

Peel Bldg. Bk.

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MONTGOMERY, MICHELINE

The Mississauga News

Psychiatric nurse takes to the loom

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One might think psychiatric nursing and tapestry-making are two professions that bear no resemblance to each other.

But according to one Mississauga woman who does both, they're closely related.

Micheline Montgomery is a self-styled expert in the traditional art of tapestry and the avant-garde art of soft sculpture.

But when she's not working at her loom, Montgomery is a part-time psychiatric nurse at Lakeshore Hospital.

Her creations, she says, are profoundly, even if unintentionally, influenced by her psychiatric work. Both professions, Montgomery contends, manifest her intense interest in human relations.

"My pieces reflect

how I see life, and part of my life is psychiatric nursing. Sometimes when I come home from the hospital late at night I find I have to start drawing."

One of Montgomery's sketches depicts a man's face, with an inscription beside it saying "I have been illegally incarcerated for 11 years".

"That's what this man tells me," Montgomery says. "So when I get off work, I find myself drawing on the experiences and the people I've met there."

Montgomery's fascination with symbolism is evident in all her works currently on view at the Valhalla Inn to July 7.

"Naked Sadness", a soft sculpture piece, translates the theme of sadness with the use of tiny geometric shapes edged with 'people profiles', turned away from each other.

"Solitude", another soft sculpture, is the title of a woman's form whose hair is made of waves.

"I Wonder Why" is a

woven soft sculpture formed into a fat woman's figure that strikes a questioning pose. Montgomery says the piece is one of only a few she's done that conveys humor.

"The colors in this one are different too, they're brighter to get across the humorous aspect. Most of my work is done in greys or other dark colors."

Montgomery charges \$300 to \$1,200 for one of her works of art, which each take many hundreds of hours to complete and are made of both natural and synthetic fibres.

"It's certainly not a hobby with me, it's my life," she says.

From this point in Montgomery's career (which she only began three years ago), the mother of three says she will continue to explore all art mediums.

"In the fall I'll probably take a creative film-making course. I'll be doing lots of things, oils, photography, films, the whole works."

Such is the nature of a true artist.