

Best Kept Secret

By Eileen Durand

Old Ottawa South resident, Catherine O'Grady, stumbled across one of the city's best-kept secrets the day she walked into the Ottawa Art Gallery's Art Rental and Sales. There, she found a rich offering of art by the best established and emerging artists living within 200 kilometres of Ottawa. The friendly staff readily took her on a tour of the works hanging from floor-to-ceiling in the attractive gallery, just inside the front doors of the Arts Court building, at 2 Daly Street in Ottawa. Further paintings were drawn out of the accessible storage bins for her consideration.

Ms. O'Grady, who is the Executive Director of the Ottawa Jazz Festival, was most impressed with the quality of the works which were on display and all selected through a jury process. She was also excited by the variety of styles and of subject matters, ranging from figurative pieces, to landscapes, still lifes and abstract works. A small but engaging collection of ceramics also caught her eye. Catherine never dreamed that she could hang an original work of art in her home for as little as \$20 a month. The affordability matched with the quality of the art convinced her to leave the gallery with a painting in her possession. That was last autumn. Now, O'Grady has become a regular client of Art Rental and Sales, which is the premier source of art rental in Ottawa. She has found that the free and informed consultation service offered by the gallery has facilitated her choices.

"I think that it is a marvellous experience for the whole family, including my children, who have since become more interested in art and now often accompany me to the gallery to select our newest art piece. Everyone in the family likes the flexibility of the service, which enables us to change the works hanging on our walls as often as every month, if



desired. It's a good way to discover our own tastes," says O'Grady. Like many clients, Catherine and her children may fall so in love with a painting that they will not be able to let it go. If this happens, three months' rental fee can be put towards the purchase of the work.

For O'Grady, who is conscious of the current trend to buy local, it's important to support artists from the Ottawa region. In doing so, she feels she's making an important contribution to the vitality of the local arts scene.

All in all, O'Grady has found that renting art

work has enriched the life of her family. "Renting art opens your mind and makes you look at things differently. It's a brilliant opportunity and a secret to be discovered!" she says.

The Art Rental and Sales Service of the Ottawa Art Gallery is located at 2 Daly Avenue, Arts Court Building, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6E2, Tel: 613-233-8865 Fax: 613-569-7660, Hours: Tuesday to Friday--- 11am to 5pm, Saturday ---12pm to 4pm