

Acoustic mix set

Folk/acoustic performers Jeannette and Earl will appear at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 25, at Living Room Coffee House, 9365 Clarence Center Road. Call 741-4026 for information.

East meets West

Clarence resident in art exhibition at Buffalo State College

by JUDI KURTZ
Reporter

Professor Elaine Polvinen of Buffalo State College has experienced a year of cultural awakening due to a project entitled, "Inspirational Chinese Designs, East and West Interpretations, Digital Textile Designs."

The project is on exhibit at Upton Hall Gallery, Buffalo State College, 1300 Elmwood Ave., until Oct. 4.

Polvinen, a Clarence resident and professor of computer-aided textile design, lecturer Shen Li of the Capitol Normal University, Fine Art College, Beijing, China and Yimeei Wang, associate professor of Textiles and Clothing Department, Fu-Jen Catholic University of Taipei, Taiwan collaborated on a project that represents personal interpretations of traditional Chinese art found in paintings and works of pottery.

The goal of the project was to see if professors from different cultures located in different countries could combine talents and knowledge to develop digitally designed textiles.

The project was started due to the initiative of Professor Zhang Jie, director of the Center for China studies. Jie wanted to gather a cross section of faculty and administrators from Buffalo State, said Polvinen, and bring them to Chinese universities to meet like professors. The trip was to last for 10 days.

Jie is founder of the China Center, said Polvinen. The China Center focuses on developing relations between United States and Chinese scholars. Student exchange programs, education and consulting projects are just some of the center's activities.

It was on Jie's trip that Polvinen was introduced to Li in June 2001 at Capitol Normal University in China where Li was a lecturer.

The two women discovered through an interpreter that they had similar educational backgrounds and interests.

In a summary report written by Polvinen, Li and Wang, the goal of the project was to see if "professionals from very different cultures could (with language restrictions) work together digitally to develop a collaborative project based on mutual common interests that focus on sharing and combining professional strengths."

Despite a language barrier and an ocean's divide, the project began with Polvinen and Li communicating design goals, objectives and concepts through e-mail.

The first few months of the project were slow and difficult, said Polvinen, due to the language barrier. Li spoke very little English and had to find interpreters to translate e-mails and other forms of commu-



Shen Li and Elaine Polvinen created interpretations of traditional Chinese art using digital technology. The exhibit is located at Buffalo State College, Upton Hall, until Oct. 4.

Photos by John Rusac

nication.

Wang came on board in the fall of 2001. She was working on a project, "Tradition and Innovation," since 1986, she said, and received government grants in Taiwan to work on "Tradition and Innovation of Textile Design" with Polvinen and Li.

The two projects were very similar, and Wang was a major force in moving the project along, said Polvinen. Her mastery of the English language was also a huge help.

"I think this project collaborated with three different artists from from different backgrounds," said Wang. "Therefore, we use same language that is textile digital printing. In this global language and interest to share with others."

For the next phase, the women worked independently, researching and selecting imagery for design inspirations from historical Chinese decorative designs, Polvinen said. The research was burned onto CDs.

From August to November, each artist selected inspirations from the CD's for the project and hand painted or drew each

as storage space. Processor speed was also an issue."

Polvinen used her images as fabric wall posters and scarves. She said many people thought her work was actually created by Li, as it had a stronger Chinese influence to it than Li's did.

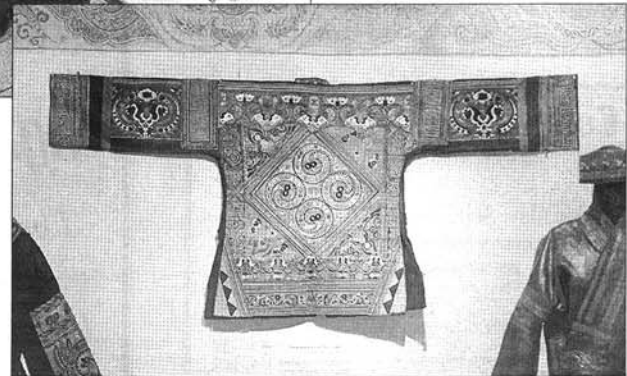
Li used her inspirations as designs found on traditional Japanese clothing, such as jackets and skirts. She described her style as abstract and said she favored traditional Chinese colors like red, which represents marriage in China. Like Polvinen, she also created fabric wall posters.

Once the project was completed, a web site, www.cadtexiledesign.com was designed to showcase the colorful creations.

It was decided that the project would be displayed in each of the artists countries. In January of 2002, Polvinen and Wang sent their artwork to China for the first scheduled art exhibit. Once the U.S. show ends, the work is being shipped to Taiwan for the final show.

Li is staying with Polvinen for four months in her Clarence home. It is Li's first lengthy trip to the United States.

While here, she is continuing to learn the English language, said Polvinen. During the day, Li sits in on lectures given by Polvinen and Jie.



A traditional Chinese jacket, as designed by Shen Li. Li used inspirational designs to cover the jacket.

image onto paper. Then, those images were scanned into a digital format for further development by the artist.

Adding colors, rearranging patterns and using layers of images were just some of the ways the artists created new inspirations digitally.

Once the images were created, they were downloaded from the computer, said Polvinen, and printed on to silk.

It was at this stage of the project that the group experienced technology problems. According to Polvinen, there were "issues relating to excessive loading and saving times, slow working pace for functions such as filters and special effects, as well

Li's first impression of Buffalo was that it was a "very big city." Polvinen explained that Li lives in a very small village in China with her husband and child and loves Buffalo.

Li has visited many of Buffalo's art galleries and museums. One night, Polvinen said, she took Li to see Terry Buchwald, the local Elvis impersonator. Li bought a T-shirt and enjoyed the music, she said.

The collaboration was a great experience, said Polvinen. She enjoyed working with both Li and Wang, and would participate in a multicultural project again.

