

Reel Brog.

May 10-78 MT

SMITH, ROXANN V.

Watercolors

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MT "... because I wanted
everything to be pretty"

By CONNIE RAE
Times Staff Writer

When Roxann Vivian Smith was a little girl she could usually be found out in the garden admiring the flowers.

"I wanted everything to be pretty," says the Streambank Drive resident of Lorne Park who has carried her love of flowers into a part-time art business.

Pastel watercolors glazed over with matted tissue give an ethereal quality to Smith's paintings, a look that has become part of her trademark.



Times Photos by GORM LARSEN

Roxann Smith captures the beauty of nature from all she sees around her. Here she shows a painting of magnolia blossoms in front of her Streambank Drive home behind her magnolia tree which is just preparing to flower. Her floral paintings, seascapes, landscapes and ballerinas will be on display this month at Bronte Post office.

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Landscapes, hollyhocks, appleblossoms, Queen Anne's Lace and goldenrod grace the canvases in Smith's studios (that is, when she's not having a gallery show somewhere).

The Centre Island-born 18-year Mississauga resident has an impressive list of one-woman shows at galleries including the Samo Gallery in Yorkville, the Four Seasons Hotel and the Cobblestone Gallery in Niagara-on-the-Lake. In addition, Smith has shown her work in Mississauga at the New Port Hotel, and Mississauga libraries.

Smith has also participated in group shows at the McDowell Gallery and the O'Keefe Centre, and has won awards from the Niagara-and-District Art Association and from Buffalo, New York.

She is a member of the Canadian Confederation of the Arts, the Women's Cultural Centre of Toronto and the Central Ontario Art Association — to name a few.

Although Smith always loved art, like so many other female artists, she never really got into it until her three children were at the high school age. She began painting in oils with the Humber Valley Art Club where she took lessons from the late Adrian Dingle.

Today her medium is watercolors (they're more of a challenge — you have to create the whole thing in one sitting) and her talents have expanded from floral statements to sea and landscapes. A recent exhibition at the O'Keefe Centre demonstrated, through a series of ballet studies, that she is also proficient in painting people.

Trips to Mexico with Jack Reid's painting group and a recent trip to Mikonos and Delphi in Greece have expanded her horizons.

There are still some unsold paintings of Mexican street scenes and Greek seascapes.

This month's art show, at the Old Bronte Post Office Gallery at 86 Bronte Road, south of the Lakeshore, demonstrates an adaptability and versatility that many artists lack. The show includes several scenes of the pier at Bronte with children feeding the geese.

SOMEONE GUIDES HER

Smith, who once was a member of Psychic Research Foundation in Toronto, is very much a spiritualist and believes someone is definitely guiding her, in her life as well as in her paintings.

"Perhaps it's because artists are sensitive and responsive to things. I just want to put it down and keep a record of it and I tune in to a guiding force," she says.

At this point in her life, Smith feels she is just touching the surface as far as her art future is concerned.

At present, she works part-time at a chiropractor office and enjoys the balance between inward reflection (painting) and outward participation in working with other people.

This summer she plans a trip to British Columbia where she plans to "loosen up and explore some new painting techniques" in the solitude of the Rocky Mountains.

She has also toyed with the idea of opening her own art gallery, but says she would rather paint.

Smith is also exploring the idea of purchasing a press to produce her own Christmas cards. She sends out about 400 a year and cards over the past few years bear fine black-and-white drawings of the faces of the nativity.

She is also looking into the possibility of making her own paper. At present she purchases D'Arches, which runs about \$7 for a sheet 22 by 30 inches.

Making her own watercolor canvas out of old paper and shredded, blended and pasted rags would open a whole new dimension, she says. "You could make it with the kind of texture you wanted and do all sorts of things with it, like add seeds," she says.

In the meantime, Smith is busy painting and "recording the beauty that's there before it's gone."

The Bronte show west of Oakville runs until May 28 and gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.