



CONTACT INFORMATION:

Colleen Fitzpatrick, *Executive Director, Rotary Centre for the Arts*

Email: director@rotarycentreforthearts.com

519-501-9673

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Rotary Centre for the Arts Spring Gallery Exhibitions Highlight Homes to Homelessness by Kelowna Artists

(Kelowna, B.C.) - The Rotary Centre for the Arts Spring art gallery exhibitions feature works on themes of homes to homelessness by four artists from Kelowna: Lucas Joel Macauley, Irina Bakumenko, Susan Protsack, and Tyler Keeton Robbins.

Community and Educational Programming Specialist, Andrew Stauffer, says, “We’re incredibly lucky to have such unique and diverse artists in Kelowna. In our feature exhibition, artist Joel Macauley delves into his experience of homelessness, mental health, and addiction. His works tell the story of a society that places significant blame on individuals for their situations in life, Macauley’s work raises questions around the social contexts that lead to addiction and homelessness. This is incredibly important if we are to develop serious solutions to these issues.”

Stauffer continues, “Many of the works we are exhibiting focus in one way or another on the home. In her watercolour paintings, Irina Bakumenko pays homage to the beautiful – and quickly disappearing -- heritage homes in Kelowna neighborhoods, while Susan Protsack explores themes of domesticity with wild sculptures that reuse various household items. Tyler Keeton Robbins represents the RCA as one of our in-house artists. After all, we are a home for artists and creators.”

The works featured in the RCA Galleries are on display from May through August. The Rotary Centre for the Arts is open daily from 9 am to 9 pm. Admission is free. Twenty percent of the proceeds from the sale of art help support the Centre and future gallery exhibitions.

About the Feature Artist

Lucas Joel Macauley - *We Live, Where No One Cares to Look*

Lucas Macauley works primarily with acrylic paint, spray cans, ink, and paint marker. His exhibit, *We Live, Where No One Cares to Look*, explores themes of homelessness, drug addiction, and mental health. This opening falls on [Canada’s Mental Health Week](#) (May 3 – May 9, 2021). Macauley’s work, which is informed by his personal experience wrestling with addiction and homelessness, depicts both people and parts of the city that are usually overlooked: people with addictions, mental health issues, and who are experiencing

Kelowna Visual and Performing Arts Centre Society 421 Cawston Avenue, Kelowna, BC V1Y 6Z1 p: (250) 717-5304 f: (250) 717-5314

info@rotarycentreforthearts.com www.RotaryCentrefortheArts.com



homelessness. Back alleys, dumpsters, shelters, and hospitals provide a look into a world that is generally written off as the “Problem with Society”, a problem that seems to have no solution. Lucas hopes to share his life experience and show the beauty and commonalities that all people share, that make us more alike than different. Whether or not one has experienced homelessness, everyone has dealt with mental health issues, misplaced desires, or feelings of being “stuck” in an undesirable situation.

Macauley comments, “In my art, I try to capture snapshots of society that are generally overlooked. I try to show not only the troubling images of how the underprivileged live, but the beauty of their community. There are social issues that we all struggle to solve and turn a blind eye to because solutions seem to be elusive. By drawing attention to the beauty that people who are suffering bring to our streets, I hope to spark inspiration that can change the way we all approach these issues.”

Irina Bakumenko - *Heritage Homes of Kelowna*

Irina Bakumenko is a Kelowna-based artist who recently moved from Russia. Her primary artistic medium is watercolour. Her exhibit, *Heritage Homes of Kelowna*, Bakumenko takes inspiration from the unique architecture she experiences in cities across the world: ancient buildings and castles, colonial-style houses, household utensils, and furniture, bridges, and streets.” Her exhibit featuring Kelowna’s Heritage Homes thus falls into a larger body of her architecture-based work. Bakumenko says, “When I paint such a picture, I reflect on the owner, the holidays and dinners in the house, the birth of children and their growing up, friendly gatherings and parties.” Her color-filled work, which includes the Belgo House, Muirhead House, and McIver House, to name just a few, honours the beauty, warmth, and humanness of Kelowna’s heritage homes, many of which are at risk of being demolished. Bakumenko writes, “I’m still looking for my style and place in the art world but what I know for sure is that I am grateful for the ability to see beauty and share it with others through my watercolour work.” Bakumenko’s work has sold in Russia, Canada, France, and the United States. Her paintings are on for sale at the RCA and 5% of each purchase will be donated to the Central Okanagan Heritage Society.

Susan Protsack

Susan Protsack is a Canadian Artist who moved to Kelowna in 1996. Her work is based on a multimedia approach and often incorporates drawing, painting, and sculpture pieces. Protsack’s sculptures, with common household items reworked and repurposed, are shown in conjunction with Irina Bakumenko’s exhibit, *Heritage Homes of Kelowna*. In these works, ordinary household tools are transformed into celebratory versions that symbolically represent domestic workers and housekeeping. Protsack writes that these works, “examine society’s view toward physical labour and seek to reframe it in a new and more positive light. She succeeds at this reframing with her sculptures, which are strange, vibrant, fun, and wonderfully interesting. Protsack says, “I am drawn to artwork that contains elements of positivity and hope.” While these sculptures focus on housekeeping, the theme may be universally applied to all types of manual work which, in our society, is often undervalued and unappreciated.” Like Macauley, Protsack is concerned with those who are often thought of as invisible --



workers who are involved in manual labour and service industries who receive little to no recognition because of the nature of their work.

Tyler Keeton Robbins - IT IS AS IF IT IS

Tyler Keeton Robbins is a multidisciplinary, self-taught artist, and classifies his work as “always evolving.” With internationally exhibited works ranging from pen and paper, paintings, and murals of up-scaled mark-making, Robbins continues to explore the softer side of abstract symbolism, applying evocative form to diverse surfaces. He has worked closely with brands such as Starbucks, Burton, R.E.I., creating large-scale prints for in-store design, textile, and hard goods. Tyler Keeton Robbins joined the Rotary Centre for the Arts in December of 2020 as an art studio tenant.

Artist Statements and images [HERE](#)

Learn more about Tyler Keeton Robbins [HERE](#)

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About the Rotary Centre for the Arts

Located in the heart of Kelowna’s Cultural District, the [Rotary Centre for the Arts](#) is a multidisciplinary visual and performing arts centre. The RCA continually strives to improve the economic, cultural, and social quality of life in the community by fostering participation in, and appreciation of the arts. As a world-class venue celebrating creative expression through diverse art forms and disciplines, the Rotary Centre for the Arts is a unique City of Kelowna facility in which individuals of all ages and backgrounds come together to share in the excitement of strengthening art and culture in the Okanagan. The Rotary Centre for the Arts respectfully acknowledges that it is located on the unceded, traditional territory of the syilx (Okanagan) people.