

# ARTS

## Moods of motion

Jane Burns uses her hands and feet in new exhibit

BY ELENA KOROBOV

Over 20 oil paintings and woodcuts have left the walls of Jane Burns' home, travelling past a lovely four-pillared porch, down the streets of the Annex, and into Yorkville's Leonardo Gallery (133 Avenue Rd.).

Most of her works have universal themes: water, moon, light, earth, femininity, and human experience and interactions with nature. Her paintings are very dynamic and energetic, perhaps because she says she has a strong interest in images that are constantly in motion.

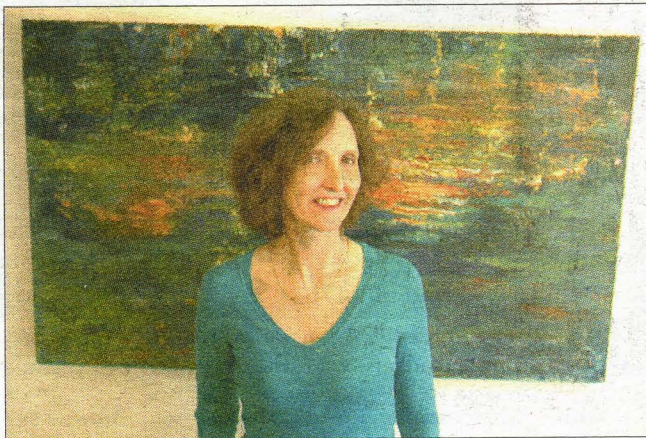
"Water, for example, has so many different moods, and it is also such a critical issue in our lives here, in the largest area of fresh water with all the Great Lakes." The Don River is among her latest inspirations, and depicted in one of her most memorable works.

Burns is an accomplished artist, whose works are part of the University of Toronto's permanent collection. She moved into the Annex neighbourhood over 20 years ago, after falling in love with her house's unusual design, large open space, and porch.

"The porch culture; people sit on their porches in the summer, and when you are on the porch, people feel like they can stop and chat."

Since moving to the Annex, Burns has developed a strong interest in urban motifs, like city lights, the waterfront, and environmental issues.

"Many works I am doing tend to be related to the light, and I am



Jane Burns' oil paintings and woodcuts are calling the Leonardo Gallery home until April 22.

working with the ways this city is lit, with effects of light and shadows," she says.

Likewise, her art has many dimensions. Her inspiration comes from many sources, including the Bruce Peninsula, where she spent her childhood, and Hamilton Bay, where she lived with her husband. She also volunteers for the Downspout program, which recycles water and prevents the rainwater from overflowing during heavy storms, according to Burns.

"The way I work is energetic," says Burns, explaining she enjoys working on the floor and painting with her hands and feet. "I get emotionally and physically involved in what I do."

Her paintings, abstract and representational, are charged with this energy, and encourage emotional reaction. Among many influences, Burns names Emily Carr, David Milne, and Jackson Pollock.

Burns' creativity and energy also fuel the printmaking classes that she teaches at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), according to local painter Lynn Hardaker.

"I have never done printmaking before, just painting and drawing, and I found Jane's course fabulous. It is a great introduction to printmaking with a lot of technical guidance from a very generous, helpful, and inspirational teacher."

The Annex community is an ideal environment for an artist and is bound to influence one's work, according to Hardaker.

"The gardens, old streets, and interesting architecture attract interesting people. A creative environment helps the creative processes, whether it is writing, printing, or printmaking. Art and beauty seem to be important here."

Burns has an "interesting grasp of landscape, as she is experimenting between abstract art and surrealism automatism," says Teodora Opris, curator at the Leonardo Gallery.

*The exhibition runs until April 22. For more information, please visit [www.leonardogalleries.com](http://www.leonardogalleries.com), or [www.janeburns.com](http://www.janeburns.com).*