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# Tay River Tattler

Arts News & Views from Tay River Gallery

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## John Alexander Day Paints Perth in "Towards the Light"

Saturday August 30<sup>th</sup> was the opening of John Alexander Day's solo show, "Towards The Light", at Tay River Gallery featuring twenty paintings of Perth streetscapes. The show continues to September 28<sup>th</sup> so don't miss the opportunity to see these poignant renderings of town sights.

Towards the Light is an impressive and astute record of Perth captured in 2003 through the eyes of this skilled artist painting street scenes from early morning to dusk over a six-month period. Day's treatment of light is compelling evoking an ethereal energy which engages the viewer.

John Alexander Day was born in Scotland and emigrated to Canada in 1989. Painting has been his passion for over twenty years and his influences have come primarily from French and American Impressionism. He has traveled across the

country painting the Canadian landscape using his field studies done on location as a starting point for larger paintings back in the studio. In recent years, John has painted more cityscapes with memorable studies of the Ottawa market and canal, old Montreal and most recently the town of Perth.

Part of the experience of painting "en plein air", was taking the opportunity to chat with many of the Perth residents he encountered. Some comments by John are transcribed below.

### Artist's Commentary

"Do you paint from Photographs?" It is a question often asked by people at my exhibitions, including the recent opening of my show at the Tay River Gallery in Perth.

I find that most people are quite surprised to find that I paint on location. Indeed most other artists I meet must wonder why I would want to paint in full view of the general public, and not back in the cosy confines of the studio. I guess it depends how comfortable you feel, but after several years of painting on the streets, I would not have it any other way. Years ago I bought a very good second hand camera, for the purpose of recording information to back up my on location paintings. I was disappointed when I got my photos back from processing to find that it was not how I had seen each scene. After comparing the on-location oil sketch with the photo, I realized that our eyes are not like a camera. Since then I have trusted my own eyes to interpret the what



was before me.

It may not be for every artist but I really enjoy painting on the streets and talking to passers-by. I find it most interesting when painting outside to hear from local people, who will often point out landmarks of historical interest. This for me only adds to the experience.

As the title of the show "Towards the Light" indicates, my paintings are really about light. This has been my reason for the vast majority of my work. This why it is important for me to paint directly from nature in order to capture the light. It is also important to travel with minimal equipment so that I can set up and get down to painting before the light changes. I am constantly aware that whatever I paint it will be different in a short period of time. I was reminded of the effects of change recently when painting along the Bay of Fundy. I had spent the first half-hour correcting and re-correcting the position of a boat against the harbour wall, not realising that the tide was going out!

When painting on the streets this also means that people and traffic and shadows also move and change in front of me. As long as I am aware of these changes it is not a problem, but maybe this is why some artists prefer to use a camera. It is surprising how much the light can evolve throughout the day, which is why I usually take several canvases and boards

with me so I can be ready to go on to my next canvas as soon as I see this occurring.

When I started painting in Perth, there was still snow on the ground, but the later paintings were done in the full heat of summer. It is interesting looking at the paintings the difference one sees from spring to summer in just one area of a street. So when painting a place like Perth, there will always be something new to offer the artist as it is never the same on the next visit.

So I guess my answer to the question "Do I paint from Photographs" would have to be that I have really too much fun painting from life, to bother with a camera.

*John Alexander Day*

## New to the Gallery

With the fall season fast approaching, the gallery welcomes a number of new exhibiting artists:

**Natalia Shapira**, Sculptor, currently living and working in Toronto, was formally trained as a teacher of sculpture and drawing at Sverdiovsk College of Arts in Russia in the 80's. In Canada, since 1999, Natalia's original sculptures have garnered recognition in international art exhibitions and private collections across North America.

On exhibit in the gallery this fall are two of her robust sculptured nudes classical in form with a whimsical, carefree touch that is Natalia's alone.

**Emblen Mulholland**, Mixed Media artist, of Westport Ontario has been involved in art in recent years after a career in teaching. Half the year she spends travelling and living in Florida pursuing courses and workshops in many mediums. Susan has participated in juried

shows at the Von Liebig and Gallery at Bonita Springs Art League.

Featured in the gallery are a number of her mixed media works employing collage techniques. Bold and Beautiful are the words that come to mind in response to Susan's works. Her use of jewel tones and gold in her abstract works is striking yet sufficiently subtle.

**Shirley Mancino**, Mixed Media Artist, studied art at Ontario College of Art and Haliburton School of Fine Arts. Shirley also hails from Westport, where she has recently opened an impressive Studio Gallery at her lakefront home on Rebecca Lane. Visitors are welcome during the Fall Colours Studio Tour on Thanksgiving weekend.

An award winning artist, Shirley's exhibitions have included Pelham Art Festival, National Arts Centre, Ottawa Rideau Valley Art Festival, Westport, Lorne Park Gallery among other. Shirley's dramatic artworks reflect her passions, and often depict people and landscapes in the exotic settings of her back-packing travels.

**Linda Grenier**, accomplished folks/blues singer from Lanark County has recently released her latest CD "**Asphalt Ramblings**" which is now available for sale in the gallery. Linda calls her music "county" music not "country" and not really folk, with a bit of blue grass feel to it. Lanark County is home to some of Canada's finest bluegrass fiddlers, pickers and step dancers. Don't be surprised if you hear yours truly humming along to Linda's catchy tunes as the CD plays in the gallery.

## Gallery News

Next month, we will be featuring a group exhibit of paintings and photography on

the subject of Nostalgia in the " Room with a View " .

Many new artworks and artists will be featured this fall season. Visitors will notice a different look and feel to the gallery most times they visit over the next four months as our displays take on new shape with the artists' newest creations!

## Events Around Town

### Authors in the Park, Perth.

A Must See! Sept. 14 from 11:45-4:40 in Perth's Stewart Park. Fourteen Canadian authors read from their works. Proceeds support the Perth Library, and literacy programs. Kudos to Rotary Club of Perth.

**Heritage Quilts of Lanark County and Beyond.** Perth Museum. 11 Gore St. E., 267-1947.

**Rural Expo 2003**, Lanark County International Ploughing Match, near Carleton Place Sept 17-21

**Art Exposed** exhibition and sale at five locations in Dunrobin, Sept. 21 from 10am-5pm. For info or directions call 832-5502.

**North Gower Discovery Tour**, Sept. 13 & 14 from 10am-5pm at 14 stops at the studios of North Gower artists/artisans. For info call 489-3675.

**Merrickville Artists' Guild Studio Tour & Sale**, Sept. 27-28 (and October 4-5), 10am-5pm.

[www.sundog.ca/artistguild/index.asp](http://www.sundog.ca/artistguild/index.asp)

More local Studio tours in October. See October issue for details.