

*And Biography* **SPROULE, FAY**  
**Painter's block gave inspiration**

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# Local artist creates using new subjects

By IRENE GENTLE  
 Special

For the traditional artist, one of life's great terrors is finding that the muse needed for inspiration has taken an unexpected vacation.

That's why local watercolor artist Fay Sproule was devastated when the inspiration that fed her artistic career for as long as she could remember, one day, simply dried up.

"You feel frustrated because you know you want to get out there and paint but you also don't want to paint," said Sproule. "I had an artistic block a few years ago and I've never torn up as many paintings as I did in that year. Usually when that happens it means something is about to change in your work."

For Sproule, an on-location artist

who traditionally uses watercolors on dry paper, the block heralded a change, not in technique, but in subject matter.

As though deliberately defying the figurative death that comes from the blocked creativity, Sproule chose as her new subject matter the vibrant and energetic life of broad-leaved plants.

"A number of the new paintings are what we'd call broad-leaf paint-



**Fay Sproule**

ings, like banana trees," said Sproule. "Broad-leaved plants give you the feeling of breath and life and I feel the paintings will do the same thing. I want to give people the feeling of breath, of satisfaction. Words along those lines. I want you to feel relaxed."

That means that in spite of the seasonal golds and reds outside, stepping into Sproule's annual watercolor exhibition at the Springbank Arts Centre, from Oct. 21-23, is like being ushered into a world brimming with the varied greens of a lush spring and summer.

"It's mainly the greens of the seasons that are represented in the exhibition. I have warm yellow greens and I have mauve greens; the whole spectrum of greens," said Sproule. "There are so many impressions of that color. If you say fire-engine red, everyone knows what that is. But everyone has their own idea of green."

Whatever your idea of the color, Sproule is sure to have it covered in one of the 38 paintings ranging in price from \$150-\$1000 that make up her sixth annual exhibition. And while Sproule refuses to pin down a date when she began painting with a coy (but firm) 'Let's leave age out of this. I never knew my mother's age until her 90th birthday and I think that's a good policy,' she admits that the hands that first picked up a paint brush were the chubby, untrained ones of a child.

"I've always painted. I enjoyed painting as a child. I had a mother who was interested in the arts and since I don't recall a definite time when I was drawn to the arts, I think it's something I always did," said Sproule. "It's very emotionally satisfying. At least it is when the painting is going well."

"I have to be inspired to begin a painting. I can go for months when I just can't paint and then something will trigger and I'll do two or three paintings in a couple of days," said Sproule. "I feel great when I paint. It's a very relaxed feeling. An inner relaxation."

The Springbank Arts Centre is located at 3057 Mississauga Rd., north of Dundas St. W.