

arts & entertainment

Goodwood artist McKenna creates eclectic works

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Correspondent

A winter landscape in gently muted colors. A pensive, dreamy portrait of a young woman. A glorious celebration of spring flowers.

The eclectic works of Goodwood watercolor artist Helen McKenna do not fit into a specific genre, and a tour of her studio offers a cornucopia of delightful contrasts.

She has lived in the area for 16 years and can't remember a time when painting wasn't a driving force.

"All my life, from my earliest childhood, I wanted to be an artist," said McKenna.

"I consider myself extremely fortunate that I don't have to go out and bring in a pay cheque, otherwise I wouldn't be able to do what I do."

She feels that with the grim realities of modern existence, people tend to overlook some of

life's more positive aspects, many of which are reflected in her art.

"We need to have a break and to enjoy the many delightful things that are available to us in this world."

When her husband's business takes him to Europe, McKenna travels with him, taking her painter's paraphernalia and recording whatever takes her fancy.

Thus a painting of a charming English church "next door to the bed and breakfast we stayed in," and a view of the beautiful old buildings in a small French city, share space in her studio with a scene from the window of her home and a beautiful portrait of her daughter.

Like most artists, she feels a

personal connection to all her work, and is particularly attached to the paintings she creates during her travels. "I did the one from France when we were there the summer before last."

At the time of their visit, she recalled, a world sculpture competition was being conducted in the city "and there were people from Vietnam, the States, Japan and all over the world. It was a special place to us."

"I did the painting, and it brings back all those special memories. I don't think I would be in a hurry to let something like that go."

McKenna said she tends to be more possessive about the work she does while travelling.

"When you do something

here, you know that the subject is still there and you can do it again if you want to. In Europe, I'll probably never go back to the same places again."

As an artist, she feels it's important to constantly develop and grow. "I think you can always improve and keep learning and evolving over time. Once you stop doing that, then you have lost something."

McKenna is in the process of working towards her next exhibition, which takes place at the Link Gallery in Toronto's Civic Garden Centre starting at the end of June. "I've always enjoyed flowers; I have a big

garden outside that I plan and work."

She has been asked to produce 20 to 25 paintings for the Link Gallery show and is also planning to participate in the Uxbridge Celebration of the Arts Studio Tour in September. Since the late 1980s, her work has been featured in many solo and juried exhibitions.

In 1990, McKenna received the Anthes Universal Limited Purchase award at the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour annual juried show. She welcomes inquiries about her work and can be reached at 649-3396.

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Stouffville church presents Canadian Orpheus Male Choir

Christ Church in Stouffville presents a special evening of song featuring the Canadian Orpheus Male Choir on March 13 at Markham Theatre.

This will be the only 1993 York Region appearance for the 100-voice choir. Founded in Hamilton in 1977, the choir has an impressive international reputation and is led by Lyn Harry.

The choir's repertoire includes more than 280 works, ranging from spiritual to Broadway.

A highlight of the Markham Theatre show will be a performance by soprano soloist Kim Turner.

Show time is 8 p.m., and tickets are \$18.50. For groups of 10 or more, tickets are \$15.50. For information, please call the theatre box office at 479-0201.

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