



By Galen Simmons

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Published on: May 6, 2018 | Last Updated: May 6, 2018 10:44 AM EDT



Though winter's wrath may have just departed, and cottage season is still around the corner, the colours and imagery of summer in the Muskokas are alive and thriving at Shane Norrie Contemporary, thanks to the opening of artist Amy Montgomery's Recollection exhibition.



Having been painting from photos she has taken with her phone while spending time with her family in Muskoka over the past three years, the Burlington-based artist blends reality with the intangible using colour, light and darkness to elicit memories of both classic Canadian scenery and the emotions it evokes.

"I definitely feel a strong thread in my work is the light and the play off light that happens in nature. So, a lot of the scenes will feature light coming through from behind the subject," Montgomery said before the exhibition's opening on Saturday.



Though Montgomery's exhibition also features abstracts and floral paintings, she maintains her own, unique acrylic style across her entire body of work.

"I tend to start a little more abstract underneath, so when you look up closely at some of the work there are spots where there is a heavy stroke of a mix of colours, almost just like a swipe of a rainbow. Then I build on top of that with the darks first, and then I go back in with lights," Montgomery said.



"I do sort of a push and pull with darks and lights, back and forth, but I always end with the lights. So, the whitest lights are always the last thing I put in."

In choosing the colours for each of her paintings, Montgomery focuses less on those that appear in her photos, and more on the colours that bring her back to that time and place that inspired her to paint in the first place.

And those are the kinds of feelings she hopes to impart on the people who come to see her work.

"When I'm building a piece, often it's less about the foliage, the green, and more about the spirit of the scene," she said. "...We had a little bit of a longer winter this year, so when people come in here I want them to leave feeling a little more positive and a little more optimistic and feeling a little more upbeat about their day and their life."

Just like a trip to the cottage.

The Recollection exhibition is the first new art installation in Shane Norrie Contemporary's new space – 73 Albert St., just down the street from the old gallery. Located right on the corner of Albert Street and Waterloo Street, the new gallery offers more art display space, a larger studio in the back, and additional office space.

"We liked the old space, but we quickly outgrew it. So, when this space became available we decided we'd have a look at it, and it was perfect," gallery owner and artist Shane Norrie said.

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