

# Another city lost?

## Exhibit remembers Chernobyl

By SUSAN HALLETT

OTTAWA—History tells us about abandoned cities that were once prosperous, such as the fabled Babylon, Homer's Troy (remains of which were discovered in the 19th century), and, of course, Pompeii.

New sites of abandoned cities continue to be discovered. The Peruvian Machu Picchu is fairly well known to travellers, but there is also the sacred city of Caral-Supe, an even older site in Peru, unexplored until 2000 when it was proven to have been built between 3000 and 2100 B.C., thus making it contemporary with the Egyptian Pyramids. Caral-Supe is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Some dead cities, such as a group of 700 abandoned settlements in northwest Syria between Aleppo and Hama, date back to the fifth century B.C. but archaeologists are not sure whether they were actually cities or simply rural villages. They were "lost" because trade routes changed.

This is definitely not the case

with Chernobyl and Fukushima. According to Toronto-based photographer Olena Sullivan, "there are several differences between these two disasters in not only underlying circumstances, but also in local government and world response." Sullivan thinks that the differences, which made Chernobyl a desolate wasteland, will contribute to eventually making the situation in Japan "liveable."

Photographs Sullivan took of the irradiated Exclusion Zone of Chernobyl and the ghost city of Pripyat in 2009 help commemorate the 25th anniversary of that horrific event which took place in April, 1986. An exhibition of those photos, called "Chornobyl Remembered," opened at the Ukrainian Embassy in Ottawa on April 12th and is on view until the end of June. The Ukrainian spelling of Chernobyl is used.

Fukushima is a city as well as the site of the infamous nuclear plant. It is known for its peach blossoms, the official flower of the city, and its official bird, the great tit. Now the question is not only how long birds,

farm animals and yes, people living in the 30-km. zone around the latest nuclear disaster will fare in the short-term, but also how long they will survive.

One huge difference between the disasters in Russia and Japan is that Chernobyl exploded, while the four reactors at Fukushima shut down. Those living in the five cities, eight towns, and three villages in Fukushima Prefecture, however, take little comfort in that fact.

Sullivan's web page tells us that when the Chernobyl reactor, which was just seven kilometres from the city of Pripyat, exploded it took three days for the Soviet government to make any effort to evacuate the city. Eventually, 1,100 buses evacuated some 50,000 residents who were never able to return. The reaction from the Japanese government, however, has been totally different. It acted immediately and didn't try to cover up the events.

Sullivan is hopeful that with the world's scientists ready to help, and the Japanese government willing to let them, the engineers and scien-



"The Break Room" shows a clock perpetually stopped at 6:30. Photographer Olena Sullivan finds it a great time capsule image of the ghost city of Pripyat. OLENA SERBYN-SULLIVAN/PHOTOLENA

tists at Fukushima will make Japan safe.

Yukio Edano, the Japanese government's leading spokesperson for the nuclear crisis and the radiation leaks, said recently about the decision to raise the crisis level from five to seven: "The change in the level reminds us the accident is very big. I apologize to the residents of the area, the people of Japan, and the international community."

Sullivan's photographs may also be seen in an exhibition called "Chornobyl: 25 Years Later" at KUMF Gallery, 2118-A Bloor Street West in Toronto from April 26 to May 4, and at the Bezpala Brown Gallery, 17 Church Street, Toronto, in "Volatile Particles. 25 Years after Chernobyl - with Mathew Merrett." In this exhibition the two artists explore man's impact on the environment and nature's resilience. Mathew and Sullivan blend

images of normality—the ghosts of the past superimposed on post-Chernobyl devastation and infestation—with present-day reality "amid the afterlife of the Exclusion Zone."

Susan Hallett is an award-winning writer and editor who has written for *The Beaver*, *The Globe & Mail*, *Wine Tidings*, and *Doctor's Review*, among many others. E-mail: hallett\_susan@hotmail.com.

# And you think naming a baby is difficult?

## Adventures in naming art

By CAROLYN HENDERSON

You know, if the economy gets REALLY bad, and, say, art sales are affected nationwide, then the Norwegian Artist and I will pick up second jobs with the interior and exterior paint companies: naming paint colours.

I found a dark orange the other day that's perfect for the bathroom wall—assuming that it becomes exclusively my bathroom—called Burnt Pumpkin. Accessorizing the seared gourd is a deep, warm cream dubbed Cheerful Cheesecake. Interesting. I have never seen a depressed cheesecake.

Now, I recognize that painting bathroom walls is not sufficient experience for getting a job naming paint chips, but the Norwegian Artist and I have a stellar résumé in our regular practice of entitling the man's fine art paintings.

I say stellar because, so far, every painting has a name, and the Norwegian Artist and I are still on speaking terms—as long as we're not discussing the colour of the bathroom walls.

When we first started, we were specific, along the lines of "Southeast Burgundy Hollow Road Just Off Highway 16." Real catchy.

I've seen similar nomenclature coming out of studios other than our own: "The 1832 Franz Liszt Schooner on Its Penultimate Voyage from Liverpool to the East Indies"—a great title if you're looking for the model ship or reading your way through a bout of insomnia.

Prosaiacally boring, however, is better than metaphysical mystique: "Cerebral Ululations Reflecting Upon the Symbiotic Correlation of Life and Expired Life," which, I assure you, is an atrocity of verbal slaughter that we have never committed. Sometimes it seems that the less there is in the painting, the longer and more convoluted the title, as if to make up for the paucity of visual substance.

Shorter is nicer, and sometimes obvious is best: "Coastline," "Polish Pottery," "Mountain Lake"—a technique that translates awkwardly to abstract work since the viewer's first response is, "Lake? What Lake?" although I suppose that it would get people to look more closely at the painting in a sort of Where's Waldo? fashion.

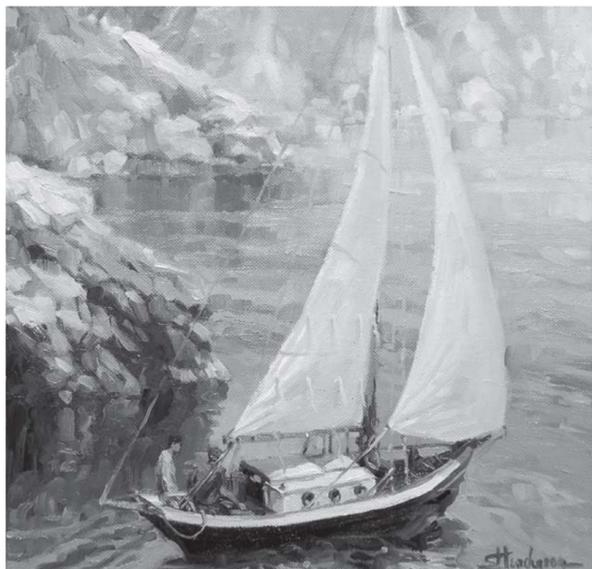
When all else fails, one can rely upon the actual location name—"Palouse Falls," "Chief Joseph Mountain," "Hurricane River."

As most people would not want "Cape Deception" on their walls or "Starvation Creek" (a surprisingly lush, blossoming picnic spot), other short, concise words must suffice: "Saturday" or "Cascadia," succinct expressions that convey a mood through the way they sound.

One of our favourite techniques, when we no longer feel like tossing adjectives and nouns back and forth



Naming art is a challenge. Distinctive, everyday words distinguish themselves and roll pleasantly off the tongue. "Daydreaming," oil on panel, 8 x 9. STEVE HENDERSON FINE ART



Succinct expressions for naming a painting convey a mood through the way they sound. "Saturday," oil on canvas, 12 x 12. STEVE HENDERSON FINE ART

over a glass of wine, is to type the word into Microsoft Word, right-click it, and look up the synonyms.

Prior to our stumbling, so to speak, upon "Stonework," we reviewed and rejected "Granite," "Quarry," "Brick Work," and "Building Material." "Masonry" made the mental leap into "Stonework," resulting thereby in one of our favourite titles.

"Passage" is another victor. In a moment of mirth, "Through the Crack" was tossed around, along with the lamentably punned "Starfish Gazing" and "Sunlight Piercing Through the Clouds and Reflecting Off the Turbulent Waters and Onto the Jagged Rocks Below—15." (Some wines have a higher alcohol content than others.)

We allow the occasional pun ("Clearwater Revival," "Moonlight Sail"), but have placed strict limitations on ourselves with these, especially if we come up with them after the second glass. Too much alliteration ("Winterwood Westering Walk," "Sensuous Sunset Sail") provides a laugh or two, but no serious pursuit.

Giving titles to works is one of those many "afterward" things that we never realized existed until the Norwegian Artist seriously pursued professional

painting (see what I mean about the alliteration? It's evily easy to ease into).

Because the Norwegian is a prolific artist, we find ourselves grabbing the thesaurus and blurting out random words on a regular basis—hegemony? ersatz? efflorescence?—an exercise that does little but confirm that we have never actually said any of these words aloud before.

So we go back to the beginnings and the essence of who we are—two ordinary people who aspire to do extraordinary things, and we settle on one to three descriptive words that roll pleasantly off the tongue: "Daydreaming," "Valley of Gold," "Zephyr," "Al Fresco," "Harbour Faire." They're easy to say but also distinctive, everyday words that distinguish themselves without pushing forward.

It's an art, you know—naming art.

Carolyn Henderson is the Polish manager of the Norwegian Artist, managing Steve Henderson Fine Art (Stevehendersonfineart.com), which showcases the work of the Norwegian Artist. A freelance writer, Carolyn is also the creator of the Middle Aged Plague humour column, which appears in newspapers and on her blog at Middleagedplague.areavoices.com.

# Annual Daffodil Gala another bloomin' success

By GIOVANNI

OTTAWA—The 23rd Annual Daffodil Gala, held at the St. Anthony Banquet Hall and Conference Centre, raised over \$25,000 for cancer research in Ottawa.

The popular fundraiser was attended by approximately 330 people, all of whom had the chance to win one of more than 200 prizes via silent auction or raffles.

A trip for two, won by Nadine Dirani and Mark Braithwaite to anywhere in North America including Hawaii and "sun destinations," was generously donated by

Kids' Horizons Air Canada as a door prize.

The event got off to a rousing start and maintained momentum as Emcees Francesco Di Candia (CHIN Radio), and Kimberley Sullivan (Ez Rock), kept events moving along smoothly.

Performing an eclectic mix of classic oldies, disco, and more current popular songs, the Showtime Party Band made sure everyone was up and dancing. Eugenio Bubba took portraits of the guests, which was another crowd pleaser.

Over the years, the Daffodil Gala

donors and patrons have raised a total \$425,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society.

More information can be obtained at [www.daffodilgala.ca](http://www.daffodilgala.ca), along with a picture gallery of this year's gala and a list of donors. Donations will be accepted until the end of September at the website. The Ottawa St. Anthony Italia Soccer Club and the Daffodil Gala Committee jointly hosted the gala. Next year's Gala has been booked for April 28, 2012.

Contact Giovanni for up coming events at [giovannipublicist@yahoo.ca](mailto:giovannipublicist@yahoo.ca)

# writers festival

613.562.1243 [writersfestival.org](http://writersfestival.org)

## JUST A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM CANADA'S FESTIVAL OF IDEAS: APRIL 28 TO MAY 3

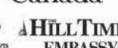
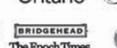
<p><b>April 28 @ 6:30 PM</b> <b>THE MYTH OF HUMAN PROGRESS</b> One on One with <b>Chris Hedges</b></p>		<p><b>April 30 @ 2PM</b> <b>A GLASS HALF-FULL</b> with <b>Joel Yanofsky, Shari Graydon and Neil Pasricha</b></p>	
<p><b>April 28 @ 8PM</b> <b>HOW TO RUN THE WORLD</b> One on One with <b>Parag Khanna</b></p>		<p><b>April 30 @ 4:00 PM</b> <b>IMMORTALIZATION COMMISSION</b> Science and the Strange Quest to Cheat Death with <b>John Gray</b></p>	
<p><b>April 28 @ 8:30 PM</b> <b>ALONE IN THE CLASSROOM</b> One on One with <b>Elizabeth Hay</b></p>		<p><b>May 1 @ 6:30 PM</b> <b>BEFORE THE BEGINNING</b> with <b>Madeleine Thien, Hisham Matar and Johanna Skibsrud</b></p>	
<p><b>April 29 @ 6:30 PM</b> <b>THE WRITER</b> One on One with <b>Bernhard Schlink</b></p>		<p><b>May 2 @ 8PM</b> <b>GHAZAL CONCERT</b> <b>Lorna Crozier, Rob Winger, Sandra Ridley, Robert Pinsky and the MEL M'RABET Quartet</b></p>	
<p><b>April 29 @ 8PM PM</b> <b>YOU ARE NOT A GADGET AND NEITHER IS THE UNIVERSE</b> with <b>Jaron Lanier and Lee Smolin</b></p>		<p><b>May 3 @ 8:30 PM</b> <b>RUNNING IN THE FAMILY</b> with <b>Sarita Mandanna, Antanas Sileika and Suzanne Desrochers</b></p>	

**ideas need words**








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