

Passion for Art

Written by Gloria Hildebrandt Photographed by Mike Davis

Lucille Weber reflects on how she used to have a little shop in Inglewood that carried her paintings along with other people's works. "One day, this 'art god' came into the store," she continues, "and said 'I really like this painting.' It was a little abstract floral of mine, priced at around \$150. He said 'I just want you to know I collect early paintings by Canadian artists. Keep painting and don't listen to anyone else.' I thought this is my calling. I went home and told my husband 'I'm closing my shop and I'll spend the rest of my life painting.' My husband just said 'What took you so long?'"



◀ Lucille Weber at home on her patio during Art in the Garden, with one of her three dogs.

▲ With her great eye for colour combinations, Weber places her art in striking positions throughout her garden during her shows. Here, her work "Spring Has Sprung" hangs on the old red-roofed shed next to fire-engine-red geraniums.

The Niagara Escarpment seems to attract visual artists like a magnet. There's something about the charming communities so close to the nature that looms nearby. The space for buildings, barns and sheds for studios, shops and galleries. The

affluent market that is drawn to rural properties as primary or secondary residences, able to buy art. The endless inspiration from field, forest, rock, water and human activity. Many artists, like Weber, have put down roots near the Escarpment and dedicate their lives to their

vocations. This is our annual look at them. Weber's origins are in rural Bruce County. Her website lucilleweber.com tells the life-changing story, of how at eight years of age, she discovered old paints in the attic and used them to create her first work, which

she keeps in her Alton Mill studio to show visitors. It's a very good, realistic little painting of a horse. Now her work is abstract, often large pieces of colourful, bold applications of paint. In addition to acrylics, she will use inks, charcoal,

gels, rubbing alcohol, even grit. She may also gouge the paint with tools. Paint may be applied thickly for texture, making the works what she calls “juicy.”

Art in the Garden

At first glance her works might be startling, assertive, even aggressive. Certainly intense. Yet despite her heavy and generous use of paint, her colour combinations are gorgeous. There is often a sense of bright light coming out of the pieces. She sometimes hosts shows and sales in her Inglewood garden, and her careful positioning of her works point out both her inspiration and palette choices.

It's astonishing that what at first glance looks like a free expressionistic application of paint, settles into looking like a landscape or a natural pond or flowers in a garden. While her art may be like nothing you've ever seen before, a look round her beautiful, mature garden reveals that she paints what she sees. She will dispute that she's painting directly from nature, saying she doesn't have a plan when she begins, doesn't start with sketches or photographs.

“I don't think as I'm doing it,” she declares. “There is a time when I edit and stop, but I really only paint for me.” She paints freely, doing what she feels like doing. While rubbing off some

Painting is about feeling, not thinking for Lucille Weber. Here she takes off some paint from a work in progress, her hands moving without her looking. ▶

Demonstrating how she uses a wooden stick to carve into thick wet paint, Weber reveals “The hairs stand up on the back of my neck because I think I've done this before. On cave walls. I'm doing what I'm meant to be doing.” ▶▶



paint in her Alton Mill studio, she doesn't even look at the piece.

No-Risk Commissions

Weber will take commissions for work, but with a difference. She doesn't paint portraits or specific scenes; she only wants to know the desired size, colour palette and an idea of pieces of her work that the clients like. She also won't work to a deadline. Instead, she will paint a few pieces, take them to the clients and leave them. If the clients don't want any of them, it's no problem.

“It's an honour when someone sees something that touches them and they want it in their home,” she says.

Play With Paint

Weber also offers art workshops for everyone, no talent or previous knowledge required. She will schedule a morning session for anyone interested, and will provide all materials and the encouragement to play freely with paint, teaching what she knows.

Perivale Gallery

At the northern curve of the Escarpment, Perivale Gallery near Spring Bay, Manitoulin Island carries the work of 57 artists and artisans. With its roots going back to 1981, the gallery was begun by Sheila and Bob McMullan at

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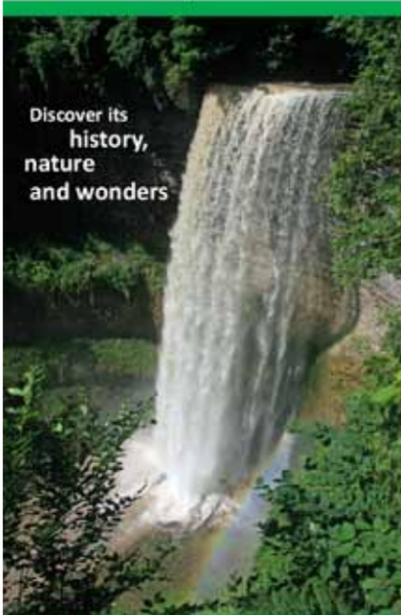


▲ In her second-floor studio in Alton Mill, Weber works on a few canvases at a time, and arranges private, fun workshops for anyone interested.



▲ Weber's paintings capture the lush colours and shapes in her beautiful backyard garden.

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▲ Perivale Gallery is nestled in the woods on the shore of Manitoulin Island's Lake Kagawong.

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their cottage on Lake Kagawong. A large addition now displays selected original art for every taste and budget. Many Manitoulin Island artists are represented, as well as artists celebrated in their own regions of Ontario.

"Over the years, we have loved to encourage young artists and artisans in whom we see great potential," adds Shannon McMullan, daughter of the founders and now the gallery owner, "such as Laurie Near, Tammy Shane, Anne-Marie Chagnon, Laurie Sponagle, Tyler Fauvelle, Matthew Church and others."

Perivale is known for its extensive collection of the works of Manitoulin artist Ivan Wheale.

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Shannon McMullan is continuing the gallery developed by her parents Sheila and Bob McMullan.



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Passion for art ▶

Perivale Gallery represents 57
artists and artisans. ▶

McMullan notes "his extraordinary depictions, in high realism, of rugged Georgian Bay shores and bucolic Manitoulin rural scenes. Ivan's passion for Manitoulin glows from within each work."

The works of artists at Perivale are exclusively available on Manitoulin Island at the gallery. And people have discovered this lovely place in the woods, for according to tripadvisor.ca, Perivale is ranked as number three out of 371 locations in their category "shopping in Ontario."

McMullan emphasizes that "the vision my Mom, Sheila, had for Perivale will continue with the passion she inspired, continuing the gallery's fine reputation for displaying a large variety of artistic works of exceptional quality. I am so grateful to have had the past three years of apprenticeship under her loving guidance to ensure a seamless transition and wonderful new beginnings as we head forward."

Workshops

Perivale hosted six workshops for artists over this season, including on the topics applying classical colour theory, transparent watercolour and glazing, assemblages in mixed media and textures in acrylics.

"Next year we hope to extend that to eight to 10 workshops," says McMullan. "Making Manitoulin Island and ultimately Perivale Gallery a destination for experiential tourism through art education has been a long-standing goal." **NEV**

A wide variety of media is available at
Perivale. New works arrive frequently. ▶

Every inch of Perivale Gallery displays
creative artistic works. ▶

For other artist features, see these
in Escarpment Views:

- ▶ "Our Annual Look at Artists," Autumn 2012
- ▶ "Robert Bateman on Development," Summer 2012
- ▶ "Robert Bateman: Spokesperson for Nature," Spring 2012
- ▶ "Touring for Beauty and Creativity," Autumn 2011
- ▶ "Autumn Colour: Touring for Artists' Studios," Autumn 2009
- ▶ "The Creative Hands of Benitta Wilcox," Autumn 2008
- ▶ "Brigitte Schreyer: Continuing the Artistic Tradition," Winter 2008



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