

## Vendor Spotlight: Barbara Pottie Holmes Art

By Laura Kirkpatrick

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Barbara Pottie Holmes is known for her unique style of painting with watercolours. She finds the beauty in real photos and brings them to life. Looking at her work, you might think she comes from a background of fine arts. But she has no formal painting education.

Barbara took up folk art painting as a side hobby 15 years ago. Being a mother of six, she never thought of pursuing any hobbies other than trying to take a nap, she says. Yet, one day she walked into a dollar store and picked up some paints. Then, three years ago, she took on a 30-day, 30 paintings challenge using acrylic paints. Last year while her son was ill, she needed another distraction.



“I had already retired by then,” Barbara said. “I started playing with watercolours and my son encouraged me to keep doing it.” She applied to the Halifax Seaport Farmers’ Market last August and started selling her works of art.

Many of Barbara’s watercolour paintings are inspired by images captured by herself, her daughter and other photographers she follows on Instagram. Her favourite thing to recreate in watercolour is nature and architecture. “I’ve always enjoyed nature,” Barbara said. “Being able to capture it in a different way has been really fun.”



Barbara loves interacting with people at the Halifax Seaport Farmers’ Market and hearing their stories. She’s had so many great and memorable moments with customers from all around the world. For Barbara, she’s always enjoyed the people aspect of any job she’s held and it’s no different here.

“I love coming here,” Barbara said. “It’s the atmosphere, the staff, the other vendors and the people who come to my table who make me want to get up in the morning. Coming to the Market is one thing that gives me purpose.”

She’s planning to keep doing this as long as she enjoys it and as long as she’s able. Her small watercolour business is extremely important to her. She encourages people to try something they’re not sure they can do because that’s exactly what she did. “You don’t know what you can do until you try it,” Barbara said. “If you challenge yourself to do something difficult, you may surprise yourself.”



For Barbara, creativity is important. Her advice to future artists/small business owners was this: “Try something and don’t give up. Don’t be discouraged by other people say and don’t follow what other people do. Try something just to please yourself.”