

Featured Artist

Lil Whitehead

Eagle Bay artist Lil Whitehead says "I paint what I like." And judging by her watercolours she likes the Shuswap! The Shuswap in its various moods and the people and animals who make her paintings come alive.

A long time resident of the Shuswap, Lil's painting career has taken off since her first solo show 10 years ago in Salmon Arm.

She has garnered a number of ribbons and gained recognition for her work through some eight years of participating in the annual Shuswap Lake Festival of the Arts in Sorrento. She has won 12 juror's choice ribbons, the people's choice for best portrait, best presentation, most pleasing picture to live with, best landscape and best picture in the show.

She praises the exposure many artists receive at the Shuswap Lake Festival of the Arts. Many of her works have been sold through the Festival. Enthusiastic supporters have also commissioned Lil to paint scenes of their favourite spots in the Shuswap.

Lil has also donated paintings to the Rotary auction, Shuswap Art Gallery Association (SAGA), Shuswap Mental Health Association and the Hospital Auxiliary.

In her studio in Eagle Bay, Lil says she chooses to paint something with "heart"—everyday scenes with people. She finds her audience is attracted to scenes which sometimes evoke a memory of childhood, a favourite garden, a view across the hills to Shuswap Lake, autumn leaves on Harris Street or a kitten tucked up the steps of

an old-fashioned sun-dappled porch.

I don't like "heavy" subjects, she says, "If it says 'what a lovely day', I'm happy."

Lil is also known for her portrait work in pastels. She find portraiture challenging but enjoys the sense of accomplishment that comes with capturing the person's image. "I've always liked portraits. It's risky, but satisfying."

Lil prefers to work with watercolours and pastels. She loves the transparency obtained with watercolours and predicts her paintings will become "lighter" over the next few years as her style grows. Lil feels she is learning all the time and can see differences in her paintings over the years. She notes that she used to paint with a much darker palette and limited colours. "I'm having a lot more fun with colours, seeing more colours in things and using colour more creatively. As I become more confident I take more risks," she says.

Lil may sketch in the field but prefers to complete her paintings in the studio. She will often produce two or three paintings from one sketch. She use Arches 140# cold-pressed paper and Winsor and Newton watercolours.

Lil did not take formal art classes when she started painting. Her greatest influences come from her Famous Artists School correspondence course, workshops at the Banff School of Arts and workshops with Holly Middleton. She also taken short workshops with other artists including: Marie Tumlinson, Bern Smith, Jo Parrott, Ken Wallace, Carol Lynn Davidson, Von Butland and Clarence Tillenius.

In the early 1960's, Lil was a member of the Salmon Arm Sketch Club (now the Sketch & Paint Club). Following a move to Eagle Bay in the 1980's Lil became involved with the Shuswap Lake Festival of the Arts and more recently the Blind Bay Painters. While family comes first, Lil says in the last few years she has found more time for herself and her painting. "I could paint from morning to night without interruption," she remarks.

If you would like to see Lil's work call her at 1-604-675-2667.

(M.S.)



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