



Paintings by Mississauga artist Lorna Wreford are currently on exhibit at the Valhalla Inn in Etobicoke. Wreford, 56, suffers from spina bifida. It is her sixth time since 1978 that the Valhalla has showcased her work.

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**Simple things  
 are beautiful  
 to Wreford**

By MIKE TOTH  
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Lorna Wreford finds and paints beauty where many others won't even thread. The simple things on the ground — a pine cone, a trillium in the field and many of nature's other everyday and often overlooked gifts have become the objects of artist Wreford's paint brush.

"Nature is something you can react to and it can be at your feet," she said.

When you come face-to-face for the first time with the artist, suddenly the picture becomes clear. You see, Wreford spends more of her time than most people looking at the ground around her feet. Afflicted with spina bifida since birth, she has no feeling in her legs, gets around on crutches and must look carefully where she's stepping.

When you do that, you become attuned to the down-to-earth world under your feet.

Wreford recalled how she came across the subject one of her favorite paintings, *Trillium In Late Summer*, a 1982 work currently showing until July 8 at a Valhalla Inn exhibition. It's one of eight Wreford paintings at a two-person show she is sharing with *The Toronto Sun* cartoonist/artist Andy Donato. All other seven of her works have nature for a subject — naturally.

This marks the sixth time since 1978 that the Valhalla Inn Gallery (just inside the main entrance of the hotel on Valhalla Rd., south of Burhamthorpe Rd. in Etobicoke) is showcasing Wreford's work and art director Anne Proulx says it's not by accident.

"I enjoy her work very much," said Proulx. "Lorna has a style of her own. I don't even have to look at the signature on the picture to know it's her work."

Proulx should know what she's talking about. Art lover, agent (she has had, among other, Toller Cranston in her stable), collector and an established painter in her own right, Proulx has been art director at the Valhalla Inn Gallery for the 25 years.

"The delicacy of the person shows through Lorna's works," she said. "She's a soft person and her colors show it. You can easily spot Lorna's work and that's the sign of a real artist."

Gallery hours are generally from 9 a.m.-9 p.m. seven days a week, but as Proulx points out visitors can view the exhibit around the clock.

This is Wreford's first exhibition in four years. Lately, more than before, the 56-year-old artist finds

## Illness slows local painter

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it harder to cope and her illness had slowed her down noticeably. She has had a series of long and tiring tests at the hospital and they took their toll.

"Physically I'm very limited," she said. "I'm opting not to move on my feet and it annoys me.

"I must stand up when I'm painting."

Wreford paints primarily in watercolor, but with a difference and that sets her apart. First she does a black-and-white pen-and-ink drawing then colors over it. The effect is very eye-catching.

A long-time Mississauga resident, Wreford has had her work shown at the Civic Centre, just about every local library branch and various churches. Outside the city's boundaries, she exhibited, among others, at the Canadian National Exhibition, at the 12 Ontario Artists juried show at Queen's Park and at McMaster University's gala 50th anniversary, and at Toronto Western Hospital.

Not a bad record for someone who doesn't find it as easy as others to get around.

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