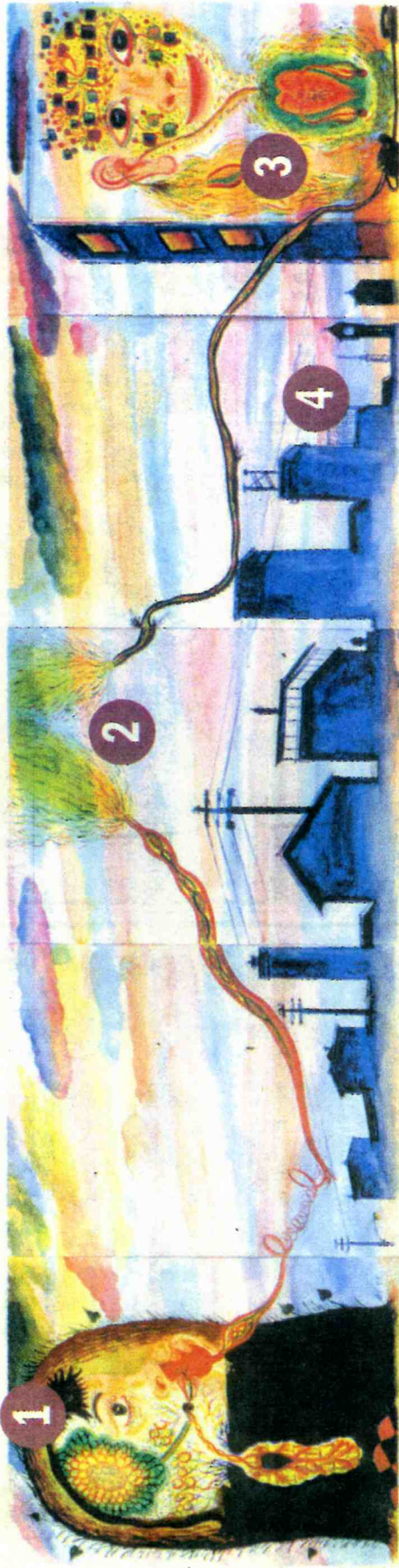


## Art by numbers

AUDIO HUGG, WATERCOLOUR, 1999



Toronto artist Julie Joyce has never been one to hide her feelings.

For nearly two decades, she has produced a steady stream of paintings that illustrate a fantastical world of visible emotions and intuition made manifest. It's a mad, jewel-like world full of whimsy, sparkle and rococo splendour.

Her Alice-in-Wonderland-like musings on modern existence remind us that beneath the layers of reason, rationality and technology,

we remain profoundly child-like, as overwhelmed as ever by forces we don't understand. Magic may not change the planet, but it can alter the way we see it.

A Joyce exhibition opens today at the Paul Petro Gallery (265A Queen St. W.) and continues until Nov. 27.

1 Joyce calls this painting "a diagram of what happens when you give someone a hug on their answering machine." Though not exactly a likeness, this is a portrait of the artist

leaving a message. The green and yellow areas make up her brain, the red shape below is her heart. Both are joined through her mouth to a telephone.

Because Joyce — next best thing to a starving artist — lives in a basement apartment, she has placed herself in a stylized mound of earth covered in leaves.

2 The energy generated by her hug flows through the phone line, but it's too powerful to be fully con-

tained.

Here, it bursts out of the cable into the atmosphere. It quickly coalesces, however, and re-enters the line where it will be directed to Joyce's friend.

"The hug needs air," the artist explains. "It's getting bigger and bigger."

3 At the other end of the line, the hug emerges and illuminates Joyce's friend. The energy transfer is complete; it can be seen travelling

from the artist's heart and mind to her friend's.

The friend's "organized brain" is a multi-faceted organ that seems energized by Joyce's hug.

4 The city below, rendered in gray-blue, stands in stark contrast to the exquisitely coloured sky above. Though it is a generic skyline, the outline of the College St. fire station, west of Spadina, can just be discerned. It remains unbugged.

—Christopher Hume