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Artist Mairi Budreau earns worldwide attention

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APRIL 29, 2013

For years, painter Mairi Budreau struggled to make a living with her art.

That's all about to change as a series of paintings about prominent area residents and an exhibit of nude portraits have earned Budreau national and international attention.

"I was trying to make a go of it. It's hard work," Budreau said of pursuing her passion.

Her exhibit of local personalities, Walks of Life, opens Oct. 3 at the Old Courthouse Gallery on Seymour Street West while a collection of nudes is scheduled to show at the Agora Gallery in Chelsea, N.Y., on Oct. 4.

Adding to Budreau's excitement is a feature article about her work and the Walks of Life exhibit that will appear in Arabella, a Canadian art magazine.

"It's a strong magazine," she said, adding the four annual editions are 400 pages in length. The article about her numbers 16 pages.

Neither the article, nor the opportunity to show her acrylic paintings internationally, would have been possible without the Walks of Life exhibit and her website, she said.

"I did a few portraits," she said. "Then I thought 'I really want to do something with this.'"

She decided to create an exhibition of well-known Kamloopsians. Budreau compiled a list of people she wanted to paint and made some cold calls, with much success.

There will be 13 portraits, about half of which are complete. Retired NHL star March Recchi, Kamloops Symphony Orchestra conductor Bruce Dunn, meteorologist Mark Madryga and Tk'emlups Chief Shane Gottfriedson are among the featured residents.

There's a whole page on her website, www.budreau.ca, dedicated to the exhibit. She said the magazine and the Agora Gallery contacted her after seeing the website.

"I didn't think that I was ready for New York," said Budreau, adding Agora seeks emerging artists.

Budreau has started doing commission work because of the attention. To contact her, visit budreau.ca.

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