

Soak up 'Local Colour' in Aurora at weekend art show



By Brock Weir

First impressions are very important.

For some, it is the make or break of what can be the beginnings of a beautiful friendship. For painters and sculptors it can be the all-important first step in creating a new masterpiece.

These tentative steps lay the 'local colour' of any work and this weekend, Aurora artists invite you to soak it up in your own backyard with the inaugural 'Local Colour' art tour.

Local Colour is a new group, bringing together eleven artists from Aurora and the surrounding area to show off their creative streak in a local setting. The group is an off-shoot of art classes led by artist Judy Sherman in her Temperance Street home-cum-studio.

'Rather than students, we're a group of people who are painting at the studio,' said Ms. Sherman as sun beat down on her the deck overlooking where Saturday's tour will take place 'both indoors and out. 'We decided to start this group to help promote local artists in the community. Everybody is local, so why don't we try and promote the local artists in town?'

The majority of the artists participating in Local Colour are current or former students of Ms. Sherman. As they conversed in the garden last week, each one had a different suggestion of what 'Local Colour' meant to them. For some, it represented the beginning of a painting. For others, it was a sense of history. Some suggested it symbolizes each colourful person's own identity.

As each suggestion was thrown out, it seemed each one was a reluctant artist who eventually found biting the bullet and picking up a brush, chisel, or lathe as a way to find and express themselves. The work on display has been selected by the artists themselves to illustrate their artistic journeys.

'Judy and [artist] Eva [Folks] have always done as much as they can to support all of us in our art,' said Cathy Fairs, who will be showing some of her still life work. For her, finding art was a positive outlet, and one she hopes will be reflected in her paintings.

'The first time, I came home and said, 'I feel like I have just had a two hour holiday. To concentrate on something and work a something and ignore everything else that has been happening that day, or that month, is a wonderful thing and very therapeutic.'

Drawing and painting is something Helen Simpson always wanted to do as well. She travelled extensively and found inspiration wherever she went, but actually sitting down and putting brush or pencil to canvas or paper was something she never before had the chance to do.

'I never thought I was an artist, really,' says Ms. Simpson, who focuses on nature, houses, and farm scenes. 'It has really been a

wonderful experience for me and it is a very spiritual thing. When I am here, I am taken out of myself and I don't know how it happens. It is something you can't explain.?

For the people sitting around this impromptu roundtable, no explanations are needed. Each speaks of how they have been drawn out of themselves through their art. Majella Power said through the art classes, she has found the confidence as well to consider herself an artist rather than a student, often focusing on a nautical theme in her work. Art has also prompted Chris Barfitt to channel her love of nature through her art to others, encouraging them to recognize a 'spiritual energy' in the world around them.

Mike Sheridan, on the other hand, works with wood, creating detailed sculptures of birds. Before coming to the studio, that is as far as things went. His work with a brush was limited to house painting and fences.

'In a very short time, I am happy with what I am doing,' he says of what he has learned. 'It is self-satisfaction.'

Adds Ms. Sherman: 'My belief is to help people achieve what they want to achieve, not for anybody to do what I do, or what somebody else does. It's to help people achieve their goals and encourage their styles to be the best they can be.'

'That is why I think this group is so unique because the quality of the work is really good and everyone's style is different, so you have a variety of work. It's very eclectic and there is something for everybody.'

Local Colour gets underway on Saturday, September 7 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 89 Temperance Street inside the studio and, weather permitting, in the garden. A public preview of the show will also take place on Friday from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.