

By Rod Urquhart, Special

“Buon giorno everyone!”

That’s now the greeting of the Georgina Art Centre & Gallery Curator Ewa Chwojko – and you are probably wondering ‘why’?

That’s because the Georgina Arts Centre & Gallery has gone on a world scale and the name ‘Georgina’ is now known all over Italy!

Ewa , her talented composer husband Steeve and 10 volunteers have recently been in Udine Italy with 30 paintings by Italian-Canadian world-class painter Albert Chiarandini (1915-2007) for a celebrated art exhibit (Sept. 19 – Oct. 16) in the Udine City Hall. They left Sept. 12 and returned Oct. 19. All expenses were completely covered by the volunteers and donations prior to the trip.

As Ewa explained in an e-mail from Udine, “Here in Italy, people really appreciate the arts. The Mayor of Udine sent four of his staff to help us set up the exhibition. He even took the trouble to find one who spoke very good English, in case we had communications problems. They seemed like art historians, because they asked us lots of questions about the art and artist.”

“Even the Mayor could not wait for the opening ... he dropped by to say hello and look at the paintings. This exhibition has certainly generated enormous interest here. And the Town of Georgina logo, together with the gallery logo are front and centre everywhere. The name ‘Georgina’ is becoming internationally known,” added Ewa, who said the Italian press were “all over” this exhibit.

For the official opening of the exhibit, two big spaces of the Palazzo D’Aronco were booked . One was gallery space, where the paintings were displayed, and another was Sala Ajace (a conference room) where all the official speeches and the concert took place. More than 100 guests celebrated with the delegation from Georgina. Professor Anna Pia de Luca from the University of Udine was MC and there was sitting for the official guests. The Mayor of Udine, Furio Honsell, was the first speaker and spoke “beautifully about the importance of the arts and Canada.” Then an honorary consul of Canada said a few words. Joan Tadier, GACAG Board Member and Albert’s daughter spoke, along with Curator Ewa. After the speeches, a string orchestra played Steeve’s original composition entitled Dentro. After that, Steeve and Ewa gave a 20-minute slide presentation on the celebrated artist – Albert Chiarandini, noted Ewa.

After the official part of the ceremonies, everyone moved into the gallery. “Many people approached me to congratulate me and ask questions and discuss the paintings. I wish my Italian was better, but I managed,” reported Ewa on the successful delegation and international exhibit by the GACAG.

Information about this exhibition (and the GACAG and Georgina town name) is on the Town of Udine website and also on the Friuli region tourism website... not to mention the GACAG website. As Ewa noted, “this is great advertising!”