

Courtney Chard *(Canada)*

Courtney is a licensed Steamfitter and Pipe welder by trade. She received extensive formal training via Mohawk College and an apprenticeship at United Association (UA) Local 46 in Toronto. UA Local 46 has one of the most sophisticated training facilities and apprenticeship training programs in Canada. She has worked in the industry since 2002 and excelled in her career in positions including instructor and forewoman.

She has always been artistic and took the knowledge and skills from her trade and learned how to create welded sculpture from metal. Courtney mostly works with carbon steel, stainless steel and occasionally copper – and a wide array of tools.

When it's possible she takes scrap and reuses it in her sculptures. She likes to mix materials and anchor the pieces in rock. She wants to be connected to nature and its powerful elements. As she says, "The world is delicate and humans have caused so much damage to the world. The oceans and water give and support life. The animals that live there have thrived despite the destruction caused by us. These inhabitants of the water can live for 50 years or more and have knowledge that we cannot grasp".

Her three exhibits here feature a whale, a turtle and koi fish.

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Exhibits

Courtney likes to give the illusion of movement to her art and achieve this effect by supporting the metal in a way that it looks to be floating (swimming).

Firstly, she cuts the metal, often into intricate shapes, using a plasma cutter. To heat or bend thin metal, she grabs her oxygen acetylene torch.

To bend thicker round or square stock metal, such as railway spikes, she heats them in her small forge and hammers it out when red-hot. To fuse two pieces of metal together, she reaches for one of three types of specialty welding machines. After she has layered and welded metal pieces to meet her overall vision, she wields an angle grinder to cut, sand down or grind off excess metal, as well as to polish.

The koi fish carbon and stainless steel sculpture, required a 3D wire frame outline onto which the various metal pieces were placed and held together by the welds.



For finishes, Courtney eschews paint in favour of more natural patinas and oils. For the pair of koi fish, motor oil helped achieve a darker colour on the carbon steel of one fish in contrast to the lighter stainless steel of the second; the sculpture represents yin and yang.

Vinegar, salt and hydrogen peroxide help rust metal as with the shell of the Turtle exhibit and a blowtorch creates spectacular blue and purple effects on stainless steel.

The final step is oil or a clear coat to preserve the finish.

Exhibit “Inner Balance”

Dimensions of Exhibit

107 cm high x 102 cm long x 102 cm wide



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