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MARKHAM ECONOMIST & SUN (905) 294-8244 Stouffville Tribune



Art trips into nature on display in Unionville

BY ROGER VARLEY
Staff Writer

Located on a quiet cul-de-sac a stone's throw away from a major Markham intersection, Judith Livingston's home doesn't fit the stereotypical image of an artist's studio.

The neat and tidy suburban house displays none of the clutter and chaos usually associated with a painter's studio.

Livingston does her painting and framing in two spare rooms upstairs, which, said her husband Mike, she also

keeps in neat order. The large and small canvases that will form her one-woman show starting in Unionville next week are judiciously hung around her living room and on the walls of the staircase that spirals up to the second floor.

The show — Light and Shadow: Ontario Woodlands — features 35 new acrylic on canvas works produced in the last year during Livingston's journeys from the north shore of Lake Erie to the north shore of Superior.

She acknowledged that there's a sense of the Group of Seven's style in her work.

"You can't be raised in Canada and study art without being influenced by the Group of Seven," she said.

But her works are not set exclusively in the remote wilderness. Urban Canopy, a painting of a path through a small woodlot at the corner of McCowan Road and Manhattan Drive, is part of Livingston's tribute to nature wherever it's found.

"Just going along the road, you have the most amazing snippets of the natural world," she said.

"Soon, that's all we'll have: snippets. As a visual person, I see a giant cement truck moving up and pouring cement."

Although Livingston said she doesn't like to be "pigeon-holed," she admitted she loves painting landscapes.

"They're life-affirming," she said. "I want people to wander around inside my paintings. I want people at the show to first take a deep breath and then slow down."

So why does she choose to live in suburbia? Livingston and her husband have spent more time here than any other place they've lived; this is where most of her friends are and where she is heavily involved in the arts community.

Livingston's show runs from Oct. 19 to Oct. 29 at the Kathleen Gormley McKay Art Centre on Unionville Main Street. A portion of the sales from the exhibition will be donated to the Spina Bifida Association of Ontario.

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York Region celebrates Rouge Park

Harry Potter, a Lake Erie island and a bus tour will all be part of York Region's contribution to a mix of events marking Rouge Park Week.

Celebrating North America's largest urban park, Rouge Park Week runs from Monday to Saturday at venues from Lake Ontario to Richmond Hill.

Harry Potter, the popular children's fictional character, will be the subject of a program at Unionville Public Library at 7 p.m. Monday.

Allan Foster of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority will talk about nature folklore in the Harry Potter books and will show life-sized replicas of Harry's famous racing brooms.

Admittance is free, but pre-registration is required at 905-415-7535.

On Saturday, the Town of Markham and the Rouge Park Alliance host a free interpretive bus tour of the natural and cultural heritage of the Rouge Park and watershed.

The tour departs from the Markham Museum at 1 p.m., with pre-registration required at 905-713-7416.