

O'Neil gallery on display at cancer hospital

BY NORA CHAN
STAFF WRITER

Chapel Hill resident Elaine O'Neil didn't know her textile career would take her from crafting curtains and tents to giraffes and barbecue huts.

"I thought I would be designing fabrics," said O'Neil, who once expected she'd use her textile design degree in a career in New York. "Things happen in life with getting married and having children."

But when a friend with a gallery invited O'Neil to make a few pieces for an upcoming art show, she found a talent for turning fabrics into masterpieces.

"I did a couple pieces with textiles, and they all sold in the opening reception," she said. "That was kind of a nice way to say, 'Hey maybe I

can make a career of this.'"

O'Neil calls her work textile collage, and she creates her pieces by layering fabric with different textures, colors and shapes.

"Like a painter uses paint, I use fabric and thread and my sewing machine," O'Neil said.

O'Neil's work now brightens the walls of the N.C. Cancer Hospital as a permanent installation. Her 12 pieces were installed in the hospital at a ceremony Jan. 21 in memory of a man treated there.

"It started as this fundraising project for the cancer hospital, and it ended up as kind of a dedication or a celebration of somebody's life," she said.

The pieces, which depict images like the Tobacco Road rivalry, NASCAR and the Durham Bulls

Athletic Park, were originally created for a 2011 calendar sold to benefit the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center.

In September, Carolyn Goldfinch saw O'Neil's pieces and expressed interest in keeping them as a collection in honor of her husband, John, who passed away of pancreatic cancer.

Goldfinch and O'Neil were neighbors, and O'Neil said she knew Goldfinch's husband well.

"It was kind of serendipitous the way it worked," O'Neil said.

Goldfinch approached Debbie Dibbert, director of external affairs at the cancer center, asking to make a gift for the art.

With help from family and friends, Goldfinch purchased the pieces and donated them to the

hospital.

"The calendar almost doesn't do justice to her pieces because you can't see the fabric, and you can't see the detail," Dibbert said. "If you can really get up next to it, you can see how intricate they really are and the amount of creativity and the effort that has gone into these pieces."

O'Neil said depicting memories is a common theme in her work, and many of her pieces illustrate scenes from Chapel Hill and UNC.

"A lot of my work focuses around a sense of place, where good things and happy memories have happened," O'Neil said. "When you're in the cancer hospital, you need to think about those happy times too."

Contact the City Editor
at city@dailytarheel.com.



DTH/LOGAN SAVAGE

Elaine O'Neil, a local artist, has 12 pieces of art permanently decorating the walls of the N.C. Cancer Hospital. They were installed on Jan. 21.

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HOROSCOPES

If February 1st is Your Birthday...
This year you'll have many opportunities to shine. Reexamine your career and consider self-employment. Balance the business of the months ahead with plenty of introspection. You may want to write a book. Seek excitement.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today is a 9 - Intuition leads to a new career path or helps you promote your work to new clients. Use your common sense and your words. Love appears in adventurous ways.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Today is an 8 - Spend some time planning your next career move. Focus your energy. Be open to changes. Let your love shine, for yourself and for others.

Gemini (May 21-June 21)

Today is a 7 - You're searching for something today. It's a good time to search further than you normally would. If the mountain doesn't come to you, go to the mountain.

Cancer (June 22-July 22)

Today is a 7 - Understanding your partner takes precedence today. You may not draw any conclusions, but just being willing to really listen makes a difference.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

Today is an 8 - It's a good day to apply your hard-won knowledge to new ventures. Others depend on you even if they sound critical. Take it all with a grain of salt.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Today is a 7 - On a day like today in 1865, President Abraham Lincoln approved what would become the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery. Where have you been a slave to your past? Let go.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Today is a 7 - You feel right at home, and at home you feel right. Surround yourself with family. Save up for a rainy day and repurpose the stuff you already have.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Today is a 6 - If you've been withholding communicating something, now is the time to open up. It's a good time to stay home, close to family. Bask in the relief.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Today is a 7 - New ideas are coming into the picture. Capture them. Words come easily, but you can also make music, take photos or draw. Take free form notes. Feel life in your heart.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Today is a 9 - Start slow to pick up steam later. Opportunities open up in new directions. The economic outlook today looks good, and you get a lot done.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Today is a 7 - It's a good time to work backstage. You'll get plenty of limelight in the following days. Enjoy your privacy while you can, and prepare for the show.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

Today is a 7 - You find yourself at a loss for words. It's a good time to relax and just do some planning. Count on your team. Then get into action. You've been preparing for this.

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