

Art is Life at Senior Exhibit

By Patricia Hannan



A special group of artists from the Jewish Association Serving the Aging's Brookdale Village Senior Center. Photos by Patricia Hannan

Seventeen senior artists showcased their creative works to the community on June 10, hoping to prove that their hands and minds are more fine-tuned than ever.

The free arts and crafts show took place at the Jewish Association Serving the Aging's Brookdale Village Senior Center in Far Rockaway.

Paintings, sculptures, jewelry, knitting, dolls, ceramics and model battleships were on view to the public, with light refreshments served, thanks to generous funding provided by Project Director Linda Solomon, Councilman Donovan Richards, Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, Assemblyman Phil Goldfeder, and the New York City Department for the Aging.

“(Councilman) Donovan Richards showed up today and he loved it,” Solomon told The Wave.

She holds this art show twice a year, in the summer and fall, bringing together a cross-section of capabilities among the seniors.



More examples of the fine work by the JASA seniors.

The idea, Solomon recalled, began four years ago with only 10 participants and now it is up to 17, saying it continues to get bigger and better every year. Easels, and walls that were lined to their fullest, displayed a variety of moods in oil and watercolor paintings, adding to larger than life mural that was painted by the center's original residents 30 years ago.

Izabella Gutman hung a series of playful and colorful caricatures. Marie Myers' painting showed a palm tree with coconuts against a bright sky. The art show managers, Ludmila Vaynberg and Raymond Daughtry, are passionate advocates for their colleagues, and share a special bond through that joint responsibility.

Vaynberg points to her portrait of Daughtry, a spitting image of him with a calm, contemplative expression in neutral colors. Her other paintings show bright nature scenes: a field of purple flowers, a tree-lined walking path scattered with birds on a misty day.



Ludmila Vaynberg's portrait of fellow collaborator Raymond Daughtry was noted by many to be especially lifelike.

"The whole idea behind this [art show] is to elicit dormant talent, to provide these seniors with a stimulant and nourishment," Daughtry said. "For some, it's a reason to wake up in the morning, to be alive, and to

become creative, as opposed to watching television. Why fade away when we don't have to? We're 70 and 80 years young.

This gives us a chance to do what we want, comfortably and happily." Vaynberg had her work exhibited at the Rockaway Artists Alliance two years ago and has expressed the desire for her group to attend RAA events and possibly have their work exhibited there.

Daughtry mentions that his wife, Marva, made a handful of small dolls, dressed in both modern and traditional African dresses, complete with jewelry and accessories. He explained about his tables of historical ships, like the Richelieu model, built in a 1:200 scale.

"These all take me between a year and a year and a half to make," said Daughtry, who provided an extensive, museum-like operational history of the ship's service. The Richelieu came into the East River in 1943 straight to the New York Navy Yard for repairs and modernization.

"They're a strong, cultured group," said Solomon, adding that people like Gutman and Vaynberg are in the first floor art room five days a week, from nine to five, and that they'd sleep there if they could.

Vaynberg agrees, "It's my life. I can't imagine life without it, and that's not an exaggeration."