

## October in bloom at Springbank

**T**he first thing you notice about the Springbank Visual Art Centre's October artist-of-the-month is the vitality emanating from her tiny frame.

Barely 5-feet tall, Bernice Louie Kwong bustles more than moves. Kwong fairly radiates energy.

It seems odd, somehow, that she manages to produce such peaceful paintings.

Despite a steady interest in art, Kwong didn't begin studying her mix of traditional Chinese and the more modern, colorful Lingnam school of painting until after 20-years as a social worker and diplomat with the United Nations.

It wasn't until 1975 that Kwong decided to channel her infectious love of life and people into another format — art.

After studying for two summers in San Francisco, Kwong returned to Mississauga and began taking the Canadian art scene by storm.

For Kwong, freedom and harmony are essential features of her art.

"Chinese paintings are very close to nature. We don't paint chaotic pictures," explains Kwong. "The world is beautiful because everything balances. Trees never grow upside-down. They're always praising God with their branches. You never see an ugly tree. Chinese painting has a message. It's spiritual, it's inner peace. It's very harmonious."

If Kwong is any example, then inner vitality stems from outward deeds. When not involved with her own paintings, Kwong volunteers her time to teach multicultural classes, donates her paintings as fundraisers for charitable causes and she recently received a Canada 125 award for community service.

Nature also plays a starring role in the art of watercolor artist Fay Sproule, whose work will be exhibited at the Springbank Centre, Oct. 23-24.

She began her career as an artist after her father informed her a career as an airline pilot wasn't open to girls. Sproule ended her career as a commercial



Bernice Kwong's paintings are featured at Springbank.

artist when the first of her three children was born. Following a 15-year hiatus Sproule's began concentrating on a new career in fine landscape art.

While inspiration for Sproule can be as close as Mississauga — her home for 30 years — her upcoming exhibit also features the spoils of a recent working holiday in Switzerland. While in the Swiss mountains, Sproule managed to reel off 11 paintings in two days — all on half-sheets of watercolor paper.