

ARTIST STATEMENT

Exhibit: "Inner Experiences: The Sculpture and Process of William Nettelhorst"

I've been sculpting, first in sand and then in stone, for almost 40 years. In 2003 I was introduced to the Zimbabwe stone sculptors from Chapungu. Following that, my work in pink alabaster began after a visit to the Colorado Alabaster quarry. I liked this stone for its flesh color and immediately ordered 3,500 pounds to work with.

Until the pieces in this *Inner Experiences* series began to take form in my mind, eye, and hands, I mainly sculpted the feminine form and other figurative work. Recently, after a friend invited me to think about carving something abstract, I began to explore how I felt about abstract and what that might look like. I had no sense of "abstract" when I looked inside myself for inspiration. After an artist friend of mine asked, "What were you feeling when you carved it?" the question became "Can I carve what I feel?" This was the start of a whole new series of sculptures, that pushed open my boundaries and lead me deeper into my heart.

I began my abstract pieces by rasping curves and creating a hole through the stone. The resulting sculpture is *My Journey*. The title came forward when I understood the piece's flow was my life's journey, both physical and spiritual.

I went back to the question: "Can I carve what I feel?" Words came to me and I scratched one line drawings for each word as I experienced the word in me. I carved four more pieces from the drawings. The drawings were expressions. The sculptures are my personal experience.

Each of these sculptures is my inner being's experience of the word. The order I carved these sculptures was determined by which word drew me first. I didn't have an awareness of what the draw was until much later when the awareness presented itself.

When I exhibit the pieces, I put *My Journey* in the middle. The series is my journey, and the middle of my life is when I awakened to my spiritual journey. My spiritual journey opened awareness and expanded consciousness. Through silent prayer I have experienced the unpacking of my subconscious and the healing of inner hidden hurts. This healing has led to acceptance of all of me and my life. I am grateful for my "wonderfully mysterious and beautiful life."

Inner Experiences. My story in stone.

Website: The Prairie House Studio <http://www.theprairiehousestudio.com>