

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Celebrating the 'Civic Center' Watercolors

Betty Munro's works chronicle building's birth

Staff report

"Civic Center Suite," 27 watercolor paintings done by Syracuse artist Betty Munro in 1974 and 1975, when the John H. Mulroy Civic Center was being built, will be displayed during a special reception April 5 at the downtown Syracuse center.

The artworks chronicle the construction of the Civic Center.

Munro, who now lives in Madison, Wis., worked at the building site in a hard hat. She recalled when she arrived on the first day, "Everyone and everything was moving. I felt a need to record the excitement and action with my brush."

She retired at the age of 91 and will turn 93 next month. The paintings were in her Fayetteville home when she moved to Madison, her hometown. She wanted the Civic Center paintings kept together as a group.

Last year, the Onondaga Historical Association announced it had received the series of watercolors as a gift, through an account at the Central New York Community Foundation. The OHA is one of the sponsors of the display, along with County Executive Joanie Mahoney. The program, which costs \$35 a couple, runs 4 to 6 p.m.



Jon Olson / The Post-Standard, 1991

BETTY MUNRO is shown painting a watercolor of the First Presbyterian Church of Cazenovia in 1991.

The historians brought together and restored the paintings, which the artist considered "one continuous watercolor," rather than individual works.

The paintings, and other Munro works, were shown last year in an exhibit at Spring Gallery in Fayetteville. Several were sold, including two bought by the OHA before the



Submitted image

ONE OF the watercolors in Munro's series called "Civic Center Suite." This view of Columbus Circle shows some of the construction of the future John H. Mulroy Civic Center in the mid-1970s.

gift was announced a year ago. "Civic Center Suite" has been exhibited before, as a group, at the Civic Center, at the opening in 1975 and at the

10th anniversary of completion of construction.

The reception and display benefit the communitywide biennial art exhibition, "The

Other New York: 2012," organized by the Everson Museum of Art and other organizations. It will open around Syracuse in September.

Refreshments will be served at the reception. For reservations, call 428-1864, ext. 312. Tickets will be sold at the door.