

Painter brings wildlife indoors with lifelike portraits



Tracey Lee Green spoke to gallery visitors on opening night. She explained that her inspiration came from the summers in the area and her desire to give back to it. She signs her work with Nasti to remind people that there is a little bit of nasty in everything beautiful.

By Sarah Sobanski

Local artist Tracey Lee Green has returned to the Art Gallery of Bancroft (AGB).

Green debuted her first solo gallery *Portraits of Nature: A Journey from Anvil to Easel* last Friday. It showcases abstract canvases of nature through animal portraits and metal art landscapes.

Part of Green's inspiration for the exhibit comes from recognizing the reliance of businesses in the area on summer tourism. She has lived in the area for 12 years and was once a local restaurant owner as well. She said she wanted to step up for the AGB.

"I hunt, I fish, I'm an outdoors person. I like being outdoors and I thought I've never tried animals in 15 years of painting," said Green, explaining how she came to animal muses. "The first one I did was the elk, and I was so taken with the expression in it and I thought I'm going to follow that example and continue painting the animals."

The exhibit is a breathtaking array of colourful and inviting paintings contrasting with dark metal pieces making it palatable for a variety of art collectors.

Green has been working on the exhibit since last December. She described herself as an artist who wanted to do and try everything, but made herself focus on being brilliant in just two mediums. She hammers her work by hand, and suggested that if she tired of blacksmithing, being able to go and paint kept her work from becoming tedious.

While creating the animals Green developed a kind of relationship with them. She would come home to the canvases and talk to them, kissing them on their noses and complaining to individuals about the others. The nature portraits are very intimate. They allow

the viewer to see and feel the emotion of the animals that Green has captured in an almost dream-like appeal.

‘As they were being created they just turned into so much more, and each had their own individual expression,’ said Green. ‘I wasn’t sure how people would observe having wildlife on the walls, but apparently it’s successful. That is just tickling me pink. I thought it was either going to be a great success or a great failure but great either way.’

On the bottom of each portrait Green signs Nasti. The name comes off as abrupt when the viewer finds it at the end of her works. Green said the blunt or abrupt feeling when reading Nasti is intended to remind viewers that even though such beautiful creatures exist in the world, so do nasty creatures, ideas and people.

‘I’ve come to an area in my career where I want to express myself, and my regard for things that aren’t happening well. I want to do shock art that says hey people we need to do this better,’ said Green. ‘At the same time I know that isn’t very collectible. It’s usually really engaging and interesting but people don’t go home with it. I think to have a namesake and have people collect your art it has to have something that says hey, look at me, I’m a way of thinking of something, but I’m so beautiful that you want to live with me and look at me all the time.’

She added, ‘Part of me started signing Nasti as a way to express my angst as an artist. When people see Nasti on the bottom of a wildlife painting, I want them to remember that we can be nasty. We can be nasty to the environment, to the world. We can be nasty to each other and to ourselves. I want something that captures their heart, but at the end of the day there’s that little reminder at the bottom of what we maybe truly are or can be.’

Green also hosted a painting class at the AGB on July 17. There she explained to artists her process and showed them how to paint with colour, expression and dynamic brush strokes.

Portraits in Nature is at the AGB until the end of the month.