

A Paragon of Art

BY DENISE FALZON
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Louis Grachos not only has come home again, he's brought some treasures with him.

The former local resident and University of Toronto Scarborough graduate is now director of the prestigious Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo.

From there he has brought a collection of abstract works for an exhibition at UTSC's Doris McCarthy Gallery called *Paragons*, running until March 9.

The exhibition features selected works from *Extreme Abstraction*, a show held at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in 2005. *Paragons* opened on Jan. 17 with a tour of the exhibition led by Grachos.



Spectators view the ChanSchatz ink on silk artwork. Photo Credit: Installation view, Paragons: New Abstraction from the Albright-Knox Art Gallery at the Doris McCarthy Gallery.

Grachos was asked by Ann MacDonald to curate an exhibition of abstract artwork at UTSC.

MacDonald is currently the curator and director of the Doris McCarthy Gallery.

"It's great to be in Buffalo, which is close to Toronto, and Ann [MacDonald] was nice enough to give us an opportunity to showcase some new acquisitions of the collection," Grachos said.

He added the strength of the gallery's abstract collection is in late nineteenth and early twentieth century modern art and that the selected works featured in the exhibition are a small sampling of artists who are really working in abstract ways and using different materials.

"These artists are pushing the territory of what abstraction can be," Grachos said, adding MacDonald worked closely with the gallery in selecting the artworks for the exhibition.

"Rather than go historical with the works, [Grachos] wanted to go particularly with works being made now and were playing with the history of abstraction and artists who are being innovative with their materials," MacDonald said.

Many of the artworks feature lush colours and dense materials. Several pieces have been made with the aid of computer technology.

"In a number of these works there are artists, and there are many other artists out there, that are working with technology to create beautiful art," Grachos said.

However, many of the artists used natural gravity to create their artwork using thick paint and materials to help give a dripping illusion.

Grachos said that he hopes the exhibition will give the audiences a glimpse of some of the innovative ideas in abstract art. He further noted that many of the featured artists have forged international reputations.

A piece by Canadian artist Karin Davie entitled "Pushed, Pulled, Depleted, & Duplicated #7," includes swirling lines of colour that appear to leap out of the canvas.

"I feel like you can walk through this space and have an interaction with each work that can be predominantly based on the senses," MacDonald said. "Abstract art offers an experience that includes, but goes beyond, rational thought."

This exhibition is the first time the Albright-Knox Gallery has lent artworks to the University of Toronto.

"It's really special for me because I grew up in East York," Grachos said. "My parents moved to Scarborough in the late '60s and I ended up coming to school here. It was a great experience."

Grachos graduated from UTSC in 1979.

"It was a great program; I studied art history mainly, but I did take some studio classes," he says. "It really focused my interest in art history and pursuing it as a career."

For more information on *Paragons*, visit www.utscc.utoronto.ca/~dmg.



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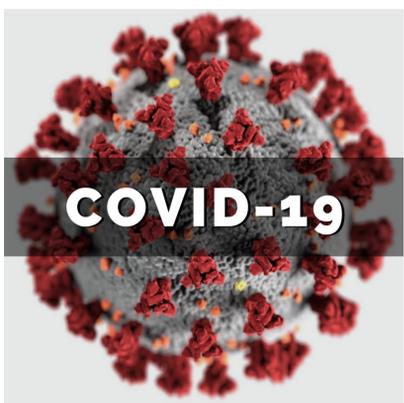
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