

Jada Doucette has a real love for all things art



By Constance Scrafield

Starting her professional life as a graphic designer and illustrator, working for a print company where she was careful about deadlines and caught in art work that was not necessarily creative, Jada Doucette was ready to do more.

‘When I had my daughter,’ she said, ‘I ended up taking a break from that. I wanted to have a hands-on relationship with my daughter.

‘I did some lessons with Sharon Wadsworth Smith ? she got me back. I was doing portraits ? then, started teaching in my own home. So, I’m an artist and a teacher, ‘though I’m doing a lot more teaching now.’

She said, ‘I do sell graphic art; it is work on the computer making logos, branding, I help companies with design. I like the rawness of working with new material, getting dirty. I helped with RJ’s Taste of Asia (on Orangeville’s Mill Street), helped with their branding, designed their menus and hand painted their sign out side and it was fun doing it.

‘I helped them with their first restaurant too ? Illustrating. I like doing all of it. They’re such nice people.

‘I haven’t taken a new client [for graphic work] except for RJ’s ? they cater to everybody and I thought I can have fun with that.’

Ms. Doucette’s roots are back at Wasaga Beach, and at high school in Rexdale, in Toronto.

‘Then I came to Orangeville. I love hanging out with kids ? helping them find their voices in art.’

Growing up in Wasaga with her family, she commented, ‘I don’t think there was ever a time I wasn’t going to be an artist. My posters won prizes. My grandparents would get all these different materials for me to work with. My family were a huge influence.

‘As a kid, the first artist I recognized was Robert Bateman ? everything so real and perfect in his paintings. Then, there were the Impressionists and later the Surrealists, who just threw out all the rules. Not that I want to be a surrealist.’

Because Ms. Doucette spent her teen years in Rexdale going to high school, she came to consider that ‘Rexdale is kind of a neat community. I have a lot of friends I met at high school and they have a lot of pride coming from Rexdale. I went from a sheltered town into the big city; I met such a mix of people.’

It was in Rexdale where Ms. Doucette met her husband, to whom she has been married 11 years and from where the two of them came to live in Orangeville.

‘He’s a millwright,’ she told us. ‘carving things out wood, working with metals. We work well together.’

A lover of art history, she noted: ‘Before the impressionists, there was no photography so artists had to create the world as it was. It had to be [a reflection of] what there was. But, during the industrial revolution, photography [was invented] so, artists could interpret.’

She said of her arts lessons, ‘When I teach, I teach art history ... that is my mission when I do art lessons in the Maples school, to teach them art really but also to let students know where it all comes from.’

Ms. Doucette runs art programs at Maples for those students in grades one to eight. ‘I am so busy, I’m only going once in a blue moon to teach kindergarten.’

A large portion of Ms. Doucette’s working life takes place at the Pottery Party shop on Mill Street, where she has a studio space that she rents for the purpose of her summertime art camps, workshops, lessons. She has partnered with the owner of Pottery Party so that, what was once a couple of days a week, is now much more involved.

?We have different skills,? she remarked, ?so, we help each other along the way, seven years this September.?

The Community Living Dufferin (CLD) program, Options, is another of Ms. Doucette's places of involvement, in that she teaches art there too. During her teaching there, she met Sarah Godfrey, whose art work impressed her very much, as did her willingness to learn.

Sarah Godfrey is showing her art, along with her guest artist, Nathan Gatten, in a show called Sadie's Showcase, next weekend at the Alton Mill Arts Centre, from August 8 to 12.

Said Ms. Doucette about the upcoming show, ?I'm so proud of her.?

As for ambition, Ms. Doucette was content to admit, ?I think at this point, I'm here for now. I have been looking at the future and I want to do in the future is have my own gallery.

?I am planning to get my art history degree on line through Georgian College. It always bugged me that I didn't go after that degree.

?I have been looking at playing with textile. I want to come up with my own style, my own voice on the canvas.?

Meanwhile, as she is busy with her present day, she avers, ?I get to do what I want pretty much full time.?

For a view of her work and notices about her camps, workshops and other programs, you can discover it all at www.artwithjada.ca.