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Niagara Pumphouse hosts introspective art by Lynne Gaetz

Maria Klassen
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1 / 5 Lynne Gaetz with her painting Believe in the World, part of her current exhibit at the Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre. | Maria Klassen

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The Niagara Pumphouse Arts Centre has welcomed Lynne Gaetz back with her new solo exhibit *Doors of Perception*. Located in the Joyner Gallery, this captivating exhibit closes Sunday.

A life drawing class, taken at the University of Calgary, inspired Gaetz to add something from her imagination to the painting of the model posing in the class, she explains. And so her style was born, blending surrealism, symbolism and intuitive storytelling into her work. Her mixed-media paintings merge human figures with mythical motifs to reveal passages into memory, spirit and dream.

Gaetz takes photos of people which become the starting point for her work. She works on the expression of the face until it speaks to her. It's the message that comes through the expression that is important to her in her work, not the face itself.

Gaetz primarily works with oils, but she adheres the mixed media elements to an acrylic background, she says. She uses photos of her family and herself in her collages, and incorporates pictures from previous paintings and drawings. Fragments of words and phrases hint at the fleeting nature of life, reflecting the mood of the piece. Gold leaf glimmers, referencing artworks in cathedrals. Birds reflecting freedom, taking flight, taking risks. Architectural features including arches and tiles of different shapes, reflecting light.

In this collection of paintings, Gaetz reflects on her own life. Falling leaves represent time passing, of her entering the autumn of her life. Since her last exhibit at the Pumphouse, her work has become more significant to her. She paints for herself, and includes her own history in her art work. The messages and words she paints are meaningful for herself, and she hopes for her audience as well.

Gaetz says, "My goal is to move beyond surface appearances to reveal deeper truths. I invite viewers to linger with the images and symbols, to awaken questions without clear answers, and to glimpse what lies just beneath the visible."

Come this week, and view this vibrant collection. What memories will awaken in your mind? What doors will open for you? Which words or phrases will speak to you?

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