NEW YORK—They were supposed to celebrate the opening of their group exhibition at Dacia Gallery on Feb. 13, but a snowstorm whited out their plans for the evening. Gathering instead a week later, the exhibiting artists who attended introduced their paintings, each one fresh off the easel. Their audience—mostly friends and fellow artists—spilled out from a white-walled furnace of a room onto the sidewalk, filling the block with excited chatter. As the speeches began, voices dropped to a hush. What followed was no exercise in customary self-introductions and thank-yous—artists launched straight into sharing their inspirations, musings, unresolved artistic conundrums, and working methods. They were often self-effacing, thinking out loud, backtracking, and drew peals of sympathetic laughter from their listeners.

Dacia Gallery is a sliver of a space on Stanton Street on the Lower East Side, where hundreds of galleries have sprung up over the last few years. In a landscape dominated by pop, abstract, and conceptual art, Dacia is one of a handful of galleries in the city focusing on contemporary figurative art.

Lee Vasu’s unique vision for Dacia Gallery

He actively helps artists get into other galleries. “Not many galleries do that—‘Why would I give my artists away?’—I don’t look at it like that,” he said. “I want them to gain full exposure everywhere. It doesn’t help me or anyone else if they just have one solo show a year.”

Last year he sent the works of 27 artists on a three-month tour across France, Germany, and his native Romania. If a painting sold along the way, the buyer wasn’t allowed to have it until the whole tour concluded. When it comes to collectors, he sometimes finds himself turning people down—not because their offers aren’t good, but because their collection might not be the best home for an artist’s work. “I would rather sell it for a larger percentage off if I can get an artwork into an important collection because it helps the artist in the long run,” he said. The press and auction houses can push a young artist to dizzying heights. But to ensure that an artist’s career doesn’t fizzle out with the changing fashions requires a slow and steady approach based on patronage and building relationships between artists and collectors. Vasu said Dacia has attracted a younger group of collectors since he started showing artists in their 20s and 30s. “All these younger people started to come check it out,” he said. “Once they’re hooked, people keep coming back. We have a good group of supportive collectors.”

By Christine Lin
Epoch Times Staff

By Christie Lin
Epoch Times Staff

“Off Balance” by Erin Anderson, oil on canvas, 9 inches by 12 inches.

“In a landscape dominated by pop, abstract, and conceptual art, Dacia is one of a handful of galleries in the city focusing on contemporary figurative art.”

Lee Vasu at an exhibit at Dacia Gallery, September 2012.
James Cameron Says ‘Avatar 2’ Is ‘Going Very Well’

By Jack Phillips
Epoch Times Staff

Director James Cameron recently talked about his progress on “Avatar 2,” saying production is in the “early stages.”

“We’re still in the early stages. Right now we’re developing the software. I’m setting the scripts. We’re designing all the creatures and characters and the settings, and so on. So, I’m not actually shooting yet, but I’m doing all the other creative processes that lead up to that.”

Cameron added: “That’s the great thing about Avatar, it’s such a rich world, I can explore any theme or any idea that I want. Once you’ve got the characters that an audience loves, it’s great to surprise them and make changes and turns that they don’t expect.”

“And you don’t have to spend months of the movie setting up all that stuff, because the audience will remember from the previous film. I don’t want to bore. It’s a great world, I love being in the world of Pandora.”

The sequel won’t be in theatres until December 2016, and “Avatar 3” and “Avatar 4” will come out in 2017 and 2018.

‘LEGO Movie’ Sequel Set for May 2017

By Larry Ong
Epoch Times Staff

Still enjoying the top place at the box office, “The LEGO Movie” from Disney, Pixar and DreamWorks is scheduled for May 26, 2017. “Despicable Me 3” from Universal and Focus Features will arrive two weeks after its release.

The February blockbuster has helped Warner Bros. stand out in the animated film industry, where it faces stiff competition from DreamWorks and Disney-Pixar.

So far, the sequel is the only big animated film slated for May 2017. “Despicable Me 3” and a new Pixar movie are June releases.

A Gallery Where Artists Are the First Priority

Gallery continued from B1

A Learning Culture

The next big thing on Vasu’s agenda is a field trip of epic proportions. He’s taking applications from artists of all skill levels for a monthlong residency in Sibiu, Romania.

The artist, who was born and raised in India, said he was inspired to put together the opportunity after years of gathering people to explore and exhibit their work.

“A selection from “Becoming” by Thomas Wharton, oil on linen.

For more information, visit www.daciagallery.com

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