

## RCC library scores Pomaska murals

“I’m so happy that I took the challenge,” says Urbanna artist Anna Pomaska about her venture into mural painting in the Children’s Room of the Rappahannock Community College/Richmond County Public Library. Her appealing farmyard and woodland scenes add greatly to the fresh new look resulting from the library’s recent renovations, and she was particularly pleased that her art would become a permanent part of a community college—“I love community colleges,” she says. “They offer such great things when you’re ready to enrich and expand your abilities.”



During her work on the paintings, which took a total of perhaps 60 to 70 hours divided into three- or four-hour sessions, Pomaska was gratified to find that children using the room were fascinated by the process. “They wanted to help me paint,” she smiled. “One boy was so interested that I gave him a little lesson—I showed him how I got the different colors by mixing my paints.” She adds, “I wasn’t sure that I still knew how to use acrylic paints”—having used only watercolors for many years—but as a friend told her encouragingly, “it’s just like riding a bicycle. Once you learn how to do it, you never really forget.”


Born in Scotland of Polish parents displaced during World War II, Pomaska emigrated with them at an early age to Buffalo, New York, where she graduated from Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy in 1964. She went on to study painting, drawing, printmaking, and the graphic arts at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, receiving her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1968. After graduation, she stayed on as the school’s assistant photographer in publications—the beginning of a lifelong involvement with photography. In 1976 she received her Master of Fine Arts degree in photography from the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, New York. Her work has been exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum, the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the Margaret Crow Gallery in Pasadena, the Center for Photographic Art in Carmel, California, and the Marsh Art Gallery at the University of Richmond. She was based in California for some years, but relocated to Urbanna at the suggestion of a friend who lived there. The move allowed her to offer a home to her aging mother, who had begun to need daily care and a milder climate than that of her previous residence in Buffalo.

Soon after receiving her master's degree, Pomaska published the first of well over 100 children's activity books that she has written and illustrated for Dover Publications. "I was their first living children's author," she notes—previous children's books from Dover had all been reprints of earlier works. The activity books were an excellent resource for the library murals, as the request for a "farm mural" fit perfectly with the "Baby Animals Sticker Stories" that she had already published. She was also able to re-use the "hidden pictures" technique from many of her books, where familiar creatures and objects share their outlines with those of other elements of the picture, and can only be spotted with a close and careful look. Her woodland mural in the Children's Room (borrowed from a "Little Red Riding Hood" illustration) shows a tree that, as well as a quirky face formed from wrinkles in the bark, has eight birds tucked in among its branches, trunk, and roots. She had to scale up her drawings considerably to fit the larger space they were intended for, but the library's overhead projector "made it so easy," she says.

In addition to her career in art, Pomaska and her husband, Wyatt Portz, are the creators of "Moving Breath Yoga," which focuses on hatha yoga as a practice that excludes no age or body type, and addresses mind and spirit equally. They have taught for the last five years at the Gloucester Wellness Center and also at the YMCA in Hartfield (Middlesex County), and in December of this year, they plan to open their own studio in Urbanna. "My yoga helped a lot with all the climbing and stretching I had to do with the murals," says Pomaska.

Photo: This mural, which graces the Children's Room of the RCC/Richmond County Public Library, was created by Urbanna artist Anna Pomaska.

## One Response to "RCC library scores Pomaska murals"

-  *Virginia Wedding Photographers* says:  
December 5, 2013 at 10:37 am

Never know when yoga will come in handy, lol! Lovely work! 🍌

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