

Teen artist has found her calling

By CHRIS KLASSEN
Special

When 18 year-old Serenity Abdour talks about her art, her normally reserved demeanor becomes noticeably more animated.

It's obvious that the T.L. Kennedy Secondary School student, given the chance, would much rather be creating art than studying.

Sipping a cappuccino in the Mikado Cafe, you can observe examples of Serenity's work that adorn the walls.

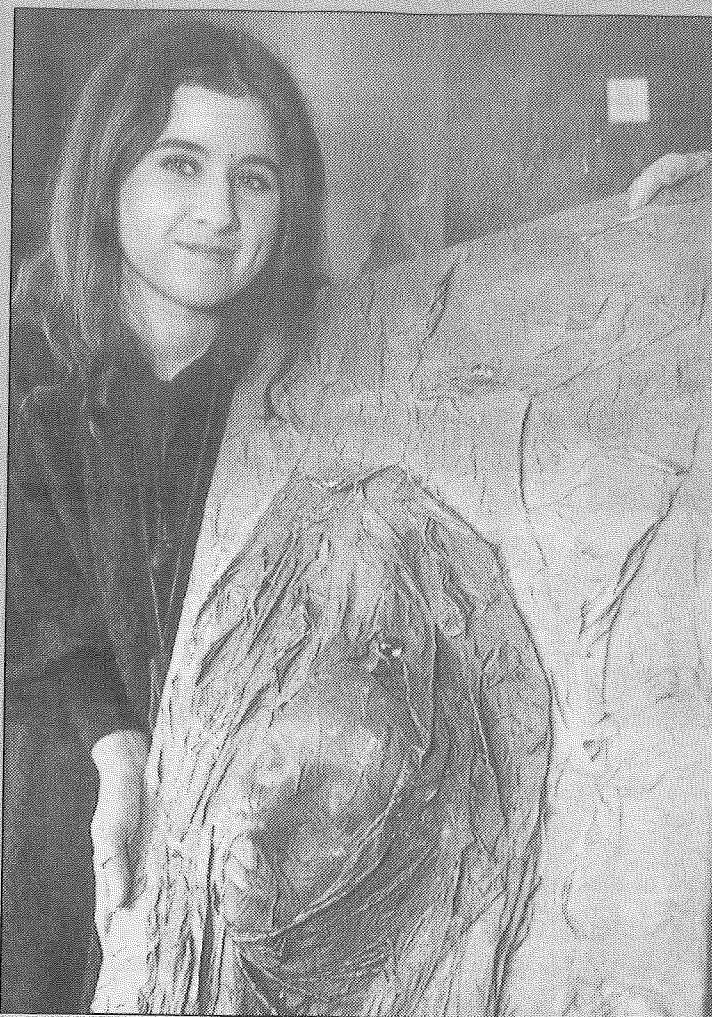
Without any real formal training, apart from high school art classes, Abdour's motivation to create seems almost instinctive. "All my work starts off with an emotion. I can only explain it through texture and color," she said.

This reasoning underlies her choice of medium. On her canvas is a three-dimensional manipulation of colored paper, material and glass beads. Physically changing the shape the materials take allows her to create the texture that appropriately expresses her emotion.

The final touch on her work is usually spontaneous. "Sometimes I find something on the street and add it in," she said.

Examples of this artistic whim include pieces of broken glass and old rusty nails. Trinkets that are not used remain, to her mother's chagrin, piled in boxes at home.

Of the several pieces on display in the Mikado Cafe, the most intriguing is entitled, *Grandma*. Despite the simple and endearing title, it creates an eerie



Staff photo by Rob Bentema

Serving more than just coffee, the Mikado Cafe in the Winston Churchill Blvd., Dundas St. area is offering a peek at some intriguing art by Serenity Abdour, including this hauntingly beautiful piece featuring a cast of her grandmother's face.

mood. Abdour took an actual mold of her grandmother's face — "she was very patient" — arranged it on a pale brown background, and veiled it with the same colored paper. Some bent old nails sit in the bottom corner.

"I wanted Grandma to represent age and how it is accepted by society. How the elderly are crying out but not being

answered," she said.

Despite being just 18, Abdour has already exhibited her work in a Toronto cafe and, last summer, at Harbourfront's Art On The Water's Edge. She has sold several pieces, although she admits that it is difficult to part with her creations.

"It's almost like giving up a baby," she said.

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