

Artists from sister city share

USA

By RICK MARSI
Staff Writer

It is easier to draw than to speak, says artist, Nicole Prevosteau — especially if your language is French, and you are showing your work to Americans.

A resident of La Teste-de-Buch, Binghamton's sister city on the Atlantic coast in southwest France, Prevosteau has allowed her watercolors and ink drawings to speak for her during a 12-day visit to the Southern Tier that ends Monday.

Prevosteau and Servant Ermes, a sculptor from the City of Bordeaux near La Teste, will show their works from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Sunday at the Plaza Gallery on the second floor of Binghamton City Hall on Hawley Street.

Joining them will be Bill Artim and Nancy

Bowen, Binghamton painters whose month-long exhibition, "Paintings of La Teste-de-Buch, France" begins Monday at the gallery and runs 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays through Sept. 27.

Artim and Bowen were part of a Binghamton delegation that visited La Teste last summer.

Hosted by the City of Binghamton and sponsored by the Studio School and Art Gallery, Sunday's exhibition will feature 25 works by Prevosteau and 10 by Ermes.

Included among Ermes' works will be a 4-foot-high sea horse with special meaning. Like the carousels of Binghamton, the sea horse serves as La Teste's identifying symbol. At a Labor Day picnic in Recreation Park, Claude Espied, La Teste's mayor, presented the sea

horse sculpture to the City of Binghamton on behalf of La Teste.

In creating the sea horse, Ermes used a material common to many of his works: a carbon compound he has developed by chemically combining carbon fibers with crude oil. Describing himself as a carbon alchemist, the artist calls the glossy black material *diamond noir* ("black diamond").

Beverly McLean, Binghamton's art curator and director of the Studio School, says Ermes' vision — his philosophy of art and how it mirrors the human condition and meshes with daily life — brings power to his work.

The vision upon which Ermes has focused recently is a building he calls an International Necropolis Museum. Proposed for construction in La Teste, and receiving favorable study

there, the four-story structure would house an art museum as well as lower-level storage vaults in which cremated ashes of "subscribers" would be kept in hollow carbon statuettes crafted by Ermes.

During their American visit, Ermes and Prevosteau visited the Roberson Museum and Science Center in Binghamton, the Arnot Museum in Elmira, the gallery and art department at the state University Center at Binghamton and the Johnson Museum at Cornell University in Ithaca. They also traveled to the studios of local artists, including sculptors Madeleine Vanderpool of Harpersville and Yvonne Hobbs of Nichols.

Prevosteau — who considers her best watercolors those she finishes quickly, "without too much detail, or make-up" — found both

women inspiring.

Through interpreter Kirsten Fogg, Prevosteau called the 78-year-old Vanderpool, "very young, very open in her approach." Of Hobbes' work, she said she was surprised and delighted to see such large, powerful pieces — some in steel and bronze — executed with ease by a woman.

Focusing her own work on human figures drawn in Chinese ink and florals done in watercolor, Prevosteau discovered a brand new color while driving upstate New York highways: a shade of blue found in chicory flowers that sprout like weeds by the roadside.

"What a gorgeous color," said the former art instructor, who exhibits regularly in La Teste. "We have blue back at home, but we do not have blue quite like that."

their visions at Sunday exhibit

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Art show today

of La Teste-de-Buch, Binghamton's sister city in France, and Servant Ermes, a sculptor from the City of Bordeaux near La Teste, will show their works from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. today at the Plaza Gallery on the second floor of Binghamton City Hall on Hawley Street. (Above: Chinese ink drawing by Prevosteau).



Servant Ermes, a sculptor the City of Bordeaux

Art from France



PHOTO COURTESY ED ASWAD/CARRIAGE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHY

Claude Espied, mayor of Binghamton's sister city, La Teste-de-Buch, presents a statue of a sea horse to Binghamton Mayor Juanita Crabb. Art from La Teste will be on display Sunday at the Plaza Gallery in Binghamton. See story, page 7D.