

Couch surfing becomes art at gallery

By Dominik Kurek

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Mississauga and Syracuse, N.Y., share a similar identity — or lack thereof. So what happens when artists from each city collaborate on a project?

The result is a video exhibit that proves each city has a culture of its own despite the proximity to a larger urban neighbour.

"Hopefully people can feel like there is culture in Mississauga, that there is something happening," said Alison Kobayashi, an art and art history student at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) who worked on the project. "Hopefully they'll feel like it's a contemporary show and it can compete with the city in a way."

Kobayashi, 24, was chosen to collaborate with Christina Kolozsvary, 21, an art video student at Syracuse University.



Couch surfers. Alison Kobayashi is chatting online with Christina Kolozsvary (bottom left corner) in this photograph. They are the Couch-surfing-in-Mississauga/Couch surfing-in-Syracuse, artists. *Submitted photo*

Couch surfing in Mississauga/Couch surfing in Syracuse opens Thursday at the Art Gallery of Mississauga.

The artists communicated online and at times stayed at each other's homes. They got the name for the project because they would sleep on each other's couches during their visits.

"It's kind of a young thing. It's informal. We would just crash on each other's couch," she said.

Each project is distinctly different. They're both a series of numerous short video clips but Kobayashi's is about the progress of growing up through Girl Guides in Mississauga. Kolozsvary's project depicts a childhood love for Elvis.

Also opening Thursday is the exhibit, *Illuminating Peace*, by Amy Loewan.

The exhibit consists of eight large woven banners inscribed with calligraphy and computer-generated type in more than 30 languages. The words were chosen by the artist because she believes they convey a message of world peace.

The opening reception for both shows, which runs to March 22, begins at 6 p.m.

The gallery is located at 300 City Centre Dr. in City Hall. For more information and gallery hours visit www.artgalleryofmississauga.com.

dkurek@mississauga.net