

Once an Artist, Always an Artist

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The tiger sweater Savage knit in high school and reconnected with many years later.

All children are artists. To remain an artist throughout your life, though, it must be part of your self-definition. While local artist Anika Ellison Savage has taken an intricate path through life and career choices, art has remained an enduring and important constant.

As a youngster, when her best friend and big brother, Rick, went off to kindergarten, she invited the girls on her block to create paper replicas of their houses to form a model of the street, an early sign of her interest in shaping the built environment. Savage's maternal grandmother, Mae Tessier, lived with her family and made elaborate crepe-paper flowers. Savage loved to assist. When she was seven, her mother bought a

sewing machine and enrolled her in an adult sewing class at the Singer store in town. From then on, until she went to college, she made her own clothes.

In college, Savage chose to study architecture at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, which placed her at the exciting hub of many creative disciplines. She practiced architecture in small firms for many years, designing a summit lodge, a church, a YMCA, middle schools, wineries in California, and luxury and low-income housing in Boston.

Later, as Digital Equipment Corporation's first registered architect, she determined the company's space needs and building criteria, selecting and hiring architectural firms and overseeing their work. The company grew from 25,000 employees to nearly 125,000 during the 18 years she worked there. The company's increased need for space required her to visit sites throughout the country and around the world.

With her husband, also an architect, Savage settled in Concord, Massachusetts, and had a son, Cam. While working full time and raising a child, she continued to sew and knit and took up stained glass and ceramics. When her brother asked her to paint a portrait of his children, her interest in the fine arts was kindled, and she began to study painting at the Rockport Art Association.

While working at Digital, Savage obtained an MBA from Babson College and became a strategist in the office of the company's president. There, she honed the skills that would take her into the next phase of her career as a corporate strategist and futurist.

As an independent consultant, her first client was AT&T's Bell Labs. She taught the scientists who had formed the Scenario Planning Lab to do scenario planning, a method of considering alternative futures and appropriate strategic responses. She then joined a team forming in the Labs to conduct research on the future of work and the work environment. This project drew on many of her areas of expertise and took her all over the globe in a single year.

Through her published writing on futures methodologies, she met her business and, later, life partner Michael Sales. They founded Art of the Future to help organizations explore their future prospects. Based on their consulting experience, they co-authored *Life Sustaining Environments, A Design Guide*.

Soon after moving to Newburyport, Savage began devoting more time and attention to her artistic pursuits. With Sales' encouragement, she set up a studio and began a new phase of her life work.

Savage uses vibrant color to reflect her fascination with nature, light, form and composition. From watercolor to oil and acrylic, she uses a variety of styles and techniques, often incorporating found objects, paper, fabric, buttons, beads and other materials. She continues to work in ceramics and has developed a loose, exuberant style. Her works express beauty – visually, emotionally and spiritually.

Savage's current work is an exploration of abstracted natural environments, space and movement. She has met many wonderful artists through her affiliations with the art associations in Newburyport and Rockport, Massachusetts, and Naples, Florida. She is a member of the National Association of Women Artists, based in New York City, and an active member of its chapters in Massachusetts and Florida.



Savage's work can be seen at anikasavage.com. Sign up for an occasional newsletter to follow her artistic explorations.

Throughout July and August, Savage is the featured artist at the Hamilton-Wenham Public Library, 14 Union Street in Hamilton. Plan to stop by for a look at her work.