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The reigning queen of Queenstown

Nancy Herrington's self-reflective collection on display at art gallery

By R. Kurt Osenlund, BucksLocalNews.com correspondent

Since Jan. 17, the work of Belle Mead-based painter Nancy Herrington has been spilling a more-than-usual amount of rich, vivid color through the rooms of the Queenstown Art Gallery in Hopewell. A self-reflective collection of over two dozen landscapes and portraits, Herrington's "happiness"-themed show renders local environments and "personal sources of peace and enjoyment," as she says, with a daring palette of vibrant hues.

"Her work is extremely bold," says Queenstown owner Marc Udell, a professional photographer who expanded his gallery enterprise - which also consists of the Queenstown frame shop on Main St. in Pennington - to include the Hopewell site approximately one year ago. "It drew a crowd of around 150 people on opening night, which is amazing considering it was about six degrees outside."

Herrington, the former director of an art gallery in Short Hills, originally came to Udell in July looking for work. While the intended business relationship never came to fruition, another partnership emerged when Udell, in search of artists to feature at the Hopewell location, paid a visit to Herrington's web site. Impressed with her skill and style (which is often more "conceptual-minded" than what's currently on display), Udell offered Herrington her own show, a first for the Rutgers grad.

"I've never done a commercial thing like this before," says Herrington, who's also worked as an art teacher at the Peddie School in Hightstown, "but I've enjoyed it so much. It's been a unique and absolutely wonderful experience."

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It took Herrington six months to complete the Queen-stown collection, which was done primarily in oil and acrylic. Reportedly inspired by Michelangelo and Raphael, Herrington puts great emphasis on shape and color, exaggerating the existing lines and tones of her subject matter to create a sort of heightened reality in her compositions. Landscapes that include mountain ranges and the waterfalls of Ricketts Glen, PA hang among bright depictions of animals like horses and even Herrington's cat. The collective tone the artist has established is one of serenity and positivity - something with which she's become increasingly familiar.

"(The collection is) really about good vibes," says Herrington, a mother of four who's recently found enrichment by braving the wonders of the outdoors. "The work I've done previously was very conceptual. This time around, my whole life has changed - I'm in a good place - and the work I'm doing is reflecting that."

Herrington's Hopewell exhibition closes on Mar. 14, and she's already looking into other venues for a future show. In sharing her art with others, the passionate painter finds much fulfillment, a sentiment she hopes her patrons will share.

"When you see the art on the wall, you can connect with it; it feeds your soul," says Herrington. "Art can make a difference in people's lives and that's what my art has always been about."

The Queenstown Gallery is located at 24 West Broad Street in Hopewell. For more information, call 609-466-0817 or visit www.thequeenstowngallery.com

For more information on Nancy Herrington, visit nancyherrington.us.

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