

AGB celebrates first show of 2019



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By Chris Drost

Dressed in what could be described as a brightly coloured floral tie, Hugh Monteith, president of the Art Gallery of Bancroft, welcomed attendees at the first exhibition of the year on Friday, March 8, a show entitled 'Unearthed,' by artist Anne Renouf. Monteith lightheartedly suggested that, 'I hope my tie will hurry along spring as we are now counting down the days, hours and minutes.'

The AGB has been volunteer-operated for more than 35 years, Monteith explained. He thanked those individuals who helped with the current show, Freddie Towe and Ken Fraser for hanging it, Pat Huddart for refreshments, Barb Millar, Deb Jeffrey and Dalila Lajko.

Monteith gave special thanks to the exhibition sponsors, Dr. Jerry Rawal, Dr. Jeff Guthrie and Dr. Melissa Fransky.

Artist, Anne Renouf, from Indian River, just east of Peterborough, studied drawing, painting and printmaking at the University of Toronto. She moved to the Peterborough area in 1997 where she has a studio on a rural piece of property, 90 acres of cedar and maple woods, fields and wetlands. She lives in an off-grid home, mostly operated through solar and wind. The house was strategically placed to take advantage of being south facing. She has no furnace but does have a wood stove.

Renouf said, 'I am delighted to show my work in this beautiful space and kudos to everyone who keeps the AGB going.' She went on to explain that the inspiration for the body of work on display came from her love of canoeing. She described her work as abstract landscape and tree images as metaphors for the concept of a journey exploring themes of memory, spirituality, pilgrimage and the space around us and the beauty of her surroundings. Her work reflects her memories from the past, especially many years canoeing through area through parts of Ontario, with Wild Cat Lake in the northern Haliburton Forest area, noted as a favourite. She still has eight canoes in various stages of repair. Each of the pieces in the show included a motif of a canoe, as seen from above, with all the ribs visible. She said, 'it has become a symbol of my work.'

Noting happily that the show opening coincides with International Women's Day, Renouf went on to say that as a female artist, her journey has not always been smooth sailing. While she is very happy to have a beautiful studio to work from, it is not always easy to make a living from her art. She appreciates having the opportunity to teach at the Art Gallery of Peterborough.

After sharing a few words with the audience, Renouf generously offered to answer any questions the attendees might have. There were a number of questions about the unique technique Renouf uses in her work. Her mixed media pieces use image transfers (manipulated photographic images) that are printed onto the canvas. She then uses drawing materials and fluid acrylics to build it up, and then take away. After a day or two, the toner from the images remains on the canvas and she peels away the rest of the paper. A trail of water is put onto the canvas and she drags paint into it. At first glance it almost has the look of being watercolour.

Renouf is interested in investigating the Bancroft area by canoe this summer after learning the York River is a popular canoeing destination. She might even consider conducting a workshop in the gallery. Other workshops already planned include, Chas Burke, 'Paint Like a Musician?', in June, Debra Bannister, 'Loving our Loons?' in July, Michelle Bruce, with jewellery and beading in July and Tracey Lee Green, with the date still to be determined. Check for times and dates on the AGB website at

www.artgallerybancroft.ca

If you have an interest in art and have time to volunteer, the AGB would be most interested in speaking with you. It takes a large force of volunteers to operate the gallery, prepare for exhibitions and operate the in-gallery shop. Regular memberships to the AGB are only \$20 per year and can now be purchased through e-transfer. To learn more about the various membership and sponsorship opportunities visit the AGB website.