

The nature of artistic inspiration

West Island artist Claudio D'Angelo featured in Bombardier exhibit

By Walter J. Lyng
The Suburban

Like many children, Claudio D'Angelo liked to draw. He was almost just as passionate about nature and all of its creatures. It was the marriage of these two interests which would go on to shape the rest of his life.

"I loved walking around the wood lots and fields around my childhood home," says the 56-year-old Pierrefonds resident. "I just had an affinity for it. It's kept me going all these years."

His hard work is now being reflected in an exhibit at the Yvonne L. Bombardier Cultural Centre in Valcourt entitled *An Instinct for Nature*. Also featuring the works of Mary S. Martin, the exhibit offers a retrospective of 60 paintings by D'Angelo.

"I had done a series of illustrations for a fellow who was publishing a book about a man who had gone thorough the process of saving these ducks," says D'Angelo. "His wife had urged me to submit my dossier to the Bombardier museum and I did that with not much expectation, as these things don't always come to fruition. Last summer, I got a call from them saying they were inter-



MAXIME PICARD PHOTO

Pierrefonds artist Claudio D'Angelo currently has a number of his nature-inspired paintings at the Yvonne L. Bombardier Cultural Centre in Valcourt.

ested in putting together and exhibition. I was delighted and I immediately jumped at it."

Over time, D'Angelo says he has refined his creative process. While the

initial source of inspiration has remained constant, his method of execution has varied.

"It's usually an amalgam of a number of experiences," he says. "I like to spend

as much time as possible just wandering fields and forests. I never set out with any pre-determined goal in mind. I just go out there and soak in whatever strikes my fancy.

"I might take note of a particular scene or see an animal doing something unusual. And I'll just store it away. Usually, the thing that triggers the painting is the landscape because the landscape is integral."

Often getting the star treatment in many of his works, the animals featured in D'Angelo's paintings are depicted in poses determined by the artist.

"I've become familiar with quite a few of the animals in the sense that I have a good enough understanding of how the anatomy works," he says. "I really don't rely on photographs. More often than not, the animal won't be doing the thing you want it to be doing."

While he has been featured in other shows, D'Angelo says he is especially satisfied with the presentation of the current exhibit, running until April 29.

"They did an exceptionally good job of putting it together," he says. "I was really impressed with the professionalism."

For more information, visit www.centreculturelbombardier.com