



Rachelle Diddens

Winnipeg-born Rachelle Diddens says art was always a part of her life. Her father was a carpenter and artist, and she learned early the skills of fixing up items and refinishing furniture. She earned a degree in human resources, and now runs a business, accounting and managing employees of her family's flat-roof contracting company. It was with zinc scraps from this business that Rachelle began developing the unique kind of canvas that anchors most of her current work. The edges are folded back to form an elegant, ready-to-hang frame that is integral with the surface. Then she paints with acrylic – and sometimes with the oil-based liquid, Pebeo – directly onto the porous metal surface. She spent two years developing her original painting technique. Rachelle's painting is abstract, often with patterns or networks that spread across the surface like fractals. There are repeated, recognizable elements that diagram myriad units which are all different but, in the wider scheme, largely the same – in connection with each other, but also broken and separated. These, she says, can be read as an allegory for the interrelationships of people within our system. Rachelle loves music, exercise, and art. She always works with music playing. She is empathetic and cares deeply about how people connect and live together. She has worked to raise funds for such causes as the MS bike tour, the Arthritis Walk, Winnipeg Harvest, Siloam, and Colour Me Rad. "We survive by spreading kindness," she says, adding, "Artbeat has saved me. I love the people here."