

# FEATURE

by Tara Johnson

## Fully present

Celtic art that's good for the soul

Elizabeth Stewart's "It's Raining Cats and Dogs" solo art exhibit opening will be held at the Elysium Arts Folk Club on March 1 from 4 to 7 p.m. The collection features various oil and acrylic paintings heavily influenced by Celtic design. Drawing from such revered sources as The Book of Kells and other ancient Irish and Scottish artifacts, Stewart said she was inspired to, "make a statement" through her artwork.

Stewart became interested in Celtic design when she began studying Celtic music. "I originally wanted to be a singer," said Stewart.

Through her investigation of traditional Scottish and Irish songs, she began to find her interest in Celtic design including knot work, mazes, spirals and animorphic motifs. In 2003, Stewart focused her attention to developing her artwork technique. "I took some art classes, but I'm mostly self taught," said Stewart.

According to Stewart the inspiration fueling her painting creation originated from her own back yard. "One day, as I was looking out the window at the trees in the yard, instead of seeing leaves, I saw pattern... not just any pattern, but Celtic design spiral pattern.

Instead of bark, I saw mazes. I turned to look at the dog sleeping on the carpet and I saw Celtic spirals in the fur and Celtic knot work in the way his paws overlapped one another. It was a breakthrough, and this has been my artistic passion ever since."

The "Pets" painting series incorporates a variety of



"Lobstermen," by Elizabeth Stewart



"Kittens in the Fig Tree," by Elizabeth Stewart

**WHAT** Elizabeth Stewart's 'It's Raining Cats and Dogs' solo art exhibit opening

**WHEN** Sunday, March 1, 4-7 p.m.

**WHERE** Elysium Arts Folk Club, Lower Mill at Salmon Falls, Rollinsford

**CONTACT** [www.elysiumarts.com/folk-club](http://www.elysiumarts.com/folk-club), 743-4700, [www.elizabethstewartart.com](http://www.elizabethstewartart.com)

animals such as dogs, cats, rabbits, and birds. "For me when I look at animals I remember a simple part of me, free of drama and financial concern."

Stewart's most popular piece titled "Missing You" captures what she describes as a timeless moment with an old Basset hound. "In capturing this on canvas, I observe the patterns in the skin and fur, the natural order of the way the garden arranges itself harmoniously around, while remaining connected to the flowers offered pleadingly to the viewer."

Stewart said she believes there is a sense of unconditional love that many people can benefit from viewing this art.

For many local aspiring artists, economic concern and uncertainty have made it a challenging time to establish a successful business. Stewart said during these difficult times, this is precisely when art inspiration is needed the most. "When people are down and out, this is the best time for art. It feeds the soul," said Stewart.

The exhibit will premiere a selection of paintings that have never been seen including Stewart's person favorite, "The Siberian Husky." A DJ will play music from Stewart's upcoming Celtic album due to be released in

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## SPOTLIGHT

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