

POCKETS

Lifestyles and Works of Canadian Artists

Paintings Echo the Forest Itself

B.C. Artist Gloria Massé has drawn inspiration from perhaps some of the most unlikely spots in the world. Early in her career, as a single mother, she took her nine-year old daughter to India where she lived for over a year. Nurturing a taste (which she still has today) for bright fabrics with pieces of mirror sewn on, jingly glass bracelets, spicy food to be eaten with one's fingers, she was able to collect images of cows and bulls which became the subject of her paintings. These were highly-textured forms of skin, bone, and muscle, with deep red pigment applied to their faces.

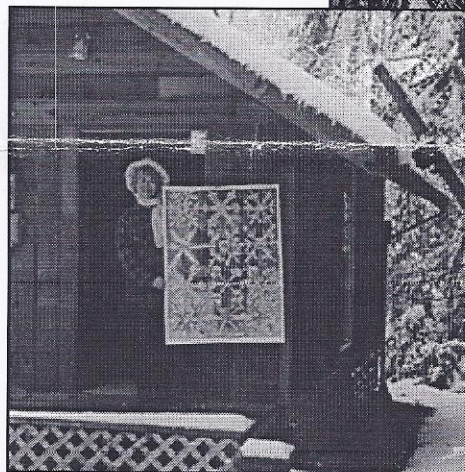
After many years of working in Vancouver, she was able to move to a piece of land on an island close to Gibsons. The ferry, which takes mainly inhabitants to and from their island, is better called a water taxi. The schedule is not terribly frequent; it seats maybe ten. Any cars on the island must be barged in. There is no more appropriate place for her work to emerge than a studio (built by her and companion John Calder) in the midst of lush green woods, full of ferns where the earth is so often a rich rusty brown colour from decomposing trees, and one can almost pretend that no other lands exist. Her water comes from a well and electricity in her two-room cabin has only recently been installed.

The initial years at Gambier saw a large series of oils with wolves. To gain experience before these, she studied the lupine animals on the other side of Canada, at a

preservation centre in Schubencadie N.S., run by a university. The wolves on canvas, whether bright golds and blues or natural reds and greens either meld with or somehow imply a forest. The fur



Above: One of Massé's wolf series, oils, 6'x3 1/2'. Christmas 1988.



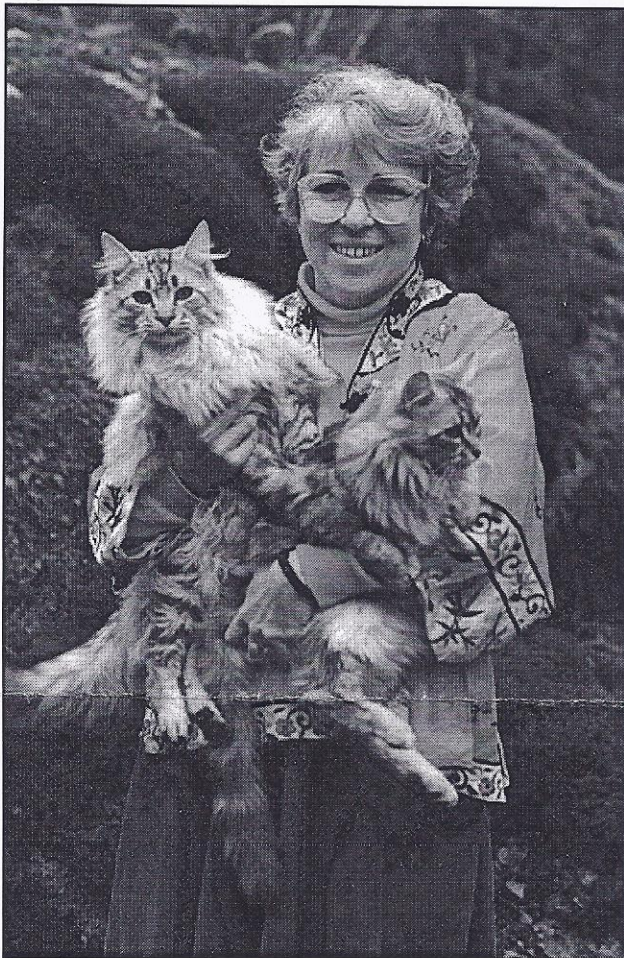
Left: Massé outside her studio, March 1994.

textures and brushstrokes perfectly incarnate the beings' wild curiosity, yet leave them free from evil malice. There have also been paintings of snowflakes, tall and hardy grasses complete with

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watercolour 15"x22", 1994.



Massé on Gambier, Feb. 1994 with her other cats Tawny Peachfuzz and Monsoon Raincloud

Massé continued...

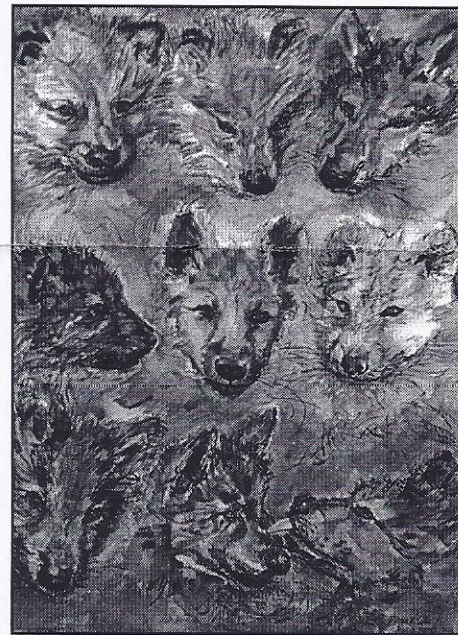
roots, and tiny watercolours—some of slightly comical slugs (a common sight) which were sold at the general store.

Although there are still buyers who wish to commission wolf paintings, Massé has recently been working on orangutans. Many works of infants, their faces highly individual and often done on round surfaces are to be suspended by

The wolves on canvas, whether bright golds and blues or natural reds and greens either meld with or somehow imply a forest.

strings from the ceiling at galleries. Aside from her work, she can go hiking and berry-picking. Her two new kittens are called Blackberry and Salmon-berry, as those grow in abundance on the island as well as in many parts of B.C.

by Heart Lavender



"Wolf Cubs", watercolour, 15"x22", 1994