

## ENTERTAINMENTS

## Orkney inspiration results in new enterprise for U.S. artist

By Leah Seator

A New York artist is to run a course in Orkney this summer, claiming she has taken much of the inspiration for her life's work from the county.

Jeanne Breen Rose, 45, lives in Westport Long Island, New York, but she explained that after a holiday in Orkney 20 years ago, she became "captivated" with the landscape, wildlife and history.

Jeanne has since returned four times, and it now keen to being a part of students, eager to help them discover new inspiration for their art as she herself first had 20 years ago.

Her course will specialise in a watercolour white-line woodblock technique — "a unique form of printmaking," she explained.

This method, also called the Preinvention Print, evolved in Massachusetts in 1915 among a small group of artists experimenting with the traditional Japanese woodblock technique. The artist carves the lines of a composition into a woodblock.

Special Japanese paper is stretched and then small areas of the block are coated with watercolour and the paper is put down and rubbed using the pressure of the palm of the hand.

The paper is then rinsed and lowered into the colour and quality feels just right. The carved

lines remain free of colour, thus defining the white-line effect.

Teacher Jeanne, who will turn 50 while in Orkney this summer, told *The Oregonian* how it all started.

"Twenty years ago, I was an exchange teacher in Fantasy for a year. I took my spring holiday on Orkney. I immediately became captivated with the broad sky, the cowboys, puffins, seals, the cloachs, the history and the standing stones.

"I have always had an interest in artistic endeavours. I trained for, and would have become, an art teacher, but the jobs were in the elementary (primary) regular classrooms where I have been for the past 25 years.

"Throughout those years, I always maintained my interest in art, working with many artists, dabbling in many crafts and I have been lucky enough to travel and see many samples of the world's art.

"In the past 10 years I have been in Orkney four times, each time being artistically influenced by the terrain as well as returning home to paint landscapes with the standing stones as the focus.

"It is the work inspired by Orkney that has brought me to the greatest artistic and personal satisfaction.

"Now it seems that others are seeking it as well. Recently, I have been working with a sculptor, David Hessler, to learn the art of working with the idea of developing sites of my Orkney-inspired work, into large steel sculptures."

Jeanne explained that after a more recent visit to Orkney, she managed to co-opt up some interest in running a course here.

She said: "I returned to Orkney for my third visit this past July, 2004, and brought some of my work to show Teach (Hall) at the Waterford Quay. She graciously, and with interest, took some pieces into the gallery.

"After a very enlightening tour with Discover Orkney Tours, I began to develop the idea of bringing artists over to mix the landscape and history with the learning of the watercolour white-line woodblock technique.

"After my return here and over the next few months, Discover Orkney Tours provided direction, insight and assistance with facilitating my plans for week-long summer 2005 art workshops.

"After investigating a few facilities, Woodwick House became the site for our home base.

"James Bryan, who has already decorated Woodwick's interior with local artists' work, was very amenable to working closely with visiting artists and the house had an extremely well suited area for constant open, well lit and non-intrusive studio space."

Jeanne is hoping to entice a certain kind of person to take part in her workshops.

She said: "The type of individual who chooses to come on this adventure will be one who has travelled before. They are interested in writing and exploring a different kind of place, and so they are planning on getting to Orkney via all sorts of interesting diversions.

"Discover Orkney Tours is providing valuable assistance to them with their travel arrangements and accommodation throughout their stay in Scotland.

"Participants will be limited to eight per week.

"This work will include a holiday tour with Discover Orkney Tours, instruction and supplies (these materials are Japanese in origin), meals, lodging and evening discussions.

"The intent is to provide as much information about the life of Orkney present and past. Negotiations are now underway to engage local Orkadians as evening speakers.

"While meetings will be scheduled at an instruction, the classroom are for participants to avail themselves of the nearby streams reachable by foot, ferry or bus.

Opportunities to visit local industries like the cheese and whisky distillery will be made.

"I will have a car to take small groups along the coast track to see fellow local artists at work."

"Some participants are interested in hiring cycles and following the tourist board cycle walk. If there is an evening of local music or dance, we will try to be there.

"Again, the idea is to connect artistic inspiration not only with the beauty inherent in the land but also with the people and their history. The premise is to learn the whole story about a place before one begins to interpret that story, be it in the land, the history or the



New York artist Jeanne Breen Rose, who will run courses in Orkney for other American artists this summer.

people in an artistic manner.

"And I assure me we will find our way into a pub or two to sample the local beer."

Jeanne has already accepted bookings from people who have seen her adverts in national art magazines, and local American publications.

She went on to describe plans for the future: "It is my intent to be the first to eventually bring other artists out-landing on their genre, to hold workshops with many different themes for a week at a time.

"In particular, I hope to draw from artists working along the Hushon Valley of New York.

"These art artists, inspired by the wild felines, will benefit and

inspire Utah's wild mountain that cascade into the very large Hushon river. While nearly the opposite in topography, I find there is some universal connection between the Hushon river valley and the gently-framed dune hills, the sun of the sea, and the wisdom of a land filled silver river Orkney where it seems to feel you are on top of the world."

The workshops are planned to be held on July 11 until July 16, and again from July 18 until July 23. The course will run again between July 18 and August 6 and then between August 13 and August 20. For more information, check out Jeanne's website at [www.jeannebreen.com](http://www.jeannebreen.com).