

Denita Benyshek

Short Bio

1/27/24

A lifetime of transformative experiences is integrated and represented in Benyshek's artwork. Born in a rural Czech immigrant community, she felt kinship with the remnants of animism and folk beliefs. Her family's farms, gardens, and frequent camping trips nurtured an intimate relationship with the natural world – her place of inspiration, awe, and wonder.

Benyshek studied art formally, with a BFA (Wichita State University) and an MFA (University of Washington) in painting. During the years of part time teaching in the Alaskan bush, she found her artistic voice, developing an intuitive, visual language akin to the Slavic perception of reality: richly layered, visionary, with nonlinear time, reverie provoking discontinuous space, and a belief in a transcendent power of beauty.

With motherhood, Benyshek decided to develop a second career that would provide for her family. She earned an MA in psychology, a graduate certificate in the psychology of creativity, and a PhD in humanistic and transpersonal psychology.

In 2018, Benyshek was initiated by three South Korean shamans. Benyshek's research on contemporary artists as shamans was published in the USA and Europe, with many presentations at international conferences. This work integrates academic research, autoethnographic narratives, poetry, visual art, and performance. For 25 years, Benyshek lived in the Cascade mountains near Seattle.

In 2022, Benyshek moved her family to Wichita, returning to her roots. She was selected as the artist in residence for Botanica Gardens through the Fisch Haus OpenStudios project and also began creating a new garden around her home. Those garden watercolors led to the recent Sacred Geometry series, a means of representing her mystical relationship with nature. She is also completing a book of poetry and garden paintings.

Benyshek's artwork is in the public collections of the University of Washington Medical Center, King County Ethnic Heritage Collection, Harborview Medical Center, Snoqualmie Point Park, and the Glass Museum in Ebeltoft, Denmark. Her paintings were exhibited in solo shows in Seattle, WA, Santa Fe, NM, Sun Valley, ID, Portland, OR, Wichita, KS, and elsewhere.