

# ARTS

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## Portrait of an artist

# Campbellville's Newlove makes art out of words



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

**UNIQUE ART:** Artist Tina Newlove displays one of her pieces that combines art and words.

By Sabrina Byrnes  
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

As the brush strokes glide across the canvas with structure and purpose to abstract, free-flowing art, Tina Newlove comes to life in her pieces.

Working out of her studio in Campbellville, Newlove has become quite an accomplished artist, with her work shown in more than 70-juried exhibitions (where she has earned a number of awards) over the past 13 years. She began showing her work before she graduated in 1996 from McMaster University with a BA Honours in Fine Arts.

"I've always just known that this is what I wanted to do," Newlove said of her passion for art.

Newlove enjoys incorporating wordplay into her pieces, which may feature definitions straight out of the dictionary. She first experimented with the effect at her graduating show. She literally ripped out the page for the word 'apple' and added it to her drawings, along with some gold leaf. She also incorporates some of her own prose and poetry into her work, which allows her to maintain a strong personal connection with the piece, while making it accessible to the audience.

The inspiration for much of Newlove's work finds its roots in a poem that she has written or single words or phrases that come into her mind.

"So many little phrases will just stick in my head, and I'll have a picture. I see everything visually as I'm reading. When I can't picture it, then I'm kind of lost," said Newlove.

One of Newlove's collections, 'Memory Girl,' came to her in a surprising way. As is her custom, she was starting an abstract piece with a general background wash when the face of a girl appeared – and the artist knew she just had to paint it.

"At first it was always really surprising," said Newlove. "I'd be like, 'What—there she is again.' It would be interesting, but it would be surprising."

Now, adds Newlove, their appearance is less surprising because they

come along all the time. She claims these bodies of work come from her subconscious.

"A lot of them are pretty sad or really intense," she said. "I'm feeling very happy at the moment, but maybe it's just those deeper emotions that are coming up and out. I'm just kind of letting it happen."

Newlove came up with the name 'Memory Girl' for the series because most of the pieces in the collection evoke emotions from her past, or represent a means of remembering little everyday things symbolized, for example, by little blue forget-me-not flowers.

Newlove enjoys working on her 'Memory Girl' pieces because they are quite different from some of her more structured pieces that have a more direct focus. 'Memory Girl' pieces are freer flowing and evolve as Newlove works with them.

"I think I need both," said Newlove of the different styles. "I need to always have something that I'm working on, to know where I'm going."

Newlove also likes to incorporate found items, such as apples, fish and trees, into the works. Trees are a favourite subject as they symbolize isolation, growing through adversity.

"They're beautiful and they're strong, but they're kind of struggling through the atmosphere," she explained.

"Trees were kind of my refuge spot when I was a kid. Runaway, climb a tree," Newlove added, laughing. "When I'm painting a tree it's kind of a safe place where I can go back and explore those emotions."

Newlove was quite shy when she was a child. Then, reading offered an escape; now as an art teacher, she encourages her students to be free in their paintings.

"I like getting people to get into their own ideas and just have fun, just be creative," she said.

"When she's teaching, she's very aware of people's feelings. She's very encouraging. She wants (her students) to be comfortable and explore," said Newlove's mother, Rose Anne.

Newlove conducts private lessons out of her studio and will be teaching a

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