



one blue world

I painted "One Blue World" as a prayer for water.


Once, I listened with fascination to astronaut Roberta Bondar describe our blue and green world floating in space. It was this blue I painted, knowing that humans can live a month without food but less than a week without water. While painting, I was listening to accounts of the Iraq war and was reminded that many sources, including the World Bank, have warned that the next wars will be about water. Part of the problem in recognizing the water crisis here in Canada is that there seems to be an unlimited supply. But fresh water is in crisis worldwide. In his visionary book, *Water*, Marq de Villiers says our

water supply is in peril because we "poison it, waste it, and restlessly change the hydrological cycles." He



warns that the "human population is burgeoning, but water demand is increasing twice as fast." More than 97% of the Earth's water is salty or

frozen. Of the remaining water, less than 1% is available for meeting human needs. Most of us in Canada live near water or not far from it. Given that we need water to live, we should be more grateful, more conscious of its importance, and more active in conserving and protecting it. Do you know what watershed (the area drained by a river) you live in?

There's a circle of women in my painting; it's women who can join hands together and make a difference. Women are key because they are the primary purchasers of the hundreds of chemicals used in cleaning, maintenance, lawns and gardens. 

green tips - actions you can take to reduce the number of chemicals entering the water cycle and to conserve water.

Think about where your water goes when it leaves your home. This will help connect you to your watershed. Every chemical that's used in households including cleaning and personal care products go down the drain and eventually enter the water cycle in your watershed. These chemicals travel through ground water, into rivers, lakes and oceans. Most household chemicals do not break down and are heavily scented to mask the smell of toxic chemicals.



by leanna braid

- Switch to cleaning products without bleach, perfume, and other harmful chemicals. There are many environmentally-friendly products available.
- Use vinegar for glass cleaning. Vinegar also works well with baking soda as a drain cleaner.
- Use borax and tea tree oil products (a natural disinfectant) instead of bleach.
- Don't put oil, paint, glue, and other chemicals down the drain. Take them to a hazardous waste depot; if there isn't one in your community, call your municipality for advice.
- If you have a septic tank, pump it every five years and ensure it's working properly.
- If you use a powerboat, consider using a sailboat, kayak, rowboat, or canoe instead (another way to help slow down global warming). If not, keep the engine in good repair and avoid leaks of oil, gasoline, and solvents.
- If building or living by water, keep shade trees to provide cooler water for fish and as place for birds and animals to travel, roost, and nest.
- While camping, use biodegradable soap.
- Install water-saver showerheads or flush-efficient toilets ("if it's yellow, let it mellow, if it's brown flush it down!"). Turn off the water while brushing your teeth.
- Use washing machines with a full load and reduce the frequency you wash clothing, towels, and linens.
- If you garden, use mulch on plants and gardens; store rainwater.
- Consider turning your lawn into wildlife habitat to avoid heavy watering (by doing this, you'll also reduce the amount of mowing which helps conserve energy).
- Grow a chemical-free lawn/garden.

For more information:
Marq de Villiers. *Water*. 1999. Stoddart Publishing.
http://www.ec.gc.ca/water/en/info/pubs/FS/e_FSA6.htm#action

photograph of anne camozzi and of her painting, "one blue world" courtesy anne camozzi; photograph of leanna braid courtesy leanna braid