

Art for Healing Foundation opens Ann McCall Gallery at General Hospital

By Martin C. Barry

Ann McCall (left) chats with long-time friend and fellow Westmount artist Catherine Young Bates at the Oct. 1 opening of the Ann McCall Gallery at the Montreal General Hospital. Photo: Martin C. Barry

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The Art for Healing Foundation, an organization that believes healing and art complement one another, has created an installation at the Montreal General Hospital, using more than 40 works painted by Westmount artist Ann McCall. The Ann McCall Gallery was inaugurated last Monday, Oct. 1, at the MGH's McGill Undergraduate Teaching Clinic of the Faculty of Dentistry.

The 41 prints, collographs and silkscreens that make up the collection, line the clinic hallway's walls. They are expected to have a positive impact the clinic's patients and staff.

McCall told The Examiner that the main dental clinic was named the McCall Dental Clinic in honour of her parents-in-law. Both had been doctors in Montreal. She and her husband, Dr. Storrs McCall, have been residents of Westmount for 33 years.

"It was put in, in their memory, she said of the clinic. "So I thought it was a very appropriate place for the works to go."



McCall met Earl Pinchuk and Gary Blair, the founders of Art for Healing, only recently. But she decided quickly that the concept the two developed — making use of art in clinical and hospital settings — was the right thing to do. "They've done many installations already in other hospitals," she said. "It was my idea to have it here ... I thought 'keep it all in the family.' Why not?"

Catherine Young Bates, another well-established Westmount artist who attended the event, said she was delighted to be there. "Ann and I have been friends for many years," she said. "She's a very, very fine precise printmaker. This is a celebration."

The Art for Healing Foundation was launched in 2002. Since then, they've created art galleries in 17 Montreal institutions and hospitals. The organization's collection includes more than 900 works of art.

"Art makes a difference in everybody's life," said Pinchuk. "For every project we've done, the before-and-after feeling in the department is like night and day. I think that's why these types of galleries have been so popular. Art enhances everything."

"We felt that there was a need in the medical system — that there wasn't enough visual stimulation around," he added. "We also know a lot of artists, Gary and myself, and we saw that there was a surplus of art. There are not enough places for artists to exhibit all the work they produce. So we thought let's marry the two together."

Dr. James Lund, Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry at McGill, said that after viewing examples of McCall's work, he concluded, "Clearly they were exactly the sort of art that you want to put on the wall of a waiting area in a clinic."

"They're very calming, the colours fit very well with the décor in the clinic," he added. "Our students love them and so do the patients. So clearly an excellent initiative. It was very generous of Ann and Storrs to donate the art and to pay for the installation."