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Doug Andrews - The Artist

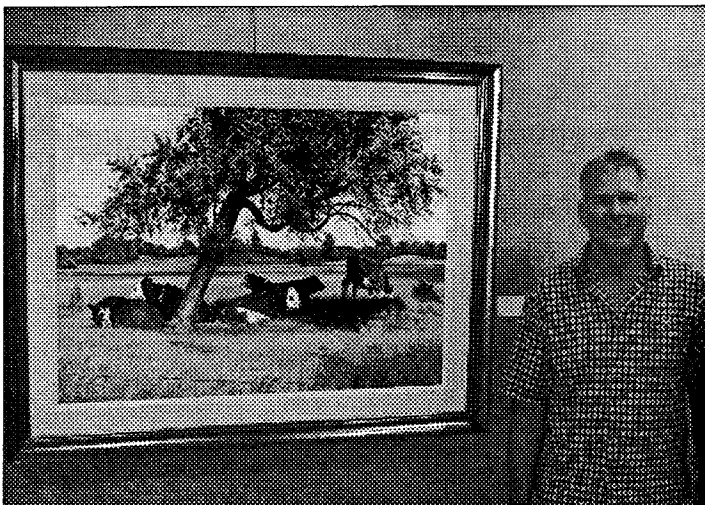
by Nan Peacocke

Doug Andrews paints landscapes, but not the tally-ho kind. You won't find stately mansions, booted grooms and hungry hounds in his work. He paints the spirits living in the lands of Kawartha. As we go about our everyday life, you and I glimpse these spirits sometimes – moving behind the cool shadows of woods or pelting us with river sunlight.

Stand still in Doug's gallery. The spirits look back. They're all around connecting the land outside to the place within – water lilies on the pond over the fence, indifferent cows chewing in the shade. Here's a scene on the Indian River above the Warsaw Back Dam. It's July now, but this one's the back lane on Ander-Vale Farm in winter.

"Some will look at my work and say, 'He's just recording'; and it is a record but that's not all it is" he tells me. Doug is himself a living record of the connection between Ontario's settler history and the land that was the basis of a farming economy now in decline. "I have thankfully inherited that total comfort zone with farming".

His grandmother was the person who connected the young Doug with his "real love of green and of growing stuff". "Farmers and farm wives work from before daylight till dusk – exhausting work, but the glass was always half full with her. She made time for household things – creative things. She kept a flower garden and created an environment that was more than half full". His mother, who also paints, encouraged his artistic ability.



He's a roots man. He has a green thumb on the hand in which he holds his paintbrush.

Out of nowhere he brings up the subject of Iraq. "It's impossible to put myself in that circumstance, but I may even still try to paint nooks and crannies where life is still, where creation is still going on. Being the way I am I wouldn't paint the war zone, the buildings torn apart, the dead. I don't know if that's hiding your head in the sand, or creating an image of hope but I would like to think that there was hope. That's probably why I paint landscapes."

Doug Andrews of the Society of Canadian Artists won 'best in show' for his painting 'Any Day Now' in an exhibition called "A Sense of Place – Artwork from Coast to Coast" held at the Leighton Art Centre and Museum, Calgary, Alberta. (See DN Issue 166 June 07)