

Artist to present 'edgy' work

Avril Bull ready for Colborne exhibit

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BY JASON CHAMBERLAIN

NORTHUMBERLAND -- "Life is edgy."

It's not just a statement; it's the guiding principle behind Avril Bull's new show at the Colborne Art Gallery. Called 'Edges', the show will open on May 1 and will feature 26 of the local artist's new pieces, all of which focus on those moments in life when "something is up." There's the fear on a small child's face when they know they've been caught in a bad deed, and the strain and eagerness of one putting her hand up in class, desperate to show the teacher her knowledge. Those are two instances where Ms. Bull utilized her experience as an educational assistant to inform her work.

"I reflected on some different incidents that have happened over the years," she said. "I like the expressions on kids. They can go from totally engaged to watching a fly go by."

Not all the pieces feature children though. Others deal with older, more mature subjects, like the failure of a marriage. Visitors to the show will no doubt find the assembled paintings and prints to be not only visually arresting, but thematically intriguing as well.

"It's just food for thought. I'm interested to see what different people get out of it," said Ms. Bull. "What I put in and what someone else sees can be two different things."

What can't be disputed is the effort the artist put in. She took months off of work in order to immerse herself in her studio, and spent the winter producing piece after piece for the show. Despite working so consistently and in a confined space, Ms. Bull still produced a number of pieces that are totally unique to each other.

"Sometimes it feels like Jekyll and Hyde, like so many different things go on in here. I wish it was uniform, but I don't fit the mould," she said.

Like any artist, Ms. Bull has more than one place from which to draw inspiration. Whether it's the children she works with, her family or even the people she passes on the street, it can strike anywhere, at any time.

"I respond to everything around me. You can catch people, like with a camera," she said. "I'm always doing little sketches and drawings of things that have happened in my life. Some stuff really strikes you and pulls at your heart strings and you think, there's something I want to say about that."

After having spent so much time preparing, Ms. Bull is ready to move on to new projects, but she looks forward to seeing the response to her hard work once the show opens on Saturday, May 1.

"I just want people to look at the work. There is something that everyone can relate to."

The show opens Saturday, May 1 at the Colborne Art Gallery, 51 King St. E., with a reception from 2-4 p.m. and will run until June 13. The gallery is open Thursdays to Sundays from noon to 5 p.m.