

Art gallery brings Power to the People

By Joanne Oostveen - The Weekly News

The Craig Gallery at Dartmouth's Alderney Landing is now featuring an exhibit that provides a peek into the lives of people from our province. And what you see is not always what you would expect.

The People of Nova Scotia is a collection of paintings by local artist Zehava Power. Her work is clear and bold with a unique way of portraying the lives of those who live here.

Her aim was to capture the gestures and moods of those she

paints while using flamboyant use of colour and communicating the sense of joy that she finds in the everyday. And she hits the mark every time.

"I took photos of people with a zoom lens and then used them as references for my paintings. I wanted genuine people who didn't pose for the pictures. It was a way of really seizing the moment of expression and life."

You can tell that Power is inspired by the diverse culture of Nova Scotia. With her loose interpretation of those at work she does justice to a coal miner and brings focus to her painting of people running in the waves. Simple themes seem brilliant and new all over again.

What makes her work especially exciting is that she doesn't pretend to be perfect. The faces are blurred but it could be your neighbour. The colours are unusual in places — but seem just right.

"You don't have to be a connoisseur to like my work. These paintings are for everyone. In fact, if someone has never been to an art gallery before this is the perfect time to come. My work suits everybody. It is real."

Power is a self-taught artist who was born and raised in Israel. She said the mild temperatures of the Mediterranean gave her the ability to know how to pause and observe the world. About seven years ago, she began to



ZEHAVA POWER: Paints Nova Scotians in their everyday lives.

paint murals for homes and businesses. But painting people in their daily activities is what makes her happy, she said.

In addition to her studio work Power also paints in annual events such as Paint the Town and Paint Sea on Site. She also painted a lobster form for the Abilities Foundations

Fundraiser and donated proceeds from her work to the AIDS Coalition and the Mental Health Foundation.

Ruby Joyce Fowler, Power's artistic mentor, advised her to have an exhibition so her talent would not remain hidden.

"Her paintings are alive. They speak to everyone," Fowler said.