

Retrospective pays tribute to former resident's artwork

by Wendy Spence
THE SIGNPOST

Former Dorchester resident Bill Vincent recently had his work displayed during an exhibit in Quebec, where he now lives. Family members, including his mother Barbara, who still lives in the village, went to visit him and show their support.

His sister Susan said she enjoyed seeing the exhibit and spending time with Bill and his wife Danièle Lessard, who curated the exhibit.

"One of the great advantages of being related to the artist is having a personal tour and being able to ask all the questions I wanted to. The vernissage [preview] itself was delightful, packed with people who had admired Bill's work for many years."

Bill said he is pleased with the retrospective of his art, which was also captured in a catalogue, but is eager to move on to new work.

"I do not see this retrospective as a 'gold watch' or a sort of retirement present. I am only 60, and hopefully, have a lot of career in front of me yet."

When asked to describe

his work, Bill said, "I prefer to paint and let the others do the describing."

Susan said that he has gone between wood-cut prints, to painting, to complex combinations of materials.

"What I really like in his work is the play between texture and shape as he explores a symbolic theme. There is always something to look for and think about, not only thematically but also in the form."

His other sister, Kate Buckingham, said her brother's art is amazing and he really works hard.

"You have to be dedicated to think of different mediums." She called him a Jack of all trades.

Bill said he enjoys being his own boss and the pleasure of creating, which he believes is good for one's psychological well-being.

He finds inspiration for his artwork in many places, including architecture, nature, archaeology, science, botany, literature, mythology, biology and anatomy.

His mother said he was interested in art from a very young age.

"I always liked to draw

and paint, and art and softball at recess was my favourite part of school."

Bill did oil painting at home and said he was encouraged by his mother, aunt and teachers.

"Sometimes teachers at Northdale would let me paint 'original' oil paintings for them, reproductions of pictures from magazines, still lifes and seascapes that they would bring me, while the other students were doing arithmetic and reading," he said. "They would give me a couple of bucks for these, and, I guess hang would hang them up in their living rooms."

Bill considers himself to be self-taught and he started his career as an artist at the age of 20.

"That gave me a head-start on producing my work and holding exhibitions, but perhaps it took longer to understand a lot of other things pertaining to contemporary art than if I was exposed to it at university."

What is his advice for aspiring artists?

"I would say persist if you are really sure that is what you want to do, and do not get discouraged at drawbacks

and disappointments like grant request refusals, losing competitions or getting turned down by galleries and museums. But if you are not really sure that is what you want to do, you better change careers, because it is pretty tough being an artist."

"The only ones who get rich are the one-in-a-million

who become international superstars. The rest of us make considerably less money than people in other professional occupations."

Bill's family and in-laws have been very supportive.

"They are among my most loyal fans and patrons."

Susan said they look forward to seeing how his career unfolds in the future.



supplied photo

Former Dorchester resident Bill Vincent and his wife Danièle Lessard stand outside of the Quebec art gallery that recently displayed a retrospective of his artwork.

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