

## Deirdre M<sup>c</sup>Ewen

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Deirdre grew up in North Vancouver, in a relatively quiet area among the trees for which British Columbia is famous and where the natural world seems permeated with a life force calling for a creative response. From an early age, although she did draw from nature, her greatest satisfaction came from expressing images formed out of her own mind, something that is still true today.

Although Deirdre took art in high school, she decided to study Zoology at the University of British Columbia. It was not until much later that she returned to art, studying graphic design at Algonquin College and then working at the Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa, first as a graphic designer and later as an exhibit designer. Over the years, she has taken many classes in oil, acrylics and watercolour, but upon retirement, her painting has begun to develop in a more serious direction. She exhibits her work with the Ottawa Mixed Media Artists (OMMA) and the Nepean Fine Arts League (NFAL). In April of 2006 two paintings were accepted at OMMA's Spring Mix juried show.

Deirdre loves the diversity of colour with each colour unique unto itself, but where just a slight variation gives a whole new meaning and expression. She loves texture that enriches the painted surface, adding the dimension of depth and will often extend a painting around the edges of its canvas, to enhance it beyond the limitation imposed by just two dimensions.

Ideas for painting flow from Deirdre's subconscious mind. At times she works intuitively, starting with a texture or colour to break the surface, and then letting her hand take the lead. Gradually an idea or emotion begins to emerge which is further developed using collage, photo transfers, words or objects. At other times, the idea behind the painting comes first, perhaps in meditation or in response to current events. Mixed media is the perfect medium for this mode of painting. Using materials in a non-traditional manner, Deidre takes a painting out of its original context to give it new meaning.

Painting for Deirdre is an emotional release, a form of communication more fundamental than speaking and also a bridge to the sacred dimension that lies just beyond the world of everyday experience.