

Focus on sculptor's life-long passion

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By Jennifer Bell
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How does one pay homage to a local artist's celebrated lifelong career?

With a retrospective exhibition at Belleville's Gallery 121, of course.

Second World War flying ace-turned sculptor Trevor Bates has work in galleries around the world, including London, New York and Australia.

Now retired from sculpting, Bates recently developed an interest in pen and crayon for drawings and fans of his work can get a look at previously-unseen creations, including early sculptures, sketch books and articles written on the artist during the exhibit, from Feb. 17 to March 27. An opening reception is slated for Feb. 22 at the Bridge Street gallery, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Whimsical terracotta creations only a few inches high to bronze forms stretching 10 feet are examples of Bates' amazingly diversified art forms. More than 60 pieces and drawings will be on display for the show, said Bates.

Born in London, England in 1921, Bates, the grandson of well-known sculptor Harry Bates, was a decorated Royal Air Force pilot from 1939 to 1945, flying Spitfires and Hurricanes. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Following the war, he studied at the Slade School of Fine Art in London, receiving his diploma in Fine Art in 1950 and the sculpture prize for that year.

Then it was off to Paris for a year's study at the Academie de la Grand Chaumiere and the private studio of Russian cubist sculptor Ossip Zadkine. While there, Bates met leading abstract sculptors Brancusi and Giacometti and exhibited at the Salon de la Jeune Sculpture.

One of his career highlights came in the 1950s, when he was chosen to represent Great Britain in the major postwar International Sculpture Competition called The Unknown Political Prisoner and was



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Trevor Bates created this 40 cm high wax sculpture, Two People.

awarded a prize by an international jury.

His first opportunity to teach his craft came in 1960, when he headed the sculpture department at London's Hornsey College of Art for seven years.

He and wife Bunny, herself an accomplished artist, came to Canada in 1967, where he taught art in the New Brunswick school system until retiring in 1986.

His first Canadian one-man show took place at the Cassel Gallery in Fredericton, followed by a major exhibition at the Owens Gallery, Mount Allison University, in Sackville, N.B.

In 1986, he and his wife, Bunny, moved to Belleville, where Bates devoted himself full-