

# Artist puts 50 years of work on display

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Gil Caldwell is the elder statesman of visual art in Mississauga.

"It's 50 years — and counting," says the Applewood resident when asked how long he's been doing his highly detailed and colourful watercolours and lino-prints.

Now 81, Caldwell is marking his half-century as an artist in this city with an introspective show-and-sale now on until Sunday at Visual Arts Mississauga. He is showcasing work, some 20 pieces, from the early '60s to the present.

"My style and techniques have shown changes through the years, though subject matter remains basically the same — old buildings, parks, bandstands, old cars, steamers and urban and rural scenes," he says.

Caldwell was a vice principal with the Etobicoke Board of Education for many years before retiring in 1988. Since then he has poured his energies into his art career. At any given time, he says, he has several paintings on the go. He's certainly single-minded as far as art is concerned.

"My wife, Betty, says the house could burn and I'll still be painting," he laughs.

As part of the city's arts scene for five decades (he's a past winner of the Mississauga Arts Award for established visual artist), Caldwell says he has seen tremendous growth.

"The number of artists has increased significantly and the quality of the artwork is a testament to the talent here," he says.

Caldwell makes special mention of the many art organizations that have sprung up in the city over the years: Image Matrix (of which he's a member), Meadowvale Art Group, White Oaks Art Group and the Mississauga Art Society.

"And one must not forget the Colour and Form Society, which was

founded in 1952 by a group of 'new Canadians,' and is now an intrinsic part of the Canadian art scene," he says.

When not glued to his easel, Caldwell spends time travelling with his wife. His art is inspired by visits to Morocco, Ireland, England, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal and Costa Rica, among other countries.

"There's such a diversity and variety of architecture and buildings when you go to Europe and (overseas)," he says. "I usually work from photographs and sketches, and I try to express through my work things that catch my eye or interest."

Caldwell spends winters in Florida since he's not a big fan of snow — except in his paintings.

"I like to put snow in my work because it's easier to paint than grass," he laughs.

Visual Arts Mississauga is located at Riverwood Park.

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