

UKRAINIAN MUSEUM OF CANADA

Artists' exhibit is moved by the spirit

DARLENE POLACHIC
FOR THE STARPHOENIX

On display at the Ukrainian Museum of Canada Gallery is a group exhibition titled *Moved by the Spirit: Artistic Interpretations on the Life of Jesus*.

Curated by Louise Hudec Tessier, the exhibition brings together 12 artists of different faith perspectives to express their art in sacred terms surrounding the significant events in the life of Jesus.

A central component of the exhibit is Tessier's *The Garden Way of the Cross*, a unique collective work in ceramic tiles.

Tessier, who lives in Regina, says the idea for the exhibition was born a few years ago when she began working on a series of ceramic tiles based on meditations written by Father Thomas Stanley as an interpretive tool for the Mary Garden planted on the grounds of his parish in Portage, Mich. (A Mary Garden is one that contains plants bearing colloquial names referring to Jesus and his mother Mary, like Crown of Thorns, Christ's Blood, or Our Lady's Tresses.) Stanley's meditations further linked the plants and flow-

ers with the 14 traditional Stations of the Cross. With Stanley's permission, Tessier created a series of botanical ceramic tiles based on his *Garden Way of the Cross* meditations.

"The idea occurred that it would be interesting to pull together a group show that would include my tiles and feature the work of other artists, as well — to interpret the life of Jesus, based on the stations of the cross, in each artist's own artistic style and through his or her own faith experience," Tessier says.

Tessier, who is a member of the Saskatchewan Craft Council, began contacting fellow members to see who would be interested in participating in such a project.

"It was interesting how the people I contacted responded. Anne Hergert, a textile artist, had just returned from Oberammergau and immediately knew how she would interpret *The Transfiguration of Christ* as described in the Gospel of Mark. Doris Fulmore, my continuous-loop rug hooking instructor, was thrilled to interpret the Birth of Jesus in three hooked panels.

"I didn't ask anyone's religious affiliation. For those willing to participate, I just



LOUISE TESSIER

Louise Hudec Tessier, curates and is one of twelve artists to produce works for the *Moved by the Spirit* exhibit.

gave them the Scripture verses pertaining to the significant events in the life of Jesus that I wanted them to interpret."

Tessier ended up with 12 participating artists and 30 art pieces in a variety of mediums.

Book artist Kristina Ko-

mandant from Blaine Lake did a papyrus scroll and framed deer vellum manuscript on *The Boy Jesus in the Temple*. Janice Stefan interpreted *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River* in a concrete and fused glass bowl, while the *Wedding at Cana* is symbolized by Cara

Driscoll's clay pitcher with the text inscribed in the bottom.

Silversmith Judy Sawacki's sterling silver necklace addresses *The Beatitudes*, and clay sculptor Barb Goretzky, the *Feeding of the Five Thousand*. There's a stained glass piece by José Ventura of Gibson's, B.C., an acrylic painting by Roberto López López, and a magnificent icon, *The Ascension*, by Jenny Ward of Cincinnati, Ohio.

In addition to her *Garden Way of the Cross* tiles, Louise Tessier also contributed *Our Lady of the Prairies*, a continuous-loop rug hooking of Mary, and a ceramic tile insert on a walnut funeral urn crafted by her husband Larry Tessier to interpret *The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead*.

The exhibit opened at the Ukrainian Museum of Canada Gallery on March 21 and will show until June 22. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday. The museum is closed Monday.

Janet Prebushewsky Danyliuk, director and CEO of the Ukrainian Museum of Canada, says the museum is thrilled to have the exhibit in its gallery, "particularly

at this time of year. We like to have something spiritual-based during the Lenten season.

"Lent and Easter are very important in the Ukrainian tradition," she says. "This travelling exhibit not only addresses that, but it fits with our mission to bring together not just Ukrainian artists, but all artists working in all mediums."

She says the Lenten-themed display coincides well with the pysanka workshops the museum conducts for schools and the public only during Lent "to stay true to tradition."

"I was fascinated when I saw the variety of artists and mediums represented in the exhibit," Danyliuk adds, "and how the 12 different artists interpreted the Scripture passage given them."

A public open house will be held at the museum on Palm Sunday (known as Willow Sunday in the Ukrainian Orthodox tradition), April 13. Louise Tessier will be present. Everyone is welcome to attend; admission to the open house is free. At all other times, entrance is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors; free for children.

The Ukrainian Museum of Canada is located at 910 Spadina Crescent East.