

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Little Italy art show reflects French past

By Carlos Verde

Little Italy's Gallery 101 is showing a unique Francophone art exhibit this month.

The show titled *Fragile*, curated by Montreal-based Salome Viguiere, runs from Nov. 11 to Dec. 3 and features the work of six francophone artists exploring what it means to be a linguistic minority in the nation's capital.

"We wanted to create an exhibition with emerging artists who are francophone," explained Viguiere, a native of France who has worked in the Canadian arts industry since 2010.

"We are still writing francophone history in Canada, and this exhibit is about the relationship between who you are, what you will be and where you come from — things like culture, language, family."

The exhibit marks the first collaboration between Gallery 101 and Bravo, an Ontario-based group that highlights the work of French-speaking artists.

"I'm really excited about this exhibition," said Gallery 101 director-curator Laura Margita. "All the artists in the show are under 35 (and) they're all Fran-

co-Ontarian, so it's interesting in terms of culture and trying to understand the differences and similarities between cultures."

Gallery 101, which operates as an artist-run centre to provide a forum for edgier, non-commercial material, hosted an opening reception on Nov. 11.

"It's important for us to look back into history and see what our shared history is," said Margita, head of the gallery since 2012. "According to this exhibition, colonialism has been happening since the time of the French monarchy coming to this country. It's always good to review things and maybe discover them in a more gentle or humorous way."

One of the highlights of *Fragile* is a colour photograph series from Genevieve Thauvette on the filles du roi, a group of 17th-century French women who played a critical role in the social development of early Canada. The women faced harsh living conditions and bleak social realities, but ultimately helped the colony's population blossom.

"Our work here is usually not object-based, with a focus more on video and performance, but those are fantastic photos," Mar-



Kristine Lee, Centretown News

Fragile curator Salomé Viguiere stands with "Orpheline, Les Filles du roi," a piece by artist Genevieve Thauvette that is one of six different installations on the cultural experiences of Franco-Ontarians.

gita said of the photo series. "It deconstructs this terrible history with humour, in a way that we can all talk about it."

Thauvette's eight-photo series tells the story of the prostitutes and other "undesirables" — marooned in the harsh colony of New France — through a series of modern self-portraits.

"She's using a completely contemporary approach to tell the story of (how) Louis XIV sent prostitutes, women nobody want-

ed, to save the colony," explained Viguiere, who put out an open call for submissions from Franco-Ontarian artists earlier this year.

"It was a difficult life for these women, and (Thauvette) is telling the true story in a modern way that people will understand."

Carleton University art history student Josh Majerle said Gallery 101 is a perfect spot for the unique exhibition.

"Smaller venues tend to be a lot more intimate with the viewer and

creator," said Majerle. "Bilingual art creates an appreciation for our diversity, so it will be interesting to see how creative they are with their space."

Margita said the exhibit is a perfect match for Gallery 101.

"Places like the National Gallery (or) Shenkman Arts Centre, they have to be careful — they can't show anything too edgy or pornographic," explained Margita. "We have a lot of freedom, and we're really embracing that."

Nature Museum exhibit breaks the ice

By Nick Laws

A ground-breaking Arctic mission from January 2015 is being commemorated at the Canadian Museum of Nature.

On Thin Ice is a temporary exhibit consisting of six, three-metre-tall tablets featuring pictures, information and graphics describing the Norwegian research vessel mission Lance. The goal of the mission was to not only identify changes in the ice, but to pinpoint the cause of the melting ice and to raise awareness.

Museum president Meg Beckel discussed some of the problems that arise when tackling climate change.

"When it comes to climate change, people need evidence, and knowledge derived from that evidence," said Beckel. "But they also need to be inspired to learn more and to care."

To kick off the exhibit on Nov. 7, the museum joined with the Norwegian Embassy and the Scandinavian nation's Royal Family to welcome Norway's Crown Prince Haakon and Crown Princess Mette-Marit to the opening.

There was also a symposium held on the Arctic's melting ice sheets to launch the exhibit.

The royal couple stayed for about 30 minutes due to scheduling constraints.

After attending the opening remarks they continued their trip across Canada.

They toured Canada to strengthen relations between the two Arctic nations, capping off their four-day visit in St. John's, Newfoundland.

The exhibit commemorates the work done by Arctic scientists from around the world, including the Norwegians' six-month mission last year.

"Changes that are being observed over the past few years are the most dramatic changes that have ever been seen," said Mark Graham, the museum's vice-president of research and collections. "Those kinds of findings make you pay attention a lot more."

Museum officials said they hope the exhibit spreads awareness of the issues, to "help people understand why the Arctic is important to them personally," said Beckel.

"In many cases, the Arctic is so remote that people don't really connect with it."

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