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Gina Gillespie photos

A recent addition to the area's artistic community,  
Georgia Amar enjoys her Brighton home..

## Denver artist realizes her dream

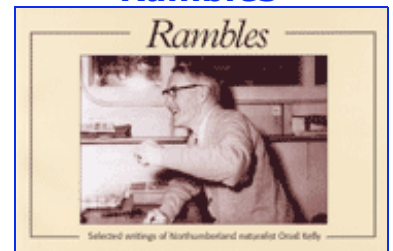
by GINA GILLESPIE  
*The Independent*

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on Brighton's history](#)

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### Publications

**Rambles**



**A Collection of  
Garden Diaries**



**The Spirit Tree**



One doesn't interview Georgia Amar. One gets caught in her energy field, and swept along by the current. She's an elfin woman, a self-starter with a French accent, and creative energy flowing from every pore. At 53, she's getting younger every day.

"I am getting younger as I grow older, because the spirit is freer," she says. "I was a very serious teenager. Morbid actually."

Ms. Amar left her native Morocco in her late teens, studying philosophy in Israel before coming to Canada. Here she immersed herself in philosophy and French literature, eventually earning both a bachelor of arts and a bachelor of education from the University of Toronto. During those years, she fell in love with the sunsets over Lake Ontario, and purchased some land with the intent of starting an art camp there.

"The most gorgeous sunsets in the world are right here. They are so spectacular, I think that's what kept me here," she says.

She currently splits her time between her home in Denver, where she owns the Habitat Gallery, and her studio/gallery house on Ventress Road in Brighton.

It took some time for the dream of an art camp to materialize. Artistic success doesn't happen overnight. But Ms. Amar never played the role of a starving artist.

"That is not a concept that is acceptable to me. I had a hard time, but starving? No. I wouldn't allow that," she says.

In fact, Ms. Amar is a force to be reckoned with, preferring action over reaction.

"Most people react to circumstances outside; that's when they are moved. I don't wait for the circumstances. I initiate. Big difference."

Her resourcefulness is evident as she prepares the ancillary art studio and gallery for her summer art camp students. She's everywhere at once, a paint and plaster splattered whirlwind, assembling bunk beds, painting walls, alive with creative energy. She needs to design and create her own living space, refusing to let a landlord dictate the terms of her existence.

Initially, she built an A-frame cabin



Betty McGill-Down

## Weather

Brighton, ON

Overcast

	<b>21°</b> Celsius	
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out of wood on her Brighton property, but eventually replaced it with a 3,300 square foot,



open-concept home that reflects the occupant's artistic soul. It's an airy, open space with blonde hardwood on the floors and 79 windows to let the sunlight spill through. The light flows over the colours and shapes of Ms. Amar's art, which hangs throughout the lofty space. There's "The Six Days of Creation", a partial model for the stained glass windows she created for Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Toronto. On another wall hangs a painting of her husband Jack, a man she describes as the kindest, most temperate man she's ever met. There's also a model of a clock tower, made from coloured panes of glass. One day, she plans to build a full-sized version, 30 to 40 feet high.

"I will illuminate this on each corner, up, and I will create a holographic image in space, going for miles," she says.

But it is when the lights dim that the magic begins. The colours in the artwork start to split in space, moving forward, backward, sideways. They dance.

"I destabilize colour," says Ms. Amar. "I so destabilize it that it doesn't want to stay within its boundaries. Perhaps it's like me."

According to Ms. Amar, she's done an "awesome" amount of work.

"The landscapes I've done of this region are on display all over the world," she says. "They don't know it here."

Canvas, fabric, oil paints and glass transform beneath the artist's touch. It's the oils she loves the most, but as an artist, she wants to work in many mediums. So if a space cries out for light and glass, she learns the skills to create with that material. She also likes to translate art between mediums. So a painting hanging in her upstairs loft becomes the blueprint for a floor to ceiling hanging rug. Or she'll create your portrait in glass. Her art, found in collections, galleries and sacred spaces throughout Canada and the United States, includes lithographs, serigraphs, oils, fabrics, environmental installations, light and laminated glass.

This summer, Ms. Amar is running art camps for boys and girls ages eight to 14. They'll be learning more than art. They'll be learning to adopt an

artist's state of mind, one that studies and observes life, and tries to answer all the questions that arise.

"That is what makes an artist," says Ms. Amar. Scheduled activities include exposure to drawing, oil and acrylic painting, sculpture, printmaking and laminated stained glass. There's also swimming, horseshoes, badminton, billiards, stories by the bonfire, and informal musical jam sessions. But the schedule is far from fixed since Ms. Amar values spontaneity, and the energy of the group will dictate the lessons to be learned. She doesn't show students the best way to hold a brush. She encourages imagination and asking questions of the world.

"I don't want followers," she says of her students. "If you follow, you're lost. You haven't created anything. You are in a reactive position. Somebody is leading you, as opposed to leading yourself. I want you to be self-led. That is my greatest goal, to make you lead yourself. I want you to be independent, to be healthy, to be your own thinking machine."

Art Camp Amar begins June 26, 2005, with one or two week sessions running until August 27, 2005.

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