

DIANE BRUNET OF PEOPLE AND PLACES...

Magazin' Art Winter 1999-2000

She smiles as she shows me her portfolio, evoking pleasant memories of the places and personalities she has painted. There's humour too in the titles Diane Brunet gives her works, often a sentence suggesting a story – funny, tender, affectionate, intriguing tales.

It's not surprising that she admits she might choose Pieter Bruegel as a model with his teeming scenes of everyday life. Ms. Brunet's paintings are modern in terms of action and technique (acrylic on textured canvas), but the subjects are universal, yes, akin to this Renaissance painter. "The scenes seem ordinary," she says. "I want people to smile, seeing themselves in them. My characters are always doing something, going somewhere, often embroiled in conversations".

Diane Brunet adds research and tenacity to her talent to achieve mastery and success. Outwardly calm, gentle and warm, she also adds well-organized discipline and puts in long hours. She's a professional who respects the art viewer. "People often remember the one bad painting rather than the many good ones", she says.

Always in quest of perfection, it was only at age 35 that Diane Brunet's professionalism led her to study painting and drawing formally at Concordia University, then at the Université de Montréal, ultimately earning a Bachelor's degree from the Université du Québec à Montréal. She has also taken silk-screening courses at Val David's Atelier de l'île. Her great appreciation goes out to Armand Tatossian who taught her so much in drawing and painting.

But this belated vocation had early roots. Her teachers at school often gave her the special task of creating decorative scenes for Christmas and other festivities. Leisure time would find her drawing; she loved to observe and depict the Montreal neighbourhood of her childhood around Saint-Urbain and

Duluth streets, of different cultures living together in harmony, a rich treasure of inspiration, with the shops and street corners of ordinary people.

She also grew up not far from Montreal's École des beaux-arts, an institution she ultimately attended, relinquishing a job in telecommunications to do so, following her star, so to speak. That was 13 years ago, and she delights in her choice. This joy shows up in the lively vignettes of her paintings – subjects straight from her memories of events past, from travels and youthful reminiscences, imaginary events nourished by keen observation. With a touch of nostalgia, she tosses an amused look at everyday life, the interplays of people and situations. Look closely, there's a lot happening here, interesting little creatures, details in touches and gestures, that Diane Brunet masterfully offers you, with a wit that lets you share her fun. **I**

Michel Beauchamp

