



Meet 2021 Artist-in- Residence **Nancy Hershberger**

Fabric artist Nancy Hershberger
expected to find serenity
in Shenandoah.

Instead, she found storms —
and in them, inspiration.

When she arrived in May,
the trees were bare atop the
mountains. The skies were
gray, the days cold. "It was
like stepping back in time to
March," Hershberger says.



✓ Shenandoah Sunset/Nancy Hershberger



Then, buds opened and leaves unfolded. “I couldn’t believe just how beautiful that place was, and how it revealed itself... Every day, there was a change in the scenery. It was subtle and at the same time spectacular,” she says.

With funding from the Trust, Hershberger stayed three weeks at Skyland Resort, hiking and taking photographs to interpret in her work. One of the most striking images was taken near Skyland: the sun sinking behind the mountains, as gray storm clouds break up to reveal a lemon-yellow sky. From that photograph, she created “Shenandoah Sunset.”

Another piece depicts a bare tree overlooking an east-facing view as heavy clouds hang overhead. The wind-shaped

tree died years ago, she says, “and yet it stands there, defying the elements, like a sentinel.” She’s donating that piece to the park.

Hershberger works in fabric, fused then quilted and enhanced with water-based Tsukineko inks, acrylics made for fabrics, and oil paint sticks. The two pieces she created during her residency are just the beginning; she’s planning several series based on the park’s wildflowers, mountain vistas and water.

Hershberger first applied for the artist residency in 2018, then again in 2019 and 2020. While disappointed not to get in, she spent those years building her body of work. When she was awarded the residency in 2021, she was ready.

“I have the SNP Trust to thank for that,” she says. “You gave me time on two different fronts — time to really work on my voice, and then time to work on nothing but Shenandoah, once I did get in.”

During her three weeks in the park, Hershberger chatted with day-trippers and Appalachian Trail through-hikers. She learned about Shenandoah’s ecology, including the ongoing threat posed by acid rain. If she and other artists can show and share what they’ve learned, she says, people will understand why they need to protect special places like Shenandoah. “Maybe we’ll actually inspire more people to think about it, talk about it, and do something about it.”

Event Calendar

August 29

Banff Centre Mountain Film Festival

September 12

Fall Hike in the Park

September 30

Wine on the Rooftop

October 22–23

Rapidan Society dinner & Weekend in the Park

For more information about these events, visit
www.snptrust.org/events.

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