

Roy Mackey, a brief bio/history

I originally started doing this type of steel work in 1984. At the time I had been doing a lot of portraits in pencil and though enjoyed it did not feel satisfied with the medium. My desire was to do something large and three dimensional. Back then the majority of my time was spent customizing and painting old and classic cars. I had taught my self to do this and discovered I had a real knack for it. It was not long before my shop was very busy. One day I started to reflect on using small pieces of sheet steel to weld a head. Since I was well versed in welding steel already in the body shop the project came together quite easily. After this first piece I was obsessed even though no one at the time seemed that impressed. Since that time I have not been able to stop.



After getting tired of the auto-body shop I ended up then buying an antique shop. I ran it for five years, welding my sculpture in any spare time I could find. Then in 1990 I hit a deer while riding the 1951 Harley I restored. After almost dying in the hospital I realized this must be a sign. Especially since this was my third near death and out of body experience. It was then I made the decision to do my art full time. After getting back on my feet physically and my Harley back to restored condition I moved to Vancouver Island. There I worked obsessively and endlessly on my art. After seven years there I decided it was time

to quit doing art and get a *real* job. I sold virtually everything I had including all my tools packed my art and moved to Vancouver. Of course three months later and just before going totally crazy I realized that I could not quit doing my art. I then set out to buy new tools and find a place to work

I moved into my new studio at Vancouver's ARC, Artist Resource Centre in 1999. Then after living here a year had a chance to manage the building which I grabbed. The first reason was to eat better the second was to try and revitalize this very cool artist building which was sadly falling apart due to bad management and tenants who were not artists. Though it took a lot longer than expected the building now has great energy and vibrant sense of artistic community. It is a remarkable place to live as far as real live/work studios go.



Eventually I moved into a larger unit with my partner Marta Baricsa. We now have the space set up so that it is not only very liveable but very productive as far producing her paintings and my sculpture. Our studio is fifteen hundred square feet, and has sixteen foot ceilings with a loft for bedroom and bathroom. It also has floor to ceiling windows on two walls. After six years of managing and not enough time welding I resigned. Now I spend almost all my time in my studio welding or pursuing galleries to represent my work. After resigning I wrote and self published a humorous semi-fictional book on growing up in the Rocky Mountains. Strangely this book has been selling very well! For me it is the ideal **live/work** situation. My present goal is to just produce as much of this work as possible... along with eventually looking for a gallery that can see what I see.

