

Press Release  
*loop gallery*

**BETWEEN WORD AND FLESH - MARIA GABANKOVA**

**December 3, - December 24, 2005**  
**Opening Saturday, December 3, 2-5 PM**  
**Gallery hours: Wed - Sat 1-5, Sunday 1-4**  
**1174 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ontario**  
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Complex figurative paintings echo the radical essence of biblical narratives. „Here tenderness, community and fear jostle for space on the same canvas. Although there are images of apocalypse and darkness, compassion and humanity dominate.“ (Russell Smith)

Gabankova uses the human figure as an allegory exploring the meaning of spiritual reality in context of contemporary existence. These paintings pose questions, reveal the artist's struggle and search for reconciliation between the terrible, beautiful and faith. They look for an expression of hope.

**Maria Gabankova** has exhibited extensively in Canada, U.S.A and internationally. Recent shows include *Art Canada 5*, Prague Czech Republic, spring 2005, *6981 km from Toronto* in Bratislava, Slovakia and two retrospectives *The Body Redeemed* (2004 in Ancaster) and *The Body Broken* (2005 in Toronto).

In November 2005 Gabankova's commissioned portrait of Honourable Ch. Mayer - former Canadian Minister of Agriculture was unveiled at the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame at the Royal Ontario Winter Fair.

Gabankova has received several awards and her work is represented in private and public art collections in Canada and abroad.

The artist studied figurative drawing and painting at University of British Columbia, the Vancouver School of Art, Montreal School of Art and Design, and the Art Students League of New York.

Realist figurative representation with conceptual emphasis on the spiritual and Biblical has been the central theme of the artist's work. Portraiture also holds a special focus with an impressive record of commissioned portraits.

Gabankova lives with her husband Aleš Březina in Toronto. She is an associate professor at the Ontario College of Art & Design, and a member of several artists organizations and initiatives. She has been invited to serve on juries, panel discussions, conferences and work in film and theatre.

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