

Creating a symbolic, personal statement

CJ Hurley designs one-of-a-kind friezes

By James Bash

If you step into the Laurelhurst home of CJ Hurley, you'll think you've stepped back in time. Hurley's 1913 Portland Four-square home has a parlor and a dining room restored to reflect the Arts and Crafts style when the home was built. Inside their home, Hurley and his wife Barbara Pierce, who is also Hurley's business partner, have created an artistic space that includes Hurley's hand-painted friezes, stained glass, metal work and wainscoting. The result is an integrated work of art.

Hurley has a passion for art and its relationship to architecture, family and culture, so it's not surprising that he loves the Arts and Crafts movement, which was concerned with integrating the arts with life in a very individual way.

"Environment, sense of place and immediate surroundings were always important to me," says Hurley. "I try to integrate that into my art."

For Hurley, each project is unique. For each client who wants Hurley to create friezes for their home, Hurley starts out by visiting the client and spending a considerable amount of time studying their house before creating a unique design.

"I try to find out what you love about your house and the setting," says Hurley. "I weave those elements into the art that I create; and it becomes a symbolic, personal statement."

That personal statement works well with people who are committed to the place where they live. They can rest assured that they have a piece of art that is not repeated anywhere.

"Some people want me to copy a design from Frank Lloyd Wright," explains Hurley, "or they want me to repeat something from a home that I did. I don't do that. I create a unique piece. My designs are laden with symbolism from a particular home, the values of the homeowners and the environment. It's art."

Hurley studied art at Guilford College in North Carolina, but he became fascinated with the Arts and Crafts movement on his own and taught himself much of what he knows about it. With the help of Pierce, Hurley practiced his art on their home in North Carolina before moving to Portland in 2001. By then, he had begun to get a lot of recognition in national publications for his

Arts and Crafts-inspired paintings, stained glass, built-ins, copper designs and pottery designs. Hurley's work has been featured in *American Bungalow*, *New Old House* and *Style 1900*.

After moving to Portland, Hurley and Pierce created their art-and-consultation business called CJ Hurley Century Arts (cjhurley.com). Pierce takes care of the financial side of the business while Hurley is known for working ten-hour days to get a piece of artwork just right.

"I could make it easier for myself by just limiting things to a set of designs," admits Hurley, "but that is boring and uninteresting work."

Hurley also creates paintings that are displayed in galleries. Some of his works are available through the Portland Art Museum Rental Sales Gallery. Hurley has his design studio upstairs in his home and a work area in the basement for big, messy projects. He and Pierce haven't finished making over their entire home in their individual Arts and Crafts style. They know that it's an ongoing project.

"Our art is very much about who we are and how we live," says Hurley. "It's about meaning."

For more information: Visit cjhurley.com or call (503) 234-4167.



Above: CJ Hurley worked closely with the owner of this dining room (in a Laurelhurst home) to design a personal one-of-a-kind frieze titled "The Forest Evergreen". - Photo courtesy of CJ Hurley Century Arts



Left: CJ Hurley and his wife Barbara Pierce at work in a Northeast Portland home, with Hurley's work visible in the background. - Photo courtesy of CJ Hurley Century Arts

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