

Reflecting the fabric of Chatham-Kent

WHITESPACE EXHIBITION OPEN TODAY

By **HEATHER TRAVIS**
The Daily News

Headlines pulled from The Chatham Daily News will be featured in a video art installation by German artists at the Thames Art Gallery exhibition.

The multimedia exhibition, called *whitespace*, features four artists exploring the perceptions and intersections of public and private spaces. The exhibit opens Thursday and runs until May 4.

"The theme centres around the artist's perception of space . . . and how these spaces can overlap," said gallery director and curator, Carl Lavoy.

Among those, Elke Utermoehlen and Martin Slawig, of Berlin artistic organization *black-hole factory*, have adapted archival local news headlines into the video.

Lavoy said the pair took snippets of front-page headlines in the Daily News, some from December 2007, and combined them with images that interpreted the headlines to make the installation relevant to Chatham-Kent.

"We are bringing in artists well outside our region," he said. "(But) it reflects the fabric of the community."

The art gallery has partnered with the Retro Suites Hotel in Chatham for the presentation of the German video exhibit. The artist meet and greet on Thursday will also be hosted by the Retro Suites Hotel in the All Shook Up suite from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

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Lavoy said the partnership provides an opportunity to "take art outside of the walls of the gallery" and into the community.

Both the artists and the Retro Suites are interested in blending traditional and historic elements with contemporary amenities and technology, said Ron Laroche, marketing director for the hotel, in a news release.

Also featured in the exhibit is Quebec artist Genevieve

Chevalier.

Lavoy said Chevalier became interested in the community of Pain Court and incorporated images and cardboard templates of French Canadian chairs from the Pain Court area into her installation.

"Even though we are bringing these artists from all over the globe, we really wanted the work to still respond to the area," he said.

London-based artist Derek McLarty completes the artist bill, with paintings of realistic public locations, such as an old-fashioned schoolroom or a restaurant, that are void of people. Lavoy said this questions the perception of public versus private spaces.

"The artist is really reflecting that image of a public space, but it's actually intriguing that there is actually no people in them. Sometimes there is private situations in those public spaces," he said.

The opening reception for *whitespace* will be held at the Thames Art Gallery from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. and is open to the public. Details from the latest instalment of the Thames Art Gallery Community Arts Initiative, called *Cut it Out*, will also be announced. The gallery is open from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. daily.



JUSTIN CARTIER PHOTO

Genevieve Chavalier hangs her installation piece titled "Collection à la Capucine" at the Thames Art Gallery Wednesday, in preparation for the *whitespace* multimedia exhibit. There is an artist meet and greet at the Retro Suites Hotel tonight from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. to officially launch the exhibit.