

The art of tranquillity

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SOMBA K'E/YELLOWKNIFE - There are places in Yellowknife that foster a comforting atmosphere among members of our community who most need moments of beauty and serenity. Two local painters are celebrating those special spaces this summer.

Diavik Diamond Mines Inc. purchased a four-foot oil painting by Bonnie Madsen to donate to the new Dementia Centre late last month and this week Ann Timmins donated her three-foot acrylic work, titled Garden of Hope, to the fifth annual CIBC Run for Our Lives fundraiser in support of breast cancer awareness, prevention, treatment and research.

Peaceful memories

Madsen's painting depicts a familiar Northern landscape of rock, trees, sky and water. Lilly pads floating near the shore in the foreground draw the viewer's gaze across the placid surface of Niven Lake and up the reflected green conifers standing tall and strong on the opposite shore. Above, a calm blue midsummer sky disappears into soft white clouds.

A clearing along a rocky, swampy stretch of trail behind Stanton Territorial Hospital inspired the painting. Madsen lingered there during a nature walk last summer.

"It was very peaceful," she said. "It's a place a lot of us can relate to in the North."

The painting will hang in the entry of the new Dementia Centre when it opens in January. In the meantime it rests in Aven Manor.



Garden of Hope is a three-foot acrylic painting by Ann Timmins that will be featured in promotional material in the lead up to the fifth annual CIBC Run for our Lives fund raiser scheduled for Oct. 4 in Yellowknife. Present at the unveiling this week were, from left, Louise Dundas Matthews, chair of the Breast Health Committee of the Stanton Hospital Foundation, CIBC branch manager Wendy Anderson, Timmins and her daughter, Abbey Boyd. - Daron Letts/NNSL photo

Mickey Brown and David Gilday of the Dementia Centre Fundraising Committee and Diavik representative Glenn Zelinski approached Madsen in the spring to commission a painting that the mining company would give to the centre. However, when the trio saw landscape painting Madsen had been working on half-finished in her studio, they asked if she would release it to the centre's care.

"When they asked me, I thought it was a great way to give back," Madsen said. "As an artist this painting was really rewarding for me."

Fundraising committee chair Mickey Brown came up with the name for the artwork.

"When you're in a dementia centre you can't see something on the wall that's really busy," Brown said. "This painting is very peaceful and relaxing. We all decided that that was the painting that should hang in the Dementia Centre."

Eight prints were made of the painting, which were given as gifts to the contractors and subcontractors. Art cards with the painting on the cover are being sent to thank donors, as well.

The fundraising committee began soliciting donations last September, with a goal of raising \$550,000. They ended up raising more than \$800,000 for the new 28-room facility.

"This town is unbelievable," Brown said.

This weekend Madsen is working on a series of ptarmigan and raven paintings in her studio on School Draw Avenue. She will be giving art demonstrations during Old Town Ramble and Ride from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Garden of Hope

Timmins' painting represents the exuberant collage of colour that blossoms each year in the Loraine

Minish-Cooper Garden of Hope, a lush manicured walkway landscaped each year on the City Hall grounds. Maintained by the Yellowknife Community Foundation, the garden is dedicated to Northerners who succumbed to cancer, cancer patients, cancer survivors and their loved ones.

"This is a place of reflection and a place to remember that people die from cancer and that people do survive," Timmins said. "It takes a lot of positive energy and nurturing to get through cancer. What inspired me was the caregivers who take care of the people with cancer. It's the caregivers that really help get us through."

Timmins struggled with the disease when her daughter, Abbey Boyd, was diagnosed with adrenal carcinoma at age 14 months. Boyd, now a teenager, beat the disease. Boyd said the flowers in her mother's painting make her think of renewal and regrowth.

"The painting brings hope and happiness in some little way," Boyd said.

Timmins' canvas evokes the positive energy nurtured in the garden by volunteers each year. Pink, yellow, red, purple and blue flowers are topped by a leafy canopy framed by birch trees.

Her sky is a gentle blend of pink, peach and blue hues, signifying the quiet repose offered by the wash of light in the Northern dawn or early twilight. Bluish-grey rock on the opposite shore of the windblown lake contrasts with the silent floral symphony in the centre of the painting.

Through a gate in the garden trellis, a woman is pictured strolling down the garden path. Her solitude is enlivened by the caring company of flowers.

The garden and the painting memorialize Loraine Minish-Cooper, who was a lawyer with the federal Crown Attorney's office in Yellowknife, a former director of the NWT Law Society and an avid member of the Yellowknife Choral Society. She was lost to breast cancer in 2002.

"Lorraine had a lot of optimism and faith," said Louise Dundas Matthews, chair of the Breast Health Committee of the Stanton Hospital Foundation and a long time contributor to her late friend's memorial garden.

Timmins' painting expresses that optimism and faith as the signature image for this year's Run for Our Lives fund raiser, scheduled annually for the first weekend in October in Yellowknife. Garden of Hope adorns the promotional material and website in the lead up to the Oct. 4 event in Yellowknife. Art cards and prints featuring Timmins' work will be sold to raise funds for the cause, as well.

Registration for the day will be held in the St. Patrick's High School gymnasium at 11:30 a.m. At 1 p.m. participants will embark on a 1, 3 or 5 km walk or run.

Similar events are scheduled in Norman Wells, Inuvik, Fort Simpson and Hay River in early September. Funds raised by the Run for Our Lives are managed by the Stanton Territorial Hospital Foundation.