

The Chosen Ones

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It seems to be the perfect career – if you can make a living at it! To be an artist, doing what you love most, involves being challenged every day and inspired by the world around you in the smallest and grandest of ways. But, it also seems that an artist has no choice, in that the profession chooses them. For some artists the calling comes early in life and, almost before they know it, they are consumed with creating and perfecting their craft!

Ottawa is a hotbed for artistic talent, and to simply profile four great ones in *Ottawa At Home* seems to only skim the surface. However, our chosen four are recognizable names within the capital and beyond, so we can look forward to watching their work bring them the acclaim they deserve.



THIS PAGE: John Barkley within his work; a recent painting "Guardian Gate." John's work can be found in Ottawa at Gallerie St.Laurent + Hill and Gallery 3

John Barkley

EXPERIMENTAL PAINTER.

Describe what being an artist means to you. My answer varies from day to day. Sometimes I feel like I am in communion with the divine or self and that I am a catalyst for the work to emerge. At other times, I feel like I am just doing my job like any one else. Sometimes I feel both ways.

Describe the evolution of your work. My work is motivated by a need to create and was initially influenced by a love of the forest, land, lakes and rivers. I wanted to find transcendence and answers to my existential questions. As I moved towards abstraction, archetypal content, environmental concerns and questions of cosmogony entered my work.

Have you ever been unable to create? Not really, aside from the usual too tired or sick. But, I have had good days and bad days. The important thing is to keep working, and eventually the muse appears.

Your success is evident; where do you want to take it from here? I want to continue to make the best paintings that I can, while pushing into novel territory. I would like my work to help humanity progress existentially and spiritually.

What has been your proudest moment to date? Having my father, an artist, come and see my first solo exhibit.