

One traffic light.

Two roads.

And enough art, music and fun packed into our crossroads to keep culture hunters sated for the summer. Make it a destination or just stop the car and join the art celebrations among the fragrant black locust groves of Flesherton.

THE 18TH ANNUAL ART GARDEN SHOW

LOCAL COLOUR

7 p.m. — July 4, 2008

Gardening is not a rational act. — Margaret Atwood

Anyone who has ever been to Local Colour's Annual Art Garden would have to agree wholeheartedly. Every summer for the last 18 years, Carol Wood, artist and proprietor of Local Colour spends weeks planting a collection of wacky, whimsical, beautiful and even functional art in the lush backyard garden, which extends out the back door of her arts and crafts shop on Collingwood Street.

Locals and guests have come to expect opening night (which is the first Friday of every July) to be a delightful evening of eclectic art, music and merriment.

Nestled among the fragrant peonies, phlox, ferns and pungent herbs is a myriad of sculptures, candleholders, fountains, and containers of concrete, glass, metal and ceramics made by local artists and craftspeople specifically for this event.

For Wood, some creations are more memorable than others. She recalled a whirly-gig called *River* designed by Robert Markle.

"It was beautiful," said Wood. "It involved waves and a spinning figurative female form and it stood about four feet high."

Another piece that she described was submitted by furniture-maker Peggy Moore from *Branching Out*.

"She had just made a beautiful chair from fresh cut branches and twigs. We put it in the ground — I guess conditions were perfect — and it sprouted! There were leaves growing on the legs." Regular contributor Edmund Graham, a metal worker from Dundalk is another favorite. "His fountains are outstanding," said Wood.

And then there's the entertainment.

Musicians, dancing, poetry readings and drumming. "We can't talk about the entertainment without mentioning David Sugarman's unforgettable full frontal nudity poetry reading one year," said Wood. "Local favorite saxophonist Kenny Baldwin has also pulled off some wonderful performances over the years too."

A series of sculptures based on the weasel would have to fall under both categories — art and entertainment. Toronto transplant David Chevalier, who lives off the grid near Keady is the creator of the weasel pieces explained Wood.

"One year, there was the Rocket Weasel — that shot across the street on a wire — to name one. "I had to draw the line at the exploding weasel in the Garden though," she

said. "Instead of watching that one up close, we had him set off the weasel on a nearby hill."

Wood talked about how much "garden art" has changed since she first launched the show. "Before, people wouldn't even think about putting a beautiful piece outside, but more and more, they're moving into their gardens and thinking, why not put a designer table out there? Like paintings, they aren't limited to just hanging on a gallery wall."

Another interesting phenomenon about the Garden is that it is situated directly behind both the gallery and the crafts store. The names of the garden artists can be found on the walls of the Gallery and the shelves of the store. "But the Garden is the place where the artist crosses over and becomes the crafts person and vice versa.

"The garden blurs that line between artists and crafts people."

ROBERT MARKLE (small paintings) and OTIS TAMASAUSKAS (prints)

FLESHERTON ART GALLERY

7 p.m. — July 4, 2008

At the same same time, same location, one room over, a show by artists Robert Markle and Otis Tamasauskas will open.

The paintings by Markle are some of the last works he did before he died explained Marlene Markle. "The collection will feature some small oils on masonite, some of which have never been seen and others have been shown at the Durham Art Gallery." These small paintings range in size from 12 x 16 inches to 16 x 20 inches. She added, "There are a few dancing nude figures — some very colorful strip club imagery."

Otis Tamasauskas, who formerly lived in Priceville but is now a professor at Queens, will be present to talk about his prints. Worth noting: Markle and Tamasauskas have both featured work in the Art Garden in the 90s.

The Art Garden will run until Labor Day weekend. Shop and gallery hours are: Fri. Sat. 11 - 5. (Info: 519-924-3560. 22 Collingwood St., Flesherton.)

ANOTHER CREATIVE BLOCK — Sydenham Street

PETER BECKETT/LEFT SIDE GALLERY

At one end of Sydenham the Peter Beckett/Left Side Gallery still houses very recent and ever-changing spectacular abstract paintings by Peter Beckett.

Instead of jumping in the car after a delicious dinner at Donabies or Munshaws stroll over to the bright lights and listen to Beckett's story and perhaps, discover something totally unexpected about yourself.

"Looking at a painting is as much about you, your recollections and imagination as it is

about the artist." said Beckett.

"The images that you are drawn to express something of your nature."

*New extended summers: Fri. Sat. Sun. - 11 until 9:30. For more info: 519-794-2507
peterbeckett.com or peterbeckett11@gmail.com (Impromptu acoustic music by chance)*

SQUATTERS GALLERY

At the other end of the street, the three Squatters who invaded the Inner Garden Gallery on the May long weekend are still hanging (heh heh) around and proprietor Doug Barrett (who was in India when they slipped in) is joining them. Now you can find either local artists Anna-Maria Dickinson, Kate Esplen or Jennifer Stenberg and their paintings, plus three-dimensional garden art pieces chosen by Barrett.

20 Sydenham Fri. Sat. 10 - 5 and Sun. 11 - 4 or whenever. Other days come by chance or call 519-924-0316 for appointment.