

## Colborne exhibit meld of abstract and architecture

 [Print this Page](#)

April 25, 2011

COLBORNE -- After a brief stint with landscapes and watercolours, Cobourg-based artist Pat Stanley has now given herself permission to paint what she feels.

In the 1970s, Ms. Stanley studied drawing and painting at McGill University and the Concordia University School of Art.

"In an ideal world, I would have been an artist, but economics stepped in and I went into computers," she said.

But after she found herself out of work when her company downsized in 2000 and following a subsequent move to Cobourg in 2002, it wasn't long before the urge to pick up a paint brush emerged. She began with landscapes in watercolours, but, "I hit the end of that pretty quickly," she explained.

"I kind of floundered for a while," said Ms. Stanley. "I wasn't sure I wanted to change to acrylics but in the art world, watercolour is not treated as seriously nor with the same respect as acrylics and oil."

It was a pair of courses through the Haliburton School of the Arts, one with Lila Lewis-Irving, "who pours her fluid acrylic paint and uses broad, sweeping brush strokes," and instructor John Leonard, "who made me give myself permission to paint what I wanted," that set her on the artistic path she finds herself travelling today.

"I started to use abstract combined with architecture," she said.

One of her earliest collections, 'Fault Lines', documented the natural environment reclaiming decaying rural buildings.

"There's the suggestion of a barn, a rural abstract, being reclaimed by nature," said Ms. Stanley.

Then it was on to 'Urban Archeology' -- paintings of downtown Toronto, the Gardiner Expressway and abstracts of the Port Hope viaduct -- which investigated interactions between hard urban surfaces and the underlying natural world.

It was at showing of this collection at a Toronto exhibition where a man come up to her and said, "The Gardiner Expressway; I've seen this before on 'Life After People', when nature takes it back," explained Ms. Stanley.



Karen Longwell / Northumberland News

COLBORNE -- Crossroad, an exhibit by artist Pat Stanley, opened on April 23, 2011 at the Colborne Art Gallery.

'Life After People' is a documentary series where scientists and other experts speculate what the Earth might be like if humanity no longer existed and examines how humanity's disappearance could impact the environment.

"He actually got it... the message and emotion I'm trying to share, my awe of the beauty of these structures and fear of what their future may be... not everyone does," said Ms. Stanley.

Ms. Stanley's next collection, 'Intersection', featured abstract renderings of famous GTA landmarks -- City Hall, the Hilton Hotel, the Manulife building -- that explored tensions generated when the built and the natural landscape intersect, presenting a vision of future environmental impacts on these iconic examples of concrete architecture.

Her most recent collection called 'Crossroad', on exhibit at the Colborne Art Gallery through May 29, uses the same abstract techniques, this time from an aerial perspective. The paintings suggest road grids and sprawling urbanscapes and explore the uneasy coexistence of the built environment with the natural world.

"Even if we wreck the planet, nature will save it," she said.

The Colborne Art Gallery is housed in a circa-1860 heritage building at 51 King St. E. in downtown Colborne. 'Crossroad', Ms. Stanley's solo exhibit, runs through May 29.

For more information, contact the galley at 905-355-1798 or e-mail [info@thecolborneartgallery.ca](mailto:info@thecolborneartgallery.ca). For more on the works of Pat Stanley, visit [www.patstanleystudio.com](http://www.patstanleystudio.com).