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'Impressionism Times 2' at the Moraga Art Gallery

By Sophie Braccini



Jacqueline Proulx with her son and one of her grandsons on the exhibition's opening day
Photos Sophie Braccini

her son moved to California, Proulx started spending six months of the year here, until she became a grandmother and decided to settle in the East Bay for good. She says she found at the Moraga Art Gallery an open, friendly and supportive community of artists where she feels at home.

She is now delighted to practice her art at the Red Ox Clay Studio in Concord where she can work with a gas kiln that allows for experimentation at very high temperatures. What she presents at the Moraga Gallery are delicately decorated and evocative ceramic pieces that are true to her love of impressionism. She recalls a recent trip to Monet's house in Giverny. The extraordinary feeling of evanescent yet eternal beauty coming from nature that she felt there is what she impresses on the clay, and shares with others.

That path down Giverny's alleys is not exactly that of Rodrigue. Earlier year's work of the renowned artist where still imbued with impressionism, but her later work as presented at the gallery has evolved toward abstraction.

Rodrigue is one of those few artists who have been able to live off their art from the start. She has a solid group of followers-collectors all over the world who appreciate and invest in her creations. The pieces presented at the gallery are striking and evocative mixed media conceptions. Each piece evokes a 3D totem, presenting different layers of photography, drawings, and plastic material. The visual effect plays with reflections, drawing the eye of spectators from a general vision of the piece to exploring the details of the intricate creation. Rodrigue says of her works that the image is transformed from the second to the third dimension - from the temporal to the atemporal.

Rodrigue has been featured in solo and collective exhibitions numerous times in Canada, and abroad at the Museum of Modern Art in Seoul, South Korea, at the Fremantle Museum Arts Centre in Australia, and at the Galerie Art-Tournelle in Paris, France, as well as the Gallery La Aduana in Barranquilla, Colombia.

The show, which also includes the gallery's 13 member artists and several guest artists, runs until June 2. The gallery is located in the Rheem Shopping Center, at 522 Center Street, Moraga. Its hours are Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. For more information, visit www.moragaartgallery.com.

The Moraga Art Gallery always showcases interesting local artists, and once in a while, offers the unexpected pleasure of an international discovery. This is the case with the current exhibition, "Impressionism Times 2," which showcases local artist of French-Canadian origin Jacqueline Proulx, along with a friend from her past, internationally recognized Canadian artist Rita Rodrigue, for their first Bay Area exhibition.

When Proulx and Rodrigue were in college in Ottawa together, one of their most influential professors introduced them to impressionism. Both young women were touched at a deep level with how impressionism represents reality by focusing more on transmitting the feeling a specific scene is evoking than on its actual physical form. Proulx with her ceramics and Rodrigue with her paintings embarked on that road during the first steps of their artistic development.

Today, years later, the two friends are in what Proulx call the "Times 2" of their artistic expression, and what they are presenting at the Moraga gallery is the different products that started to grow in close proximity.

Proulx lived most of her life in Qu**é**bec, and did not become a full-time artist until she took early retirement. She built her first ceramist studio in her Montr**é**al condo, before purchasing a home on the beach on the Ile d'Orl**é**ans where the artistic community flourishes. When



Painting by Rita Rodrigue

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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