

Hobby takes off for local artist

BY SHEENA BOLTON
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Colour and patterns in everyday life are the inspirations behind Laura Mindorff's silk-screen paintings.

"I would describe them as a burst of colour," she said. "They're pattern based designs and I would describe them as very retro — that's where I got the whole mod business name because it's also a play on words since my last name is Mindorff so it's Mindorff Original Deigns. They are very retro, very modern, funky, trendy, colourful pattern designs."

One thing that makes mod paintings special is that they can be completely customized to the buyer's preference. Just choose a design you like and then Ms. Mindorff will paint it in whatever colour scheme you like in whatever size.

"It's really just a hobby. I just started maybe three or four years ago," she

said. "It started out as a little experiment where I wanted to do a little bit of colour coordination so I painted a couple canvases and then matched it with some candles and pillows and coasters and things and showed it to a couple of friends and they thought it was a really cool idea. Then the canvas designs are what really took off and what grabbed peoples interest."

Ms. Mindorff's workshop and studio is in her house in Barrhaven.

"I have a little gallery in my living room," she said. "Because of my full time job and I'm a mother of three kids this really is just a hobby right now. I just don't have the time to be able to promote myself but I would love to get my things in more stores and I would love to take a step further and try and promote to hotel chains as well and model home contractors for to decorate the model homes, so more of the commercial side."

Ms. Mindorff has two

nine-year-old twin sons and another two-year-old boy. She grew up in Blackburn Hamlet and has always been artsy.

"I have always really loved colour — that's the biggest thing with my art. It's the easiest thing that I could find where I could transfer my love for colour and design to share with other people, says the girl with the pink hair," said Ms. Mindorff with a laugh.

Her most popular designs are facial portraits she has done some of model Twiggy and the Dalai Lama.

"I think the faces are the most popular designs, but it really I find with my art it appeals to such a wide variety of people," she said. "I have a lot of tweens, the younger generation of girls, who really like it and their parents really like it. I try to expand my portfolio so I have designs that attract men and women, kids and adults."

To create the face designs she takes a photograph and



The silk-screen paintings of Ottawa's Laura Mindorff, an example of which is seen below, are receiving national attention.



manipulates it in a graphic design program and then paints it. She is also willing to use personal photos provided by a customer.

"That seems to be something people are getting a lot more interested in," the artist said. "The whole pop art thing is becoming very popular."

The best way to purchase a painting is to e-mail Ms. Mindorff from her Web site, www.modartwork.com. Her work has been showcased on a recent episode of From the Ground Up.

"The dorm rooms that all the contestants lives in, my art was spread around the house, so that was pretty cool. It was on Global television and it was really exciting to see my stuff on TV," she said. "I'm happy to do it, I'm happy that people love it as much as I do. It just makes me so happy when I think of a design and I paint it and I display it and I see complete strangers say, 'Oh My God I love that that's the best feeling in the world.'"

In the distant future she would like to create more

colours coordination's to go along with her paintings.

She says her children are her biggest fans. Her inspirations come from everyday items.

"I get inspired by greeting cards, or scrap booking paper, or basically anything that involved colour," said Ms. Mindorff. "Like fashion magazines or this wood table, I want to do a design on top of wood grain, anything I see. I'm always kind of in my head looking around for something that inspires me."

Police Services Board to improve communication

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OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES

At their regular meeting on Dec. 17, the Ottawa Police Services Board undertook to improve communications with the public and city councillors on issues such as the annual budget.

The board's commitment was made after it received clarification from Chief of Police Vern White on some issues associated with the Ottawa Police Service's 2008 budget that arose during council's review earlier in December.

The chief said recent service growth has been the result of a comprehensive staffing plan, the Strategic Staffing Initiative that saw the police service grow by 206 members from 2002 to 2006. Over 80% of those new members are directly linked to operational components made up of Patrol Services, Emergency Operations, Criminal Investigative Services and services that directly support the provision of front line policing.

Staffing increases have

enabled the creation or enhancement of units such as drugs, partner assault, sexual assault and child abuse, youth services, diversity and race relations, and more.

After careful scrutiny that began in June of this year and continued until November, when the board approved the budget, it is satisfied that the increase is necessary to be able to continue to deliver the quality policing services that residents of Ottawa expect, to repair and replace key operational infrastructure such as mobile radios and in-car computers

—which serve as a mobile office and are essential for front line policing — and to implement service improvements identified as priorities in the 2007 – 2009 Business Plan.

The Board is currently working on a community engagement strategy intended to improve public education and increase input on the issues that confront the Board and Police Service in ensuring the provision of quality policing services. The new strategy will also provide an opportunity to improve communications to elected officials and the public.

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