

Peter Goetz



Peter Goetz was 71-years-old when he said, “Painting is my life. It’s the most satisfying, happy experience there is.” Like a child bursting forth to greet a summer morning, Goetz explained that he still anxiously awaited the start of every day so that he could paint.

Goetz had long since distinguished himself internationally as a watercolourist. His paintings were exhibited at La Scala Gallery in Florence, Italy; the Tokyo National Gallery; and the Rotunda Gallery in London, England. However, it was the sheer pleasure of playing with colour that brought him back to his passion every day.

It was 1966 when Goetz, a married man with two children, walked into the offices of B.F. Goodrich and announced that he was quitting his job. He decided to leave his accounting position because it was taking too much away from his painting.

Goetz was born in Slavgorod, Russia in 1917 and his Mennonite family moved to the Kitchener-Waterloo area when he was eleven years old. His father, a labourer who helped construct the Westmount Golf and Country Club, became the greenskeeper while Goetz attended high school at Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate Institute.

He moved on to Waterloo College, now Wilfrid Laurier University. He took night courses at the Doon School of Fine Art and studied with the famed Group of Seven artist F.H. Varley.

He took an accounting job during the Depression because he couldn’t survive on his paintings alone. Goetz said that the day he quit his accounting job was the happiest day of his life.

Goetz’s style is impressionism and is distinguished by the intensity of colour and contrasts. “I use yellow more than any other colour and green is the colour I like least. I hate painting in the summer because all you see is green.” The early spring was his favourite time to paint.

“What is bleak to some people is beautiful and paintable to me,” he said.

Goetz, who sold only originals of his work, painted scenes from many countries. He went on an around-the-world trip in addition to making separate visits to Russia, Portugal, Spain, Mexico, California and the Far East.

Some of his local works include everything from the former Seagram Museum to the Waterloo train station and the Waterloo Hotel. In 2000, Goetz donated a series of twenty-eight of his watercolour paintings to the Waterloo City Hall. He had previously donated forty-five paintings in 1987.

One of his paintings resides in Windsor Castle after being gifted to Queen Elizabeth II.

Locally, his work can be seen at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery and at the Universities of Guelph, Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier.

Peter Goetz died on August 28, 2007, having almost reached the age of 90.

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