

Kingston abstract artist has 'complete creative expression'



By Peter Hendra, Kingston Whig-Standard
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While photos of many of abstract artist Debra Krakow's past paintings can be found on her website, there's a good reason her newest ones aren't on there.

The obvious reason is her new show, "Horizons," opens a week from Tuesday at Studio 22 on King Street.

Another reason, actually, is the paintings themselves, as some of them measure six feet wide.

"So when it's an abstract landscape, you're standing with that horizon line at eye level, it really puts you there, and that mood of that painting encompasses everything you're seeing," said the Wolfe Island artist, whose day job sees her working as a construction project manager for the City of Kingston.

Then there's also the texture of the painting, which isn't as distinct on a computer screen.

"You got this really evocative surface and you can tell there's stuff going on underneath," said Krakow, who studied architecture in school.

The "stuff going on underneath," she said, are sometimes false starts on the painting, which adds layers to the work.

While she primarily paints abstracts now, Krakow used to undertake landscapes and figures.

"It was something I was wanting to do for a long time, but couldn't really figure out how to make that leap," she said. "I finally just sort of dove in."

A weeklong class at St. Lawrence College helped with that, as did the switch from watercolour to acrylic paints.

The switch, she said, helped free her creatively, as did expectations of the final result.

"You really have complete creative expression. You're not trying to replicate something," she explained. "And yet that whole history of having done landscapes, having done figurative painting, it's all there somewhere in me, in my psyche, and I think that kind of informs what I do now. So when I'm choosing colours, or even creating texture, that kind of familiarity with the real, visual world comes out — but I just love the creative freedom."

The show opens Tuesday, April 12, and runs until Sunday, May 15.

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