

Sunday, November 8, 1998

C'est magnifique

Spectators stepped back into the 1890s Saturday as they toured a Paris-style art salon in downtown Elgin. The Salon des Beaux Arts was part of the Bubotto Fine Arts Salon exhibition, which featured artists, from left, Burt Leveille, Dawn Blais, Amy Monday and Danielle Rhea. The exhibitors are looking at Leveille's exhibit, called an art installation. See story on Page 4.

Daily Herald Photo/Bri Peterson



Art exhibit brings taste of 19th century Paris to Elgin

BY AMY E. WILLIAMS
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Patrons stepped inside Facaccia's Restaurant in downtown Elgin Saturday and were whisked away to the 1890s, where they visited an exquisite art salon along the Seine in Paris.

Pierre August Renoir roamed the halls, explaining his inspiration for the Thinker, and Mary Cassatt displayed her latest paintings.

They also came across works from modern-day artists of Bubotto, who organized "The Salon des Beaux Arts" exhibit.

Bubotto President Dawn Blais said the group of artists sponsored the free exhibit to get people interested in art. "We want to celebrate art and to turn the public on to us," Blais said. "We're trying to introduce people to art and we thought this exhibit was a fun way to get them involved."

Bubotto's artists donned ball gowns and feather boas for the hands-on exhibit. They also encouraged visitors to dress for the period, which some did. A handful were

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wearing berets, while others came in sequined dresses, similar to those that patrons at an 1890s art salon might have worn.

Visitors roaming the halls of the salon viewed artistic media from opera to ice sculpture by artists 3 to 85 years of age. The artists had painted and sculpted pieces in the style of their favorite artist from the period.

Artist Bert Leveille, dressed in an elaborate gown, led spectators upstairs at Facaccia's to view her "installation" painting piece, which took years and years of work to bring together.

Meanwhile, employees passed French hors d'oeuvres around to spectators. The group also involved children in the day, by having them make their own artistic creations.

Tia Jones of "Whatever Comes to

Mind Puppets" also entertained the children, opening up their minds to the world of marionettes.

Throughout the day others displayed their art during live shows. Chef Robert Childers of Chauls Catering carved an ice sculpture of the Eiffel Tower and Dr. Rise Jones sang opera from the era.

"By having demonstrations of the era, it's a way to show people what it was like," Blais said. "People always ask how we got started. This is the type of salon we modeled ourselves after."

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