

Nottawasaga Handweavers and Spinners debut exhibit two years in the making

The scenes contained on the richly woven tapestries hanging in the Gibson Centre Art Gallery may not always be revealed at first glance. And that's the beauty of this artwork.

After two years of detailed craftsmanship, the Nottawasaga Handweavers and Spinners Guild have placed their work on display and are invited the public to visit the gallery and see the display.

Called Community Threads, the project features 12 woven panels each composed of four scenes depicting the history and culture of New Tecumseth.

Some panels contain scenes that may be instantly recognizable to anyone who lives in the area, while others contain snippets of a larger picture and it takes a moment to realize exactly what you are seeing.

The project began in July 2011, under the artistic guidance of tapestry artist Line Dufour with financial support from the Ontario Arts Council.

Prior to the actual process of weaving, the Guild members spent countless hours taking photos around the community, painting the designs, and working with the yarn so colours would blend appropriately into the designs.

"We began in July of 2011, but the application process and thought process started even before that," said Guild president Betty Cerar. "It was always part of the idea that somehow it's got to move around," she said of the display. "It's part of the community, all the images come from the community, it's got to go back out to the community. Where it's going to end up, we don't know yet."

A visit to the third floor of the Gibson Centre when the weavers are working is step back in time to when hand weaving was the only way this type of work was produced.

The Guild members are meticulous in their craft and passionate about their work.

The exhibit has already been booked to be shown at the Dufferin County Museum and Archives as part of the Stitches Across Time exhibit to open in 2014.

The Guild debuted their work at an opening reception at the Gibson Centre on Sunday, October 27.

In addition to viewing the finished tapestries, Guild members gave a demonstration on a loom as they worked on pieces still to be completed.

The exhibit will be on display in the art gallery at the Gibson Centre in Alliston through to November 27. Admission is free.

By Brain Lockhart