

The Times

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FINE ART

A touch of the Louvre in Lambertville

From Louvre to Lambertville, Paintings by Elena Bogatyr

Where: DeBogat/Belenikin Fine Art Gallery, 5 Lambert Lane, Lambertville
When: Through May 2019. Hours, Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sundays from noon to 6 p.m. Weekdays by appointment. Opening reception on Friday, 6 to 9 p.m.
Contact: 609-397-5855 or DeBogat.com, LouvreArtist.com

Janet Purcell
For Times of Trenton

It's not often a gallery in Lambertville has an exhibition of works by a living artist who has exhibited in Le Salon des Beaux Arts in the Louvre and the Grand Palace of the Champs Elysées in Paris. I venture to say it has never happened in that quaint little river town. But it is happening now at the DeBogat/Belenikin Fine Art Gallery at 5 Lambert Lane, right there on the river's edge where there are 63 still life and landscape paintings by internationally recognized artist Elena Bogatyr on display.

Highlighting the collection is "Mimosa from Dinard," a 40-by-32-inch oil that is fresh from being exhibited at the royal palace of the Louvre Museum in Paris. Ildico Karvalis, who curated the exhibit, translates the artist's comment that this painting, as well as "Mimosa from St. Tropez" celebrate the return of spring.

In "Mimosa from Dinard," Bogatyr suggests a field of the flowers in the distance but draws our attention to those right up close. It is as if you are standing with her where they grow. Green twigs and leaves are interspersed in the soft-edged profusion of gold and yellow blooms.

Karvalis stresses that Bogatyr never works from a photograph, but always from nature and quotes the artist: "She says to me, 'If you work from a photo, the air will not be in it.'"

And you do feel that breath of air in all of Bogatyr's landscapes, florals and, surprisingly, even in her floral still life paintings. "Mimosa from St. Tropez" brings the freshness of more gold and yellow mimosas indoors. They fill a blue-and-white china pitcher with sunlit abandon while a sprinkling of leaves and petals lie in the reflection on a shiny tabletop.

Related in translation by Karvalis and on her website, LouvreArtist.com, Bogatyr says, "My childhood passed in a country of harsh winters. I only saw the tiny twigs of the mimosa tree in spring. Now for 30 years I have been living on the banks of the English Channel where huge mimosas are covered with thick blossoms every spring. These are my strongest impressions as an artist. They are my favorite subject. To me they are a symbol of the annual revival of life, the power of the sun's light, wealth, joy, unconditional love."

The beauty of nature fills the walls in the DeBogat/Belenikin Fine Art Gallery. There's a



Elena Bogatyr brings her artwork, including the oil painting "Buttercups," to the DeBogat/Belenikin Fine Art Gallery in Lambertville through May 2019. Courtesy of the artist

vast field carpeted with violet, blue and lavender wildflowers that give way to spring green grasses and trees. There are pink and blue hydrangea bushes proliferating up the side of an old stone building. There are white peonies that fill a canvas and a pair of beached sailboats perhaps waiting for the tide to change.

Since 1998, Bogatyr has crossed and re-crossed the Emerald Coast for color, light, following seasonal cycles. Karvalis says Bogatyr sometimes drives more than 1,000 km (approximately 620 miles) a day to find the right landscape to paint.

On the gallery wall, surrounded by flowers, landscapes and coastal scenes, is a charming painting of roosters strutting in the sun and white chickens pecking the ground around an old brown barn. Karvalis translates Bogatyr's story: "For many years I went to Burgundy. There was a farm with cocks nearby, more than 100 simply living for the joy of the owner who was a vegetarian. I never saw a bigger farm in my life. There is a shed and everything remained there, as it was

before the war, and a lot of roosters and chickens."

She says she lured them to come close with sweet buns and cookies. "For the sketch, I needed to see them so near me and see their eyes. And no one was allowed to eat those cookies."

To say this exhibit is museum-quality would be an understatement. The gallery is not large and all the framed paintings are displayed salon-style. When you enter, you are quite literally surrounded by fine art.

According to Karvalis, the first time Bogatyr arrived in Lambertville she fell in love with the little city. "All the little shops, the galleries, the river — from the Seine to the Delaware. From the Louvre to Lambertville, right?"

Yes, right. Bogatyr will be enjoying Lambertville again. She will be at the opening reception Friday from 6 to 9 p.m. when there will be cocktails, refreshments, live music and 67 works of art. She will also be at the gallery Saturday and Sunday during regular business hours before she returns to Paris.

GoodTimes

On the cover

Carl Wallnau and Joy Franz co-star in "The Triumph of Love" at the Bristol Riverside Theatre. Photo courtesy of Bristol Riverside Theatre.

The Arts

Fine Art, 2
Theater, 3
Backbeat, 10

Dining

Bill of Fare, 4
Capsule reviews, 5

Movies

"Deadpool 2," 6-7
"Book Club," 8
Movie times, 8

Miscellaneous

Retro, 9
Events, 10-11

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Published by

The Times,
413 River View Plaza
Trenton, NJ 08611

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