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millennium, arts were important (and) several personal growth workshops and Julia Cameron's, *The Artist's Way* changed my life. I plunged into the arts. *The Artist's Way* had me writing every morning."

Dempsey laughs as she says, "There is a Zen statement, 'After ecstasy the laundry' which we might reverse to say, 'After much laundry comes a moment of ecstasy.' The smaller ecstasies (arts) keep us nourished so that we have the strength to continue working on the larger art."

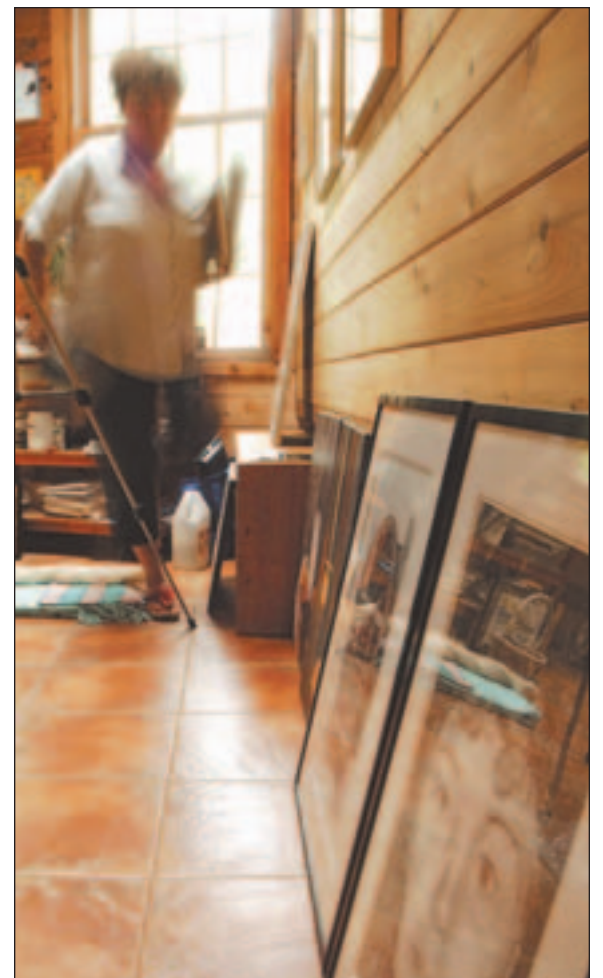
Dempsey says leaving her marriage after 22 years in 1996 was the hardest thing she has ever done and it led her to live for a while in a one-room apartment at the mouth of the Muskoka River in Bracebridge where she began to do her own art and connect with her new partner.

She says: "After I met Gary, we moved back to Port Carling to the house that I had previously built. Our home is often filled with artists, musicians, film people and other interesting travelers from around the world."

She also found a creative outlet at The Muskoka Place Gallery which opened in 2004 as a centre of arts and cultural activities.

It hosts many local and international artists, workshops, retreats, literary events, coffeehouses, house concerts. Dempsey believes arts and culture are very significant factors in quality of life, playing a key role in defining who we are as individuals, communities and as a society.

She is focusing more energy these days on the gallery with watercolour, print making and acrylic painting and writing, and she is studying with and representing the works of renowned painter Pat Fairhead.



Dempsey's self portrait lies in the foreground at her Muskoka Place Gallery.