

Artist celebrates her passage of time

What: “A Passage of Time: Works of Barbara Zimmerman”

Where: Creative 360 (formerly Creative Spirit Center) at 1517 Bayliss in Midland

When: Friday, Nov. 13, through Wednesday, Dec. 23. Opening reception with the artist from 7-8:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 13. Exhibit hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays

Cost: Free

For more information: Call (989) 837-1885 or visit www.becreative360.org

Midland -- It took Barbara Zimmerman decades to realize her childhood dream of becoming a working artist.

But now the 78-year-old Midland resident is making up for lost time.

Opening Friday, Nov. 13, at Midland’s Creative 360 (formerly Creative Spirit Center), 1517 Bayliss, “A Passage of Time: Works of Barbara Zimmerman” will feature 40 watercolor and acrylic works spanning nearly 20 years.

“A lot of people call shows like this a retrospective,” says Zimmerman, “but to me that sounds like you are dead. And I am not dead yet.”

As Zimmerman, a Detroit native, explains it, she was an avid artist all through her elementary and secondary school years, often drawing in her textbooks. She wanted to go to art school after she graduated, “but my parents couldn’t afford it back there in 1949. They wanted me to get a job.

“Besides, there were very few jobs for women artists. It was a man’s world. If a woman got hired at a graphic design company, it was as a secretary.”

Over the years Zimmerman married, raised two children and worked a variety of jobs -- for an advertising agency, Detroit Edison, banks, and lastly as a cashier at Kroger’s, retiring in 1983.

“When I retired I said now I am going to do what I have wanted to do for 40 years.”

She began taking community art classes and workshops in Midland, where she has lived for 54 years; many times studying with nationally known artists, she says.

So what will people see at the Midland show?

“I’ve never locked myself into one thing. I paint what I like - cats, lots of cats; women, like my daughter and daughter-in-law, as goddesses; some flowers, and lighthouses, which are a dying breed. No barns.

“But I also like very very modern abstracts, like Jackson Pollock does. With some of my pieces the paint is squirted on, thrown on, dripped on.

“For me the journey is more fun than the destination. I like to experiment. I am a colorist in all I do, however. Color is my main thing.”

And the sizes of the works range from small (18- to 24-inch) to a massive one, called “Blood Line,” which is 4 feet by 5 feet. “I hope people look at it,” she says of the latter, “and drop their jaws.”

Zimmerman paints at least two days a week -- one of them with a group of friends -- except in the summer, she she is at work in a large garden. She also is active in the Midland Artists Guild and Michigan Watercolor Society.

Her husband died in 2008, and for the 14 years before that she tended to him after he was disabled by a stroke. Now, she says, she is considering returning to a summertime week-long painting workshop in the Traverse City area -- where all the art is painted outdoors on location.

“I enjoy art a great deal. Through it my brain feels like I am a teen-ager even though I have the body of crone.”

On Friday, Nov. 13, Zimmerman will attend the opening reception from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. During that reception, Creative 360 will bestow its annual Art Angel award to Patricia Smith.

The award is given to a mid-Michigan artist/educator who has benefitted young people. Smith taught at in the Midland Public Schools for 36 years and now teaches art at the Midland Center for the Arts. Zimmerman was once of her pupils.

Gallery hours at Creative 360 are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Admission is free.

About Creative 360

Creative 360, formerly known as Creative Spirit Center, is a not-for-profit community arts and wellness organization founded in 1994. The Center's mission

is to create an environment for people of all ages to experience the creative process through ongoing classes, art exhibits, events, concerts, speakers and outreach programs; and its goal is to enhance the development of physical, mental and spiritual wellness through the arts and humanities. Visit www.becreative360.org for more information about the fall roster at Creative 360, or call (989) 837-1885 to request a mailed copy.

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