

Wayne Hudson's paintings love the light

By Constance Scrafield

Relatively new to Headwaters Arts at the Alton Mill Arts Centre, Wayne Hudson had his first show at the gallery in the fall of last year. Now he is back with a couple of paintings in his latest show, titled Rejuvenation.

While Hudson grew up in Moncton, NB, he has been settled here in Caledon for many years.

"I paint what I know," he said. "Landscapes mainly and with the animals I see. There is an impressionist influence in my paintings."

Earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) Degree at York University, with a side specializing in painting, he works mostly with acrylics.

"I graduated and have been painting since then," he said, adding that, as a landscaper, this year with so little snow has been good for his studio work.

Combining art with landscaping makes sense: the one informs the other. By and large, Mr. Hudson's business is on contracts with commercial buildings, like condos.

He designs and plants perennial gardens, saying, "My business is working in garden designs. Mostly commercial, I do a High Park area in Toronto, extensive gardens and it is an extension of a canvas. The way I put colours together in a garden is as a result of what I do in painting."

Being outdoors is the reference for his painting and impressionism works an influence.

"I'm a Christian," he said. "I appreciate God's creation and I'm hoping to reflect some of that. My three kids, one is 22, doing his last year in university. My wife is a teacher of grades three and four.

"Our kids are doing their own things, one is a wildlife biologist. Our daughter is in psychology. They're my best critics. My studio is on the main floor of my house. They see what I'm doing as they walk into the house.

"They all have different takes on my work."

As with many artists, a life of marriage and children did push art to the side a bit. Over the years, Mr. Hudson still had paintings in juried shows. Most recently, he was part of an art collective in Hamilton, Flagship, until about two years ago. During that association, he staged two solo shows.

In the fall show at the Alton Mill, he sold a piece.

"It's something I'll always have," he said. "Lately, I've been more into it. I've had more time. During this past winter, I've probably produced more than ever before. That's been a bonus; painting has always been important to me."

For the last couple of years, Mr. Hudson has opted to run his business with just himself and a couple of students. When artwork gets viewed as a hobby by others, he denies it and asserts that it's not that for him.

"I hope the viewer stands back and sees what I've seen in nature. I just did three snow geese on a simple field, another with animals in a scene, a forest walk."

His hope is people will stop and look at what is in front of them.

?I love to paint what I know ? small moments. I'm working on a small painting now with the sun coming through the trees in the winter. It makes you pause for a minute,? he observed.

During the days with Flagship in Hamilton, the comment he often got was, ?We don't see the darkness in your paintings.? But Mr. Hudson is not interested in painting the dark side. He paints hope and beauty into his pictures.

With a couple of his recent paintings, he promotes simplicity and light with a pelican he saw in Mexico, the other of ducks on a pond, drawing people in to pause and just look.

Hudson met his wife at university, where she was attending Glendon campus, doing French and English. They graduated at the same time and ?we've been together ever since, coming up to 33 years.?

We asked him about his ambitions. Pausing momentarily, he told us, ?One thing I'm thinking about is getting involved with Headwaters and getting out there. Should I? Always that little trepidation: I don't know how people will like it. But they do.?

?I just want to keep getting better.?

With simple paintings of what he and many viewers know ? easy to look at ? we asked him what is he doing to grab the attention of the viewer.

He clarified what is special about his work: ?How I handle the colour and light; I keep them fairly bright, care for how the light hits something. One painting was a bull moose ? it looked almost like watercolour. The back is misty but how the light makes things appeal to convey hope in the darkness, depicting how the light and colour can make a difference.?

He mentioned a beach scene bathed in sunshine, and the snow geese, depicting how white is all kinds of other colours too.

?As a Christian, that's what fits in my life. My witness to the world, what it means to me.

?Everybody has something in his life that is sad,? he said, yet, light always brings hope in Wayne Hudson's paintings.

@waynehudson.artist