



BIOGRAPHY OF SELENE COLE

Raised on a sheep farm in Timiskaming, Quebec, Selene has always felt connected to the natural world as the early days of her life were spent watching the cycles of farm life and being in close contact with the outdoors. She grew up in Winnipeg and at the age of 20, she set off to backpack in Australia. Here, she met her husband, Alex, and they continued to travel together to South East Asia, India, and Europe.

Interested in a simple and nomadic lifestyle, her first home together with Alex was in a tipi at Coed Hills Rural Artspace, a leading centre for sustainable living and the creative arts in Wales. The centre inspired Selene and she started exploring its creative arts for herself. She helped to build a traditional Celtic round house of straw bale, daub and clay, and completed a 20 ft canvas cover for a tipi. Attracted to ancient and circular spaces, it was only natural that Selene was enamoured by the yurt – a nomadic tent-like structure from Central Asia. Taking the enriching experience from the centre she returned to Canada and settled in Nova Scotia to share her passion for yurts with others.

With sewing and design fresh in her mind, Selene took a pattern construction course through the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and put these skills into practice by making yurt covers of various sizes and styles. She also completed a certificate in non-profit management through Dalhousie University. All the while, she worked at the Sierra Club of Canada as an environmental educator to involve herself in local environmental issues and connect with the community.

Eventually, Selene began working full-time designing and tailoring canvas coverings for Little Foot Yurts. Interested in traditional felting techniques, she integrated wool into the design: she made a felted roof and wall cover for a 17 ft yurt, and felted smaller coloured pieces for décor in the yurts.

In 2010, Selene and her family went to Kyrgyzstan to train with yurt masters and felt artisans. She was able to broaden her skills and techniques as a textile designer and learn about weaving and shyrdak making (The shyrdak is a stitched and felted wool carpet.) She gained an in-depth understanding of how the shyrdaks are made and designed using the indigenous knowledge of Kyrgyz patterns, symbols, colouring and sewing techniques.

Textile work keeps her busy during the production months as well as the ongoing marketing, managing client bookings, website design and administrative work. On the side, Selene chairs a food and nutrition committee at her daughter's school and is a member of Valley Families for Midwifery. Her favourite moments include playing with her two children, Yara & Rawly and spending time outdoors with their small flock of sheep!

hand-made coppice wood yurts

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