

BEACH METRO

COMMUNITY NEWS

From our **Oct. 5, 2010** issue (Vol. 39 No. 13)



[Beach Studio Tour Oct. 15-17](#)

Art Scene: Local artists ready for Beach Studio Tour's fall edition by Bill MacLean

There is nothing quite so relaxing, and yet stimulating at the same time, if that's possible, as strolling through the streets of the Beach during the warm days of early autumn. The beautiful vibrant colours of the leaves as they gently fall onto the walkways, softening the concrete edges, quieting the mind, while the odd breeze reminds us that summer is over, and we're soon in for cooler days ahead. Now add to this wonderful walk, the open doors of artists' studios, the smell of spiced teas beckoning us inside to see – and maybe even purchase – a piece of original art. Yes, it's time to enjoy the Fall Beach Studio Tour.

Over the weekend of Oct.15 through 17, 24 artists and artisans, will be showing in 13 different locations throughout the Beach. There will be everything from fine art paintings to hand made jewelry, textile art to pottery, all at reasonable prices, and all available right from the artist. Well known Beach artists – names such as Gill Birol, Jennifer Cline, Lucille Crighton and John Dowding – will be joined by



visiting artists such as Kate Hyde and Thomas Aitken, Caprice Akram, and Helen Benninger.

This year the artists of the Beach Studio Tour have chosen the Toronto Wildlife Centre (TWC) as their charity of choice. At each studio there will be at least one piece of art for sale to benefit the TWC, with a set amount from the sale of the piece used by the TWC to help bird and animal rescue in Toronto.

The Beach Fall Studio Tour runs from 6 to 9 p.m. on Friday Oct. 15, then from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 16 and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday Oct. 17. There is a complete list of participating artists, their respective websites and contact information, and the addresses where their studios are located at the website www.beachstudiotour.ca.



Nathalie Vachon is a charmingly beautiful woman who lives in a charmingly beautiful home on Scarborough Road. She was telling Carole and me that she and her husband specifically moved into the area so that she might become part of the Beach Studio Tour. And that was 13 Tours ago! Since then Nathalie has shown every year in the Tour, and risen to be part of the Tour committee, the one responsible for getting other artists to become involved.

Vachon's house is an open concept semi with a distinct Japanese feel – an open wooden staircase leading up to her studio, a covered outdoor deck which allows for al fresco dining and art exhibiting, bare wood floors, and skylights in the kitchen – perhaps reflecting the year and a half she spent in that country as a



young student. There was a small cast iron Japanese-style tea kettle on a votive candle base on the dark wood dining table, and we were served a deliciously spicy cup of herb tea. She admits, though, that neither she, nor husband, Ross Lynde, of the male a capella vocal group Cadence, are particularly handy when it comes to home renovation – “It was perfect when we moved in,” she said.

We gingerly climbed the rail-less staircase and entered Nathalie’s studio space. The room faces east, and gets plenty of sunlight in the early part of the day. There are some just-finished pieces on the desk, work taken from photos of their recent trip to Italy – a Venetian canal, a Tuscan hillside – and a larger unfinished canvas on an easel off to the side. It is also a work from the trip, and sketches on a nearby book shelf give a hint as to the finished project.

“I’ll go to a place and just soak up the inspiration,” Vachon said. This past summer she and Ross spent six weeks teaching in Singapore, she art, and Ross music. On the way back they spent some time just relaxing in Bali (“I love Bali,” she said).

Vachon said that she came to a career in art by accident. Needing to finish a high school diploma, she ended up taking a couple of art classes, thinking they would be an easy couple of credits. The teacher, however, had himself studied with members of the Group of Seven, and challenged Nathalie to work at her art.

“It is said that some people need permission to see themselves as artists,”

Vachon explained. “One day this teacher came to where I was working, looked over my shoulder, and told me that he thought I WAS an artist. My parents wanted me to become something more practical, but I knew then that I wanted to be an artist.”

She ended up getting an undergrad degree in Business from Laurier, but “took as many arts courses as I could get away with.”

Nathalie travelled to Japan for a year and a half studying painting, pottery, writing, and of course the language. She recalls fondly this time in her young artistic life, and many of her paintings still reflect the moods and images she encountered. She also tells a charming story highlighting the politeness of the Japanese people. Once she caught the wrong train out of Osaka, and ended up hundreds of miles from where she was supposed to be going. She explained her predicament to the station master in her rudimentary Japanese, and he told her

that the train back would not arrive until very early the next morning. He could see the worried confusion in her face, realized that she was unsure of what to do, and offered a special room in the station where she could sleep.

“The next morning all the station hands were at the door calling Nathalie-san wake up, the train is coming,” she recalled. They sent her on her way on the right train, and she never forgot their generosity.

From Japan she travelled to Hawaii to study abstract, intuitive art, and real-life drawing courses at the Honolulu Academy of Art. Then to Boston to take a Masters of Education in Creative Art at Leslie College in Cambridge. She also studied storytelling and drama, and told herself, “no more fooling around here, I’m going into art full-time.”

On her website – www.nathalievachon.com – she has three styles of paintings: Mystery, Mood and Whimsy, each reflecting a particular style that she does. Under the Mystery category you will find some of her more recent works; those that might be hanging on her walls as part of the Studio Tour. Under Mood, you can see pieces inspired by feelings and intuitions, while under the Whimsy category you will find light-hearted paintings she sometimes uses to illustrate her children’s stories.

As mentioned, this Beach Fall Studio Tour will be Nathalie Vachon’s 13th tour, and she loves each and every one of them as much as she did the first.

“All the artists are so great we learn from each other,” she says. “I love the fact that it’s not just a gallery atmosphere. It extends so much more beyond just selling. We can serve tea, play music, and people can actually see what the artwork would look like on the wall.”

Be sure to take in all the studios on the Beach Fall Studio Tour, but if you can’t, at least stop by 395 Scarborough Rd. and visit Nathalie Vachon’s.

