



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND GALERIE DONALD BROWNE

Lynne Marsh's film *Planterwald* (2010), as seen in this production photograph, is part of the *Ecotopia* exhibit.

Art alert

Ecotopia exhibit's dozen artists examine environmental crisis

Robert Reid, Record staff

KITCHENER— Few concerns worry Canadians more than the threat of environmental degradation on our beleaguered planet.

Many believe the assault on the biosphere puts our very survival at risk. Prime Minister Stephen Harper triggered an onslaught of public outrage when his government bullishly tried to fast-track approval for a pipeline from the Alberta oilsands to the British Columbia coastline after gutting the national environmental review process. Such cautionary controversy makes *Ecotopia* not only relevant, but urgent.

Ecotopia

Ecotopia
Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery
On view through
Jan. 28
Information and gallery hours available online at www.kwag.ca

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Ecotopia assembles work of 12 artists working in a variety of media

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Organized and circulated by the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, the multimedia exhibition opened Friday and continues through Jan. 6.

The opening proved timely because it fell a day after Allan Casey visited Waterloo Region as part of the annual One Book, One Community initiative.

Casey's Governor-General's Award-winning book, *Lakeland*, examines environmental issues in the context of the country's extensive network of freshwater lakes.

Guest curator Amanda Cachia, an Australian-raised, freelance curator pursuing a doctorate at the University of California, assembled a dozen artists who work in a variety of media spanning drawing, painting, sculpture, installation, photography, video and digital imaging.

The exhibition borrows its title from *Ecotopian* fiction, a literary sub-genre wherein utopian and

dystopian themes clash in a wild vortex of dream and nightmare.

The exhibition vibrates within a dynamic of pastoral and urban, natural and manufactured, protection and exploitation, conservation and destruction, nostalgia and futuristic vision as it challenges notions of modernity and progress.

Pinocchio is a large, mixed-media installation constructed by the Montreal collective BGL (Jasmin Bilodeau, Sebastian Giguere, Nicolas Laverdiere)

It consists of a highly stylized plywood tree with plastic, green

leaves. A horizontal, rotating limb is balanced at the other end by a dangling chainsaw.

The installation evokes associations with clear-cut logging which is a metaphor for many forms of destructive resource exploitation encompassing forestry, mining, energy and hydroelectric practices.

Dagmara Genda's *Panorama* is a circular, collage-mural suspended from the ceiling.

Viewers are invited to ascend a platform and contemplate the inside of the mural by rotating 360 degrees.

Drawn from various nature books and tourism brochures, the imagery depicts an apocalypse of slaughtered and eviscerated wildlife that raises questions about Canada's uneasy identification with notions of wilderness which has increasingly become commodified.

For *Untitled*, Kate Wilson drew directly on the white gallery wall with a black marker.

Her frenzied image evokes a sense of the destructive forces that arise from within the world of nature (tornadoes, hurricanes, tidal waves, floods) as opposed to

such forces as urbanization, transportation and industrialization that attack nature from the outside.

The Nurse and Envelop, a couple of meticulously detailed watercolours by Tristram Landsdowne, blur the lines between architecture and landscape by depicting abandoned and dilapidated structures overrun with fecund vegetation.

After closing in Kitchener, *Ecotopia* will tour across Canada during 2013-14.

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THE BEST MOVIE I'VE SEEN ALL YEAR!"
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"★★★★★"
THERE'S BEEN NO MORE ACCOMPLISHED OR MASTERFUL

MOVIE DIRECTORY

SHOWTIMES VALID SATURDAY, 9/29 THRU SUNDAY, 9/30

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FINDING NEMO 3D (G) Sat. & Sun. 1:20, 4:05, 6:45, 9:20	STARS IN SHORTS (NR) Sat. & Sun. 8:50	HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA (PG) Sat. 12:40, 3 Sun. 12:50, 3:10
RESIDENT EVIL: RETRIBUTION 3D (14A) Sat. & Sun. 1:50, 4:45, 7:45, 10:20	FOR A GOOD TIME, CALL... (18A) Sat. & Sun. 7	HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 3D (PG) Sat. 5:20, 7:40, 9:55
THE DARK KNIGHT RISES (PG) Sat. & Sun. 12:45, 4:20	BOOKSHELF CINEMA	
THE CAMPAIGN (14A)		