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Multicultural Exhibition features work of three artists

BY ROBERT REID, RECORD STAFF

Homer Watson Gallery's Multicultural Exhibition heralds the coming of spring by celebrating cultural diversity.

Featuring the work of three artists — Margie Kelk, Lloyd Cooke and Irina Likholet — the exhibition continues through May 2.

Enigma of China

Toronto artist Margie Kelk has visited China a number of times. She lived there long enough to learn Mandarin.

An ancient country with rich cultural traditions, China is a Johnny-come-lately to the accelerated industrialization, commercialization and consumerism of the Western World.

Smoke, one of two watercolour and photo collage folding books, deals with the issue of industrial pollution.

The companion folding book *Datong* consists of contemporary city scenes.

Warrior-in-Designer-Clothing, a series of six pastel/photo-based works, show an ancient tomb figure mounted on horseback. The equestrian figure is dressed in designer clothes (for example, Yves Saint Laurent, Versace and Dior), which satirizes the illegal counterfeiting of brand name fashions and accessories so prevalent in contemporary China.

The theme is examined from a slightly different perspective in *Designer Zhong Kui*, a series of four large, free-hanging ink/watercolour works on paper and silk portraying a fearless mythological warrior. The cartoonish warrior derives strength from the designer logos on his shoes, sword and fan.

A quartet of *Untitled* ink/watercolour/pastel/photo collages celebrates traditional Chinese life by blending calligraphy with images of masks, theatrical costumes and horses.

Expressions/Impressions

Toronto artist Lloyd Cooke has traversed the globe painting portraits of women in public markets — places where women in traditional cultures enjoy limited freedom to express themselves in natural surroundings. Their colourful dress is as important as their faces as expressions of rich cultural diversity.

There are portraits of women from Mexico, Morocco, Kenya, Dubai and Somalia, among a range of other countries.

Light & Life

Kitchener artist Irina Likholet was born and raised in Russia before immigrating to Canada in 2002. A physicist by education, the self-taught artist applies a contemporary sensibility to such traditional techniques and conventions as still-life genre painting, chiaroscuro and portraiture.

Her Old Master-style still life studies of fruit, flowers and antique vases are dark and atmospheric, the result of low light conditions.

She moves from the High Renaissance to the Romantic period in a trio of small paintings.

Warm Sensations is a Turner-esque explosion of light, while *The Waves* and *The Fortress of Silence* are Turner-esque seascapes.

Her portraits are lovingly and meticulously rendered, featuring such titles as *No Thought Lost*, *Arthur* and *Lost in Thought, Helen*.

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Multicultural Exhibition

Margie Kelk, Lloyd Cooke, Irina Likholet

Homer Watson Gallery



Record staff

On display at the Homer Watson Gallery is artwork by artist Irina Likholet, titled, *Innocence, Natasha*, 2009. Media is pastel on Canson paper.

On view through May 2

Information and gallery hours available at 519-748-4377 or www.homerwatson.on.ca

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