

'Emerging' from rearranged priorities

Although the title of Beverly Brown's exhibit at Canal Frame-Crafts Gallery in Washington Crossing, Pa., is "Emerging," she can in no way be called an emerging artist.

Brown has a bachelor of fine arts degree and studied architecture and graphic design for an additional three and a half years. She's been an architectural draftsman, art director and graphic designer.

What's "emerging" is her 3-year-old concentration in oil painting that has led her already to win six awards and earn a solo exhibition at the Pearl Buck International House.

In 2003, Brown was given first-place honors in the Canal Gallery's "Glimpse of History" juried show for her painting "Gathering of the Troops at McConkey's Ferry."

"The quality of her work spoke for itself and I knew I wanted to give her a show," says gallery owner Deborah Crow. "I've had her work here and wanted to expose people to her first, but now it was time to give her a show to let the world see what she can do."

Brown says she "rearranged my priorities" after 9/11.

"I called my mother and said 'Let's set up easels in the kitchen and let's paint together.' She came up and that's what we did. That was the first time I ever painted and I haven't stopped since."

Brown's mother, Sylvia Hopkins, painted for more than 70 years and studied with Frank Schoonover of the Brandywine school. She's now 91 and only recently has had to lay down her brush.

"I loved watercolors and thought I would do that, but decided to do oils so my mother could critique my paintings," says Brown. "Once I started, I never stopped. Now, I just can't imagine not doing it."

Brown is a plein air (painting directly from life) and a studio painter.

"Four or five of the paintings in this show were done almost completely plein air, but touched up a little bit in the studio," she says. "And I work from photographs if I've taken them myself, but usually it's a compilation of photographs."

The artist isn't concerned, however, with capturing her scenes exactly.



"Even when I'm working outside, I don't mind moving a tree," she says.

During the past year, she has been studying classical chiaroscuro lighting of the still life with Frank Arcuri and David Leffel.

"It's all about one source of light — more about light than color," she says. "I don't want to paint an object. I want to paint the light on whatever it's falling on."

That approach can be seen in "Brass Vase, Lemon and Pear," where one philodendron vine trails gracefully from a tall vase, leading the eye to a cut lemon, seeds and a golden pear, all of which seem illuminated.

In "Wine and Lime," a green-and-red apple and a cut lime stand with a heavy goblet filled with ruby red wine. Light falls on the goblet, throwing its shadow on the background. In "Honeydew Breakfast," a melon, blueberries and white, antique

pitcher glisten against a background that is a blend of all their hues.

Brown's love of painting light as it falls on an object is not limited to her still life paintings, however. In "Carolina Woods," a couple is walking hand-in-hand along a sun-dappled path through the woods. The light rests on the woman's blond hair and on the shoulders of the man's yellow shirt. Brown says she saw the couple coming and decided to photograph them as they passed through a spot of sunlight that was coming through the trees.

In "Spring Lake Girls," she captured the light as it danced in the moisture on the backs of two little girls who were playing on the water's edge.

Brown's landscape paintings lean more to the impressionistic style that she may have learned from her mother's work. You see that in "Eugenia's Farm," which portrays stone and weathered wood outbuildings, as well as trees in delicate spring bloom. Light picks up all the various textures and colors of the scene.



Still lifes and landscapes are featured in Beverly Brown's exhibit at Canal Frame-Crafts Gallery in Washington Crossing, Pa.

"Telluride Road" is somewhat more focused. It portrays a tiny, red-roofed house glistening in strong light that illuminates the majestic mountains that surround it.

"I like going back and forth," she says. "If I get too loose in a landscape, I don't feel I'm saying what I want to say. I like the balance. My still lifes will probably become looser."

"Every painting I do is a learning experience," she continues. "I'm happy when I'm learning and that's one of the things so

exciting about painting. In every single painting, you learn something new. Even though you've learned things that are basics, there are no rules and there is always a slightly different way of handling things."

Works by Beverly Brown will be on exhibition through Sept. 24 at Canal Frame-Crafts Gallery, 1093 General Greene Road, Washington Crossing, Pa. Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays; 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Thursdays. (215) 493-3660 or www.CanalFrame.com