

TWO ARTISTS' ENDURING CREATIVITY

Joan Gold: 'A Joyful 80' in art and life

"A Joyful Eighty" describes Joan Gold's art and life. It's also the title of an exhibit of new paintings by the artist that is on display at the Humboldt State University's First Street Gallery through Sept. 7.

The colorful exhibit of abstract work offers visitors a comprehensive experience of the artist's work in her 80th year. On Saturday, Aug. 16, Joan will give a free talk and tour at 3 p.m. at the gallery at 422 Second St. in Eureka.

"I never thought being old could be such a good time," Joan said. "It's one of the best times of my life. I'm in good health. I'm well taken care of. I can go to my studio every day and paint and make my world. So, of course, I'm full of joy."

In her art, Joan draws from life experiences to

create layered, vibrant, colorful compositions that elicit joy, balance, harmony, beauty and serenity.

One of her inspirations was the basement playroom she shared with her brother when she a child. Her mother covered the unfinished walls with wallpaper samples given by a neighbor. It was a cacophony of stripes, paisleys, plaids and flowers.

Joan remembers her mother working in the kitchen upstairs, and her father in his shop in another part of the basement. It seemed, she recalled, "the safest place in the world."

"The joy I find in painting patterns, textures, stripes and flowers and putting them together, plus the pleasure of working with color, comes from that early experience when all was right with the world."

Joan says her need to create a safe place dates to the 1940s, when she became aware of the violent impact that World War II and the Holocaust had on humanity. Following the artist's path, she discovered, helped steady her soul.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Joan began taking art classes in high school and then earned a scholarship to the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in Manhattan. She continued her studies at the Brooklyn Museum, which was followed by a fellowship to study painting at the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Caracas, Venezuela.

Settling in Caracas, she married and raised her four children while working as an associate professor at the Universidad Metropolitana. In 1979, she re-settled with her children on the North Coast. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally.

Humboldt State University student Elisa Griego-Martinez and Senior News Editor Kathy Dillon contributed to this article.

Joan Gold (left) stands by samples of her work. Julia Bednar (below) was recently honored by the Redwood Art Association.

