

Lorne Park artist still going strong

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At the age of 97, Lorne Park artist Yana Headford is showing no signs of slowing down as an artist. During the month of May, Headford will exhibit her artwork at the Lorne Park library, in Mississauga.

Born in Greece, Headford knew she wanted to be an artist at the age of 12, after going to visit a great uncle who painted religious icons.

"When I met him, I thought he was god," said Headford. He was tall and had a grey beard and blue eyes. "I was scared."

Headford asked to see his studio. She remembers walking into the room and seeing the light streaming in from the windows onto his paintings and said, "That would be my life's work."

She married her husband Sam at the age of 19. Shortly after they were married, Sam was shipped to Syria and Headford had no contact with her husband for long periods of time.

Headford joined the army to be close to him. After the war ended, the couple lived in England and Headford studied art at Sheffield University in Bristol. The couple came to Canada in 1966. Sam became a teacher and Yana became a full-time mother to three children.



"I wasn't a typical mother for sure," she said, adding that her children would complain their home smelled like

turpentine instead of cookies, like their friends' homes. "When I go into that studio everything goes away."

(Above) Mississauga artist Yana Headford will be exhibiting her work at the Lorne Park Library during the month of May; (Left) News clippings of Yana Headford.

Rizleno Ventolli / Metroland

Over the years, her style has changed dramatically - from landscapes to impressionism, cubism, and then a combination of the two. Her earlier paintings were done in oil, but now works in acrylic.

"I like to work in series," she says. "The next series Headford plans to work on is nocturnal

landscapes.

Headford founded Unit 2 with artist Joan Pearson and they invited artists from all over Canada to join their exhibitions. Headford also taught art for the City of Mississauga's recreation department from 1970 to 1982.

She joined Sheridan College an art instructor from 1971 to 1981. In the summer, Headford also ran her own art school in Port Carling. She also founded Studio 10 art group.

When Sam passed away in 1984, Headford stopped exhibiting her work.

In 1998, Headford returned to the art scene, and marked her return with an exhibition of her painting.

When she turned 90, Headford considered retiring. She learned bridge and became a life master player. "It still wasn't enough," she said and returned to the art scene at the age of 94.

She also started writing her biography, to tell her life story to her children. After learning how to use a laptop computer, Headford has cranked out 760 pages so far.

"This is a pretty vital 97-year-old," said her son Stephen.