



Staff photo by Chris Horobin
 A collection of paintings by Mississauga artist Alberta Sparrow will be on display at the Springbank Visual Arts Centre through the end of the month. Included in the show is a series of prints of historical Mississauga buildings.

Heritage buildings a Sparrow specialty

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By LISA TALLYN

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Although she got a late start on her painting career, Alberta Sparrow has been making up for lost time.

Several prints by the 63-year-old Mississauga resident are on display at the Springbank Visual Arts Centre gift shop through the end of February. The display includes a series of 18 prints of Mississauga heritage buildings, which Sparrow says have been selling well.

Sparrow didn't take her first art class until 20 years ago. She had wanted to sign up earlier but didn't find the time until her children had grown.

CONT. →

"I was one of those people who always wanted to go to art school, but never did," said Sparrow.

She received her training from community colleges and local community centres.

She has always been fascinated with old buildings.

"The architecture is so different, they used different building materials, and they have such character."

Her fascination led her to do a series of pencil sketches of several historical buildings in Mississauga.

In 1984 in connection with the tenth anniversary of Mississauga being named a city her sketches were displayed at Mississauga City Hall.

Due to the interest in the sketches Sparrow decided to issue them as hand-colored limited edition prints. She hand-paints each one with watercolors before it is framed.

Buildings she painted include Cherry Hill House, The Grange, St. Peter's on the Hill, Springbank Visual Arts Centre, Lislehurst (on the Erindale Campus of University of Toronto), Britannia Church and Britannia School, Dixie Union Chapel, The Adamson Estate, and The Middle Road Bridge.

She spent about five months working on the detailed drawings, and did most of her work on location.

Sparrow says the most popular prints are Cherry Hill House and Lislehurst.

"People collect the prints for many different reasons. One man wanted a print of the Dixie Union Chapel because a tombstone of a relative of his was in it, some want the Lislehurst print to give as a graduation gift, new residents of the city want them because they are interested in finding out about where they live."

While she enjoys watercolors and sketching with pencil her real love is oil painting.

"I like the way oil feels, it's buttery. It is what I seem to know best."

She is constantly trying new things, and has taken pottery classes and life drawing.

Sparrow admits she has come to her art in a backward way. She is currently enrolled in a fundamentals of drawing course.