

# We're Not About Murder Anymore

A conversation with Cliff and Wilma Derksen

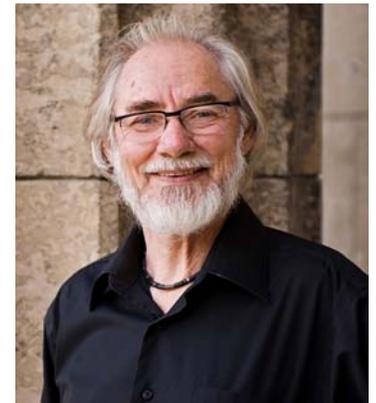
by

Brian Campbell

As part of the planning of the family art show, "Inexplicable: It is About Healing," I had the opportunity to sit down and talk with Cliff and Wilma Derksen about what their inspiration was behind doing the show. Cliff said that, "It has always been a dream to do this as a family." They have done art shows through other organizations in the past and always talked about doing shows themselves, but were not sure how to get started. Self-promotion was not natural for them they didn't know how to "brand ourselves." Then life and the trial put everything on hold. Ironically, it was the process of the trial that made Cliff think of, "Art as therapy." He said that, "This was solidified when I got invitations to speak about how my creativity helped me through my trauma." That was when he realized how much his art had helped him and the rest of the family.

Wilma was the one who stepped up to help Cliff and Odia to expose their art to the public. When she talks about her husband and daughter's work it quickly becomes obvious how proud she is of them and how much she wants to share what they can do. What Wilma didn't count on was that Cliff and Odia would want her to be part of the show. She doesn't consider herself an artist at the same level of Cliff and Odia, but feels that she can show her work as an example that anyone can do it to help dealing with trauma and issues in their lives.

Cliff sketches and works in clay as his chosen form of art, but suggests that people can use any form of creativity. The idea is to use both halves of your brain, and through repetition, getting more into the creative side of your right brain, whether it is through sculpture, painting, photography, or simply going for long walks and admiring the scenery. Any form of creativity is good therapy.



Odia uses installation art to express her emotions through art. During the trial she crocheted in black, red and beige to express her emotions each day. She also created "The Last Walk," through the use of photography to follow Candace's final journey. Odia will be featuring her most recent piece, "The Offering Project," which is about crochet bowls, "Symbolic containers of our pain and hurt and presenting them as an offering." Through her website, Odia has invited others to join her project. All together she has over 300 bowls to date. Anyone who has crocheted a bowl is invited to bring them, along with their story, to the gallery. They will be added to the instillation.



Wilma said that “When I didn’t have any words I yearned for the simplicity of white and the purity of white.” She paints over words to signify her struggle for words, her search for words. She considers her work decor art, just something to put on the wall as part of the background. Wilma says that, “I haven’t reached my white yet,” and refers to her work as implicits, “Because they have an underlying message.”



The Derksens are hoping to inspire and encourage people with their show and story. Wilma says, “People tell us that our story inspires them because we survived it.” They want to encourage and offer hope to people through art. She also says that, “We’re looking for inspiring stories. I think we need one a day.” Wilma believes that everyone has the ability to be creative. Their plan has always been to, “Create something beautiful out of something horrible.”

They want this event to be a positive and happy event, not a sad one. Cliff says that, “Everybody has trouble, the world is full of troubles. We want to inspire people to be creative and have hope no matter what they are going through.” This is a family project that they believe is good for family unity. They have the full support of their son Syras who, although he is not directly involved in the show, will be part of it in some way, as is his wife and Odia’s husband. They feel that Candace is and always will be part of their family and their family celebration.

Lastly, they want people to know that they are not just about murder. That they are a normal, happy creative family. Cliff says that, “We will always be victims in name, but we are not victims in spirit. We are beyond that now.” Now they want to be happy and have fun as a family and want people to come out and have fun with them.

Inexplicable: It is About Healing, begins on Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> and running until Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. The Art Talk nights are on April 12, 17 and 26 beginning at 7:00 p.m. and will include refreshments and a chance to meet and mingle with the artists. Come out and join their family celebration.

Inexplicable: It is About Healing

Frame Gallery

318 Ross Avenue

Winnipeg, MB

Open: Tues.: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Wed. – Fri.: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Sat.: 1:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Sun.: 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Media Contact

Brian Campbell

High Hopes Communications

(204)880-5505

brian@highhopescommunications.ca