

From New York with love

Artist Mikhail Gubin was born in the former Soviet Union but ended up in New York with his work being noticed by Al Pacino

Chancery Gallery in Bracebridge will have a distinctive New York feel to it when it welcomes the work of artist Mikhail Gubin.

The Russian-born painter has spent the last two decades in The Big Apple with his biggest claim to fame coming when one of his paintings *Tango Argentina* was selected by Al Pacino for display in the movie *Devil's Advocate*.

Gubin has been painting from a very early age.

"Apparently, my first scrawls made some impression on the people around me," he said. "I started receiving presents containing brushes and paint. From that moment on our house was filled with piles of paper and pencil stubs.



RAINY DAY. 'Rain in New York' is part of a collection of work by Russian-born artist Mikhail Gubin. He now makes his living in New York and will be displaying his work at Chancery Art Gallery in Bracebridge.

Submitted photo

Paint footprints and dirty spills could be seen everywhere."

Art classes were not the exclusive places where he used to draw in school. All his notebooks were filled with drawings. That did not make his teachers very happy and his parents even less.

"In addition, all cartoon portraits of teachers were ascribed to me," he said. "I suffered unjustly. As a result I became keen for justice."

"I began self-education. It consisted of private painting and drawing lessons, visits to museums and interactions with artists. Soviet Realism was the exclu-

sively accepted art form at the time. All attempts to show something new were condemned by the presiding contemporary government. That political tactic brought non-conformist artists to organize underground, so-called 'apartment' exhibitions. Whoever was searching for something new, something they could call their own, took part in those exhibitions. I was one of them."

Perestroika gave Gubin and others the opportunity to show legally for the first time. He was one of the young artists showing at Kharkov Art Museum and having inhaled a "breath of fresh

air," wanted more. He, along with many Soviet artists decided to emigrate, even though their decision was not welcomed by the authorities. Months of rallies, hunger strikes and arrests followed.

Eventually, in 1989 the authorities gave up and Gubin and his family were granted permission to leave the country. The route went through Vienna and Rome, New York where he has been actively participating in shows and artistic life.

His work has not gone unnoticed.

Neighbor's Baby by Gubin was recently named best in show at the 50th anniversary of Art of the Northeast U.S.A. at the Silvermine Guild Arts Center in Connecticut. The New York Times described the painting as an "emphatic figurative work aspiring to monumentality." It is just one of numerous awards for this painter during the past 20 years of working in New York City.