

Get a Life at the Colborne Art Gallery

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COLBORNE -- When Port Hope artist Heather Roy tells you to get a life, she is talking about creativity.

Ms. Roy, a teacher at Ganaraska Trail Public School in Port Hope, opened her first solo show titled 'Get a Life' at the Colborne Art Gallery on July 16. The title for the exhibition of abstract oil paintings refers to the life affirming aspect of creativity, she said.

"It's a strong life force, the creative life force, in whatever way people express it," said Ms. Roy. Getting a creative life - in music, art, theatre or whatever you are interested in - is important.

She added the title is also a bit of joke. When Ms. Roy gets pre-occupied with painting she sometimes has to remind herself to get a life. However painting or any creative outlet is a great way to spend time, she said.

"It is a wonderful life," she said.

The collection of colourful paintings invites the viewer to see a world not seen anywhere else, said Ms. Roy. The paintings are nonrepresentational and abstract. People have different interpretations of the pieces, she said. Some see objects and others have an emotional reaction, she said. There is no right or wrong way to see the paintings, she added.

"For me, however they take the work is fine," said Ms. Roy.

The Cameco facility at the Port Hope waterfront inspired Ms. Roy's floating world paintings, which are also included in the exhibit, she said. The floating world is a genre of Japanese woodblock paintings, which focused on the fleeting beauty of the pleasure district. Ms. Roy feels Cameco can look very beautiful at night. Her floating world paintings attempt to capture that feeling, she said.

Ms. Roy hopes her students will see the exhibit over the summer.

"It is really important for young people to get into a gallery and see art work," she said.

Trenton High School teacher Annie McDonald also encourages her students to come to the gallery. Ms. McDonald's exhibit titled Script II is showing in the Heritage Room of the gallery. The ceramic sculptures employ the use of encaustic paint.



Karen Longwell / Northumberland

COLBORNE -- Port Hope teacher and artist Heather Roy is showing Get a Life, abstract oil paintings at the Colborne Art Gallery until August 21.

Encaustic beeswax is an old technique for painting, which has become popular again in the art world.

Ms. McDonald said her students, in part, inspired the pieces based on contemporary graffiti shapes.

"They (the students) are very interested in graffiti," she said.

A trip to Europe last year also played a role in the exploration of graffiti, she said. She saw new graffiti painted on old crumbling buildings. The colourful script seemed to bring the old buildings to life, she said.

"It changed my idea of graffiti," she said.

The sculptures are graffiti forms with layers and layers of paint covering the shapes. There are various reasons for the title Script, including the graffiti and also the long story of culture, said Ms. McDonald. Ms. McDonald's other show, Script I, can be seen at the Parrot Gallery in Belleville.

Get a Life and Script opened on July 16 and the shows run until Aug. 21 at the Colborne Art Gallery, 51 King St. E. The gallery is open Thursday to Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. in the summer and fall. For more information, see the web site at www.thecolborneartgallery.ca.