



Internationally known artist Maija Peeples-Bright has a deep passion for all kinds of art, animals, nature, color and most of all, having fun. In *The Spirit of Woofdom* - a documentary telling the story of Peeples-Bright's life and art - each of these elements are intertwined and celebrated in magnificent fashion.

Playful and colorful animals, or "beasties" as she refers to them, populate all of her pieces, illustrating the joy in life and art. Animals of the "woof world" have been a part of Peeples-Bright's portfolio since the '60s and continue to appear in her work. Her 2005 series of mixed-

media paintings and ceramic figures features her favorite historical figures as "woof heroes." "George and Martha Woofington," "Chief Sitting Woof," and others are depicted with animals Peeples-Bright feels match their personality strengths.

"I love animals," Peeples-Bright says. A love she expresses by featuring all types of animal images in her paintings and ceramic art. She describes her work as "a touch of familiar, a touch of fantasy, and a touch of fun."

A native of the northern European country of Latvia, Peeples-Bright fled from a Russian invasion with her family into Germany in 1945. After spending time in refugee camps, the family eventually made their way to the U.S. by obtaining a sponsor - an Orangevale gentleman farmer. Peeples-Bright, along with her mother and father, worked on the farm for a year to pay the debt. They thrived here in northern California and decided to make the area their new home.

Even though Peeples-Bright's family wanted her to pursue a career in mathematics as her father had, art became her life's path. She attended UC Davis and first enrolled in the mathematics

program, but soon changed her mind. With encouragement and guidance from UC Davis' art professors, such as Wayne Thiebaud and William T. Wiley, her unique talent flourished. "Mathematics helped as a logical thinking tool," Peeples-Bright explains. "However, art was the most wonderful thing I ever experienced, so I changed my major."

After visiting Peeples-Bright at her new home and huge Rocklin studio, it's clear that her artistic passion has not wavered. And inside her haven, it's not only her own art, but a myriad of works by others that shows just how much she is inspired by creativity. Art is everywhere - nearly every inch of wall space and other surfaces are filled with wonderful pieces; even Peeples-Bright herself is covered. The day I visited she wore a blouse and shoes covered in illustrations of fantastic and colorful animals, which she herself painted on the fabrics. "Art should be everywhere," Peeples-Bright says. "Art, like music, should touch your soul."

Her work has been on display at local museums, such as Roseville's Blue Line Gallery, and is on permanent display both nationally and internationally at several museums including Sacramento's Crocker Art Museum. In addition, her art is featured in many permanent public and private collections around the world.

Peeples-Bright is currently busy at work on her new series of night scenes featuring the intriguing animals that come out after dark; the first of *Nocturnes* is a depiction of an aye-aye lemur (a native of Madagascar) at Yosemite's Bridalveil Fall. ●

Visit maijapeeples-bright.com for more information.

maija peeples- bright

Fantastically Funky

by LeeAnn Dickson

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artbeat

Through November 10 - Amorphous: 50 Years of Studio Glass in America.

To celebrate a half-century of glass making in the U.S., Blue Line Gallery presents this exhibit to feature 18 local glass artists working in a variety of techniques including casting, blowing, fusing and construction. For more details and tickets, visit rosevillearts.org.

Photos by Dante Fontana.

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