

# ART & ANTIQUES

## Edwina Brennan's work looks on the bright side

### Mainly Art

By TARA LYNN JOHNSON

Times are tough and people are down, but some find happiness every day. Artist Edwina Brennan is one of those people, because she paints.

Brennan, of Phoenixville, spends time every day in her studio near Norristown doing what she loves and needs to do - create. She started years ago as a landscape painter, enjoying plein air painting. When she got tired of dragging her equipment outside to do her landscapes, she moved indoors. She painted bicycles for

a while - loose interpretations of them. Her work has become more abstract through the years, capturing feelings more than exact details of objects.

Now she paints what she calls contemporary "gestural abstracts" - she uses oil sticks and paint, palette knives, charcoal and pencils to create marks going in all different directions, with thin and thick textures.

"They're not dark or moody. They're joyous," she said. "There's a lot of motion in my painting. It's dynamic. I do my exercises and my painting."

She's always on the move and always creating. And her works from the past year or so are displayed at Rosemont's Lawrence

Gallery in an exhibit called *Drawing Extended: New Works on Paper* through Dec. 4.

She's always been creative and interested in crafts. After the youngest of her three sons went to kindergarten, she decided to focus on her art more fully and went back to school. She earned her B.F.A. from Rosemont then attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

She's learned a lot, too, just honing her craft day after day. She decided to get studio space outside her house because she's a "sloppy painter" and there are too many distractions at home - the phone, the laundry. The thing she likes most about being at her studio is enjoying the company of

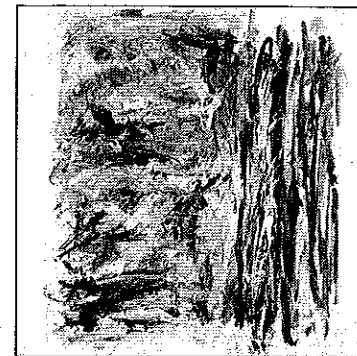
artists. More than 20 work in the same building. They provide friendship and support. They appreciate one another's ideas, she said.

For Brennan, art is all-consuming. "I'm not happy if I have a couple of days where I can't get to my studio," she said.

So she makes it a priority, as are her five grandchildren. And when they visit, she encourages their creativity. She allows them to use her watercolor crayons to create, and she encourages the kids to color outside the lines.

"It's rigid, those coloring books," she said. "You need to be free and paint your own landscape."

She encourages viewers, too, to



Abstract by Edwina Brennan

draw inspiration and find something worthwhile in her exhibited works.

"I hope people find happiness," she said.

### Coming soon:

**Main Line Antiques Show** (610-647-8632, [www.mlas.org](http://www.mlas.org)): Nov. 22-23, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., *Invest in the Past, Save the Future*, held at Valley Forge Military Academy, Wayne; benefits Surrey Services; preview party Nov. 21, 6 - 9 p.m..

**Main Line Art Center**, Old Buck Lane, Haverford (610-525-0272, [www.mainlineart.org](http://www.mainlineart.org)): *Fifth Annual Betsy Meyer Memorial Exhibition*.

4668): Painter Hal Robinson presents *Floral Metaphors*, through Nov. 30.

**The Gallery at Cedar Hollow**, 2447 Yellow Springs Road, Malvern (610-640-2787): through Dec. 30, Holiday Craft Boutique Show.

**MCGOPA**, SSP Galleries, Inquirer Building, Conshohocken (610-292-6048, [www.mcgopa.org](http://www.mcgopa.org)): *Reflections by Artists*, paintings, sculpture, mixed media, through Jan. 3, 2009; Holiday Art Show, Nov. 22 - Jan. 3; Artists'

**Haverford College's Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery**, 370 Lancaster Ave., Haverford (610-896-1287, [mcalina@Haverford.edu](mailto:mcalina@Haverford.edu)): *American Horizons: The Photographs of Art Sinsabaugh*, through Dec. 14; Sharpless Gallery, Magill Library, Sat. Nov. 22, 2 p.m., "On the Horizon: Iconography of Place in Art Sinsabaugh's Landscapes," with Nanette Esbeck Brewer

**Lankenau Institute for Medical Research**, 100 Lancaster Ave.,

Pottstown Pike, West Chester ([www.fineartspeople.com](http://www.fineartspeople.com)): Exhibition of works from Delaware Valley Art League, through Nov. 29.

**Paoli Hospital Cancer Center**, 255 W. Lancaster Ave., Paoli (610-696-8211, [pam@chescofc.org](mailto:pam@chescofc.org)): Art show to benefit the Drew Porter Memorial Fund, which aids kidney dialysis patients, through Nov. 30 weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**West Chester University's McGinney**

and Long Galleries, Mitchell Hall, Church and Sharpless streets, West Chester (610-642-4243, [dianeharkart@aol.com](mailto:dianeharkart@aol.com)): Philadelphia Watercolor Society's 108th Anniversary International Exhibition of Works on Paper; through Dec. 19.

**St. Joseph's University Gallery**, 5600 City Ave., Overbrook (610-660-3240, [pallen01@sju.edu](mailto:pallen01@sju.edu)): *Allegations of Use*, sculptures by Ephraim Russell, through Dec. 12.