

# THE SCUGOG STANDARD SHOWCASE

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## Margie Kelk exhibit at the Farndale

'Situation, Positioning, Location' - each a witty yet telling commentary on the uneasy relationship between Chinese culture and China's headlong rush into the 21st century, Margie Kelk's wall panels and large fans juxtapose brushwork, calligraphy and photography.

On exhibit June 28 to July 30 at the Kent Farndale Gallery in Port Perry, the works in this show are derived from pages in the artist's recent book, *Caged*, in which she equates the Chinese love of caged birds with the situation of those in China imprisoned by poverty and poor living conditions.

Incorporating traditional Chinese iconography, such as opera masks, horses and calligraphy, her works highlight the country's ancient craftsmanship, the ephemeral beauty of its landscape and the ravages wrought by industrial pollution.

Each of *Situation, Positioning, Location's* six framed photography-based wall panels features a single subject. In one, a tomb figure provides a humorous poke at luxury-goods counterfeiting. It depicts warrior Zhong Kui deriving great strength and validity from his designer-logo-emblazoned sword and fan.

A frequent visitor to China, Ms. Kelk was especially moved by a visit to the coal-mining region of Datong, west of Beijing. There, she toured sites of exceptional beauty, including the Yungang Caves with their ancient Buddhist carvings and the centuries-old Hanging Monastery attached by poles to the side of a cliff. Impressive as those sites were, it was the awful drabness endured by its inhabitants that touched her the most.

Lumps of coal lined the streets, piles of coal stood in doorways, ready to be used as fuel, and the acrid, choking smell of coal dust was everywhere, she recalls. The inhabitants, moreover, looked weathered and depressed. "This sad reality," she said, "was quite a contrast to the graceful flowers and singing birds to be found in so much traditional Chinese art and handiwork, examples of which were for sale at the various tourist sites I visited."

Currently president of the Propeller Centre for the Visual Arts in Toronto, Margie Kelk's award-winning mixed-media works have been exhibited widely in group shows in Canada and the United States. She holds a

graduate diploma from the Toronto School of Art and a PhD in Romance Languages from John Hopkins University. As a young woman, Ms. Kelk studied drawing and painting at l'École des hautes études in Paris under Jean Dubuffet and Victor Vasarely, among other leading lights.

Please be sure to join the artist for her opening reception on Saturday, June 28, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The gallery is located inside the Scugog Memorial Public Library at 231 Water St., Port Perry.

The Kent Farndale Gallery exhibits the works in a variety of media of emerging and established artists and artisans, both local and international. For more information on this and upcoming shows, call Sarah Gentles, Public Service Coordinator, Scugog Memorial Public Library, at 905-985-7686.