

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS  
**HISTORY**  
CENTER

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ARTWORK FROM HISTORY CENTER COLLECTION  
INVITED INTO U OF M STAMPS GALLERY EXHIBIT

JUNE 8, 2018 -- A painting donated to the S-D History Center collection in 2012 has been invited into a special exhibit at University of Michigan's Stamps Gallery celebrating the work of Ellen Wilt, a major figure in the Ann Arbor / U of M art community who maintained a second home and studio on Spear Street in Saugatuck from 1984 to 1994.

The exhibit, which opened Memorial Day weekend and will remain through September 9, is titled "Materials On Hand: The Art of Ellen Wilt", and brings together more than 40 selected pieces from personal and private collections, including "Flotsam", a large watercolor-and-gouache on paper done in Saugatuck which Wilt reportedly considered one of her personal favorites and specifically requested its loan from SDHC for this event.

Stamps Gallery exhibit hours are from 11am to 5pm Tuesdays through Sundays, with closing times extended to 7 pm on Thursdays and Fridays.

According to Gallery exhibit information, Wilt grew up in Pittsburgh and came to Ann Arbor in 1949, earned two art degrees at U of M, was an art professor at Eastern Michigan University (1969-85) and organized numerous community projects that empowered first-time and emerging artists to show their work. Now in her mid-90s, it was not until she retired in her 70s that she turned her focus to her own art practice, gaining recognition and awards from the Michigan Water Color Society, Washtenaw Council for the Arts, and Holland Friends of Art.

As described at the Stamps exhibit, Wilt's "intuitive and playful bricolage way of working reveals the scope of her achievement and her specific interest in the Michigan region and its landscape. Painting in oils, acrylics and watercolor, she has developed multiple bodies of work that feature domestic objects from teapots to chairs while also reckoning with iconic architectural props of bridges and tunnels which are ongoing motifs in her work."

Gallery materials further note that Wilt "has incorporated collage into her practice using whatever materials were available, ranging from butcher paper, aluminum foil and tissue paper to balsa wood, toothpicks and other found objects. Her works create mixed media paintings, cut-outs, rubbings and installations that reimagine the agency of mundane objects and invite viewers to look again."

Says SDHC Executive Director Nathan Nietering, "Saugatuck-Douglas History Center's art collection has grown exponentially over the past ten years. The nearly 250 paintings, prints and sketches represent many amateurs and professionals who lived or studied art in our area. Thanks to contributions of artwork by many generous donors, the collection continues to grow."

"This is the first time that an artwork in the SDHC collection has been invited to exhibit at such a prestigious institution," he points out. "Flotsam," on exhibit all summer, will raise awareness among the larger Midwest art community of the History Center collection and Saugatuck as a place of continued

artistic education and expression. We appreciate this opportunity to work with the Stamps Gallery and their staff."

To learn more about the exhibit, visit [www.stamps.umich.edu/exhibitions](http://www.stamps.umich.edu/exhibitions). For more information about the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center, its Museum in Saugatuck and Old School House in Douglas, and its activities planned for 2018, visit [www.MySDHistory.org](http://www.MySDHistory.org).

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*Photographed at Ann Arbor's Stamps Gallery (hence reflections), "Flotsam" from the SDHC collection joins more than 40 artworks in a special exhibit celebrating the creativity of artist Ellen Wilt.*