



Gentle readers, welcome,

For this issue, I had the pleasure and honour of interviewing Rita Briansky, a renowned and award-winning Canadian artist, whose work is in many collections nationwide.

We met in her Montreal apartment, where some of her paintings are displayed and where she continues to produce beautiful, uplifting and inspiring works in her studio.

This gifted artist, who will celebrate her 95th birthday this summer, cannot be pigeonholed. Her themes and the styles of her paintings are many and varied. She explained that she has a broad spectrum of interests, and they're all reflected in the art that she creates.

The Rita Briansky painting that hangs in my living room is a large tableau depicting the seaside, full of my favourite blues, bathed in sun, with happy bathers and striped sun parasols. Its colours are intense and yet its energy is restful. You feel like you are joining the bathers on the beach; you can feel the heat.

However, the paintings that Rita created after returning from a deeply disturbing and emotional trip in 1995 to Poland – the country of her birth – depict the tragedy and horror of the Holocaust. The people depicted in her series of “Kaddish” paintings, (named after the Jewish Prayer for the Dead), are her relatives who were murdered in concentration camps. Those paintings are deeply poignant and moving; they honour those individuals and all who suffered and died during that barbaric period of history.

All of Rita Briansky's work is infused with profound emotion – be it joy or sadness – and the viewer is drawn into each painting to feel exactly what she intended to convey.

She has that rare gift of finding humanity in everything and letting us experience it, too. She struggled to become an artist, coming to Canada at the start of the Depression, and she never complains. She adores teaching and has been an inspiration to generations of Montreal painters. I know that you will be as entranced by Rita Briansky's story and her art as I am. Enjoy the story on page 26!

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