncrescent.wordpress.com.

Parks and Leisure Services' role is to plan and coordinate resources in the management and development of parks, facility operations and delivery of recreation and cultural services in addition to providing opportunities that build individual, neighbourhood and community capacity. Further program information is available at mrpmparksandleisure.ca/302/Artist-in-Residence.

Photos available upon request.

For questions, please contact Yvonne Chui, Arts & Community Connections Manager at 604-467-7415 or [ychui@mapleridge.ca](mailto:yhui@mapleridge.ca).