

# **New chapter begins with octogenarian's first painting exhibition**

**A new art exhibition will showcase the creative talents of Martin Birkhans, an 88-year-old Edinburgh resident who has rediscovered his passion for painting, proving that creativity has no age limit.**

Martin, who resides at Cramond Residence, is preparing to unveil his first public exhibition, 'Sketches from a Wheelchair' – a collection of striking nature-inspired artworks encouraged by his daughter.

Upon arriving at Cramond Residence, physiotherapists helped Martin channel his determination into walking again, an achievement that garnered attention from BBC documentary makers. With age returning him to wheelchair use, Martin found a new outlet for his energy and resolve through painting.

"I have never considered myself an artist, nor do I claim to be one now. But painting has been a wonderful way to keep my mind active," Martin said. "Nature has always fascinated me, and much of my work is inspired by the world outside my

window.”

Martin approaches his art with the same curiosity that made him a respected academic during his career as a senior lecturer at the Edinburgh School of Architecture. His late wife, Joan Lingard, was a renowned author and together they shared a lifetime of creativity and inspiration.

“The exhibition wasn’t my idea – my daughters encouraged me to share my work, and I’m looking forward to seeing how people react to it,” he added.

Set to open on Friday 25th April in the cinema space at Cramond Residence, the exhibition will allow fellow residents, family, and guests to enjoy Martin’s creations. His work will remain on display over the weekend and will also be showcased in reception ahead of the event.

Despite his professional background in architectural academia, Martin’s paintings take a more organic approach, drawing heavily from the natural world. He credits Cramond Residence’s gardens as a major source of inspiration.

“I started drawing the flowers outside, and it evolved from there. My daughters send me photographs of places they know I love, and I paint from memory, imagination, and a little artistic licence,” he explained. “Painting is relaxing, almost addictive, and has become an important part of my routine.”

Creativity runs through Martin's family. Born in Latvia, Russian occupation forced him and his family to relocate to Canada in 1948. His sister, who still lives in Canada, is a professional painter, and Martin keeps her artwork alongside paintings by his father in his room at Cramond Residence.

The team at Cramond has been instrumental in Martin's artistic journey, encouraging him to explore his creativity despite health challenges that have kept him from other beloved hobbies such as golf and fishing.

Richard Annan, Head of Sales and Marketing at Cramond Residence said: "Martin is a truly inspiring individual, and his exhibition is a testament to his talent, humour, and sheer determination. He has a unique way of seeing the world, and we're thrilled to help him share his work with others. His paintings are not just beautiful; they tell a story of resilience and creativity."

The exhibition is a personal event for Martin, who has chosen to gift his artworks rather than sell them. Family members and close friends will have the first opportunity to choose pieces before they are distributed to others who have supported him.

Martin's wider circle includes generations of architecture students, including the current Professor of the Edinburgh University School of Architecture. This exhibition marks another chapter in his extraordinary life where he shares his creative talents with the community.

"I hope people enjoy the paintings as much as I enjoyed making them. I never set out to exhibit them, but I'm glad my daughters convinced me otherwise," Martin concluded. "Who knows? Maybe I'll inspire someone else to pick up a paintbrush, no matter their age."

