

Motel exploration an artistic endeavour

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Two Cawthra Park Secondary School graduates will speak Saturday about an art exhibition they're hosting in Toronto.

Alison Kobayashi and Gintas Tirilis recently opened Motel, at XPACE gallery in Toronto. The exhibition, which runs until July 25, focuses on dilapidated motels along Lake Shore Blvd. W. The artists will host a panel discussion at the gallery, starting at 2 p.m.

Richard Sewell, a teacher at Sheridan College, and Ron Butwell, who owns Shore Breeze Motel, will also be on hand, to discuss the history of motels in the area.

The artists got the idea for the show last winter when they searched Mississauga and Etobicoke for warm places to smoke. What they discovered was a strip of abandoned motels along Lake Shore Blvd. W near the border.

They became enamoured with the buildings and started to come back nightly to explore the ruins. Eventually, the pair decided to remove some of the items they found.

The exhibition is a collection that archives the many objects found in the motels. It includes documentary photography, dioramas, artist multiples and a narrative video installation inspired by the artists' experiences in the motels.

The artists describe the exhibition as, "a faithful, if sometimes humourous, record of the illicit navigation and an attempt to deal with the disappearance of these largely family-run establishments."

Both artists are graduates of the art and art history program offered jointly by University of Toronto Mississauga and Sheridan College.

Kobayashi, who won a MARTY Award in the Emerging Visual Arts category in 2007, was recently featured at the Art Gallery of Mississauga. She partnered with Syracuse art student Christina Kolozsvary for the Couch Surfing in Mississauga/Couch Surfing in Syracuse exhibit.

Tirilis has exhibited his sound sculptures and video installations in the Young and Restless exhibition at Justina M. Barnicke Gallery and Lennox Contemporary.

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Artists. Mississauga artist Alison Kobayashi (left), seen here at the opening of Couch Surfing in Mississauga/Couch Surfing in Syracuse exhibit at the Art Gallery of Mississauga, is joined by another local artist Gintas Tirilis for the Motel exhibit at the XPACE gallery in Toronto. *File photo*