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# A R T

## A pointless connection

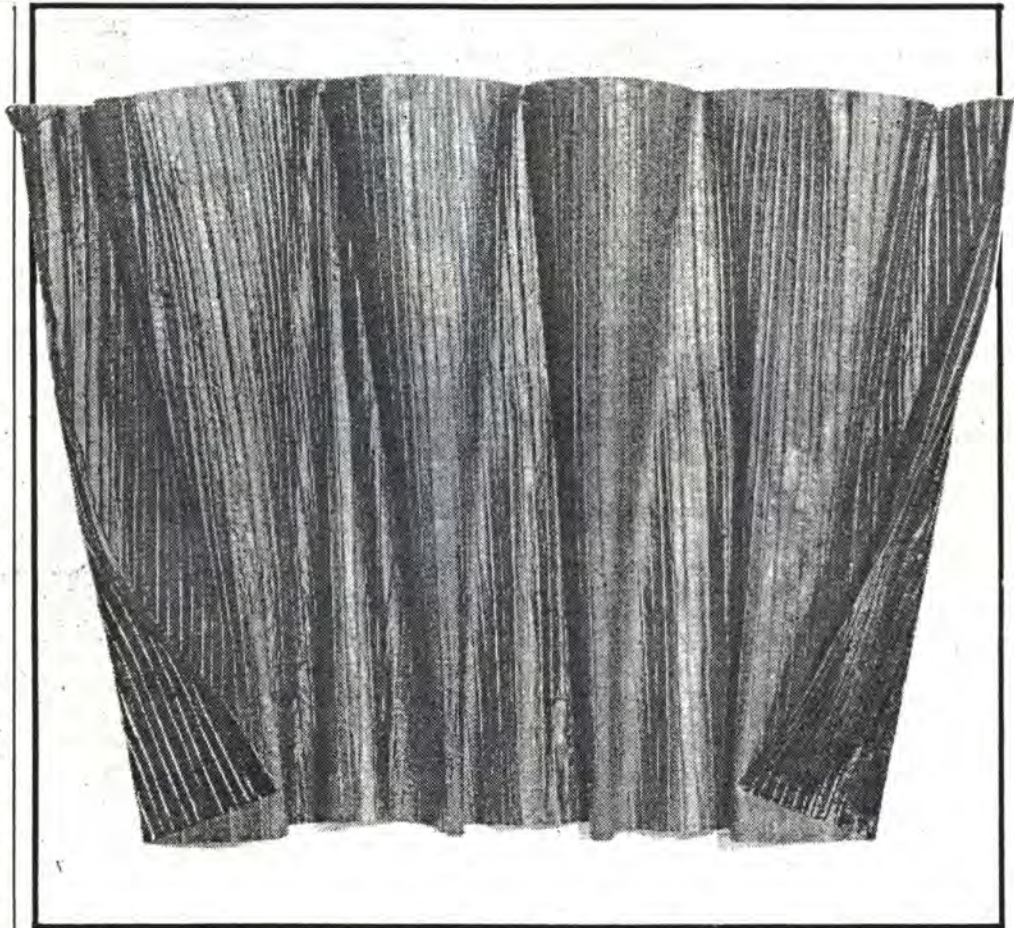
VANCOUVER ISLAND INVITATIONAL EXHIBITION  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, until Jan. 17

In case you hadn't noticed, this exhibition is what replaced the Vancouver Island Open Juried Exhibition five years ago. An open, juried exhibition was immensely popular with the artists and the community.

It gave everyone that illusion of democracy in which anyone could grasp the brass ring. Even a hope— so slight, so inconsequential —of acceptance in a show at the Art Gallery used to keep artists up late, working. The public had a chance to see work by people they knew, and could enjoy a diversity that had some relationship to current concerns in Victoria. Perhaps there were even discoveries to be made. But it was impractical for the gallery: difficult to insure, complicated to arrange, useless to judge, and often a bit of a wash in the final effect. And by its nature it excluded artists with pretentious ideas about their own grandeur. So now we have a show by two Victoria artists with a rather pointless geographical connection: The Vancouver Island Invitational Exhibition.

The exhibition is rather good. The artists chosen are relentlessly modern, and make some appeal to those whose appreciation is not a closed issue. Mary-Lynn Ogilvie's works are fabric, folded and opened, coated with color front and back. When she hangs them up they turn down like a bed.

The colors are rich and thick, chosen with taste. If you look closely at the folded overlapped top edges, you can imagine the mountains of China. She may have felt the works a bit too simple, for she included extraneous grace notes— sticks, triangles, counterpoints. They probably could be seen as measuring devices. I call them unnecessary. Her paintings are clear and strong.



Ogilvie's fabric: coated with color

George Allen is a painter on canvas. Brushed-in colors create simple pictorial tensions on the canvas, properly resolved in a painterly fashion. The works aren't a thrill in the gallery, but some are the sort you can live with— watch the play of light on them, use them as elegant background screens, hang them in stairwells in ferro-concrete buildings. My favorite is *Untitled* 1981. It is a long horizontal work in pale green, blue and pink, with a red flash on the left. It reminds me of a swimming pool. The criss-cross of impasto and stained paint effortlessly call forth ripples.

My companion had this to say:

"I kind of liked Mary-Lynn Ogilvie's. She had apparently spent a long time making the paintings, the pleats and the paint, nice even folds all the way down. His were pretty, but a bit boring. The calligraphy was heavy handed, compared to what

we've been seeing around here."

By the way, the catalogue cover is beautiful— a real sleeper —like venetian blinds into a world of unknown colors.

—Robert Amos

Robert Amos was assistant to the director of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1975-80.

## Christmas in Chinatown

IT'S NOT snowing on Christmas Eve in Chinatown. It's raining a bit and the neon is bleeding in pools down from the smiling Buddha and Don Mee. Is that



BOB GARLICK PHOTO

Chinatown: Dressed up all year.

the tinkle of sleigh bells or just the sound of the ragtime player piano jingling out from the back room of Jim's Antiques? The whispering rush of rain-wet tires on Fisgard Street washes it all away.

The blazing pink arrows, the glowing pagoda and the Golden Horse light up the

painted bricks and cars and baskets on the sidewalk. This is not a special Christmas show. No carols peal from tiny speakers hung above doorways. Christmas is here, though. In the window of the Oriental Book and Gift Shop, along with the incense sticks, is a ten-inch high Sino-Santa Claus. He's porcelain and holds a tiny panda in one hand and a sack in the other. Maybe he's P'u Tai on holiday.

Across the road the Chinatown Trading Company has pinned golden sprigs of holly to a red paper fan. The showpiece of the window is a fantasy in red and green—Chinese dollies having a tea party, insinuating the season's greetings by color alone.

The Fan Tan Gallery is a sort of Christmas dream—woodstove and woollens, crystal and Christmas tree. The pot-pourri wreaths and gingerbread angels, works of art from the Bentham household, are probably the nicest Christmas items in Chinatown. And the purring shin-caress of Noko Marie, the Gallery cat, conjures up a small-town-far-away serenity that need not be broken.

Perhaps a few cab-drivers and all-night misfits will see the break of this special day perched on stools at Quonley's. Hugo Spilker's pipe organs will make a joyful noise to celebrate Christ's birth in some other neighborhood. Another Christmas will have come to Chinatown.



Thinker Toys: just wait til Christmas

## Yule love it

**E**ATON'S DOWNTOWN Victoria store is one of the last stores in Canada to do a real Christmas wonderland animated window. As mall and skyscrapers cater less and less to a sidewalk crowd, the featured figures of Christmas displays have been left on the shelf. Whenever he can, Ken Little tries to get these mechanical dancers for his Eaton's branch in Victoria.

"We get lots of letters, phone calls, people wanting to know when the display will be up so they can bring the kids," Little says. "I think stores owe it to their public to have a fantasy display at least once a year."

For months prior to Christmas, the display department looks like Santa's workshop. Here are 14 lively dolls, still able to conjure up dreams. They stand on elevated bases which hide all manner of mechanical contrivances to make them move. Skaters pirouette, ballroom dancers circle one way and then the other, heads turn, bows are given and curtsies received. The dolls have stunning features, long noses and big eyes swept into graceful forms with make-up, paint and glitter.

Bill Patterson explains that the dolls were bought in 1945 from the Lord and Taylor store in New York. They weren't new then. But you wouldn't know it. Patterson gave them a lavish dressing up last year. Even with all the dolls functioning smoothly and their costumes spruced-up, it's still a three-day installation. The 10-person display crew are all involved, collecting greenery in the forest, painting backdrops and preparing to open the curtain today (Thursday) on a Christmas window to carry you back to the days when your Mom took you to see the magical windows.

Over at Thinker Toys, Yates and Broad street, a different kind of Christmas window has been commissioned by owner Lea Weir. A snowy, cuckoo-clock and gingerbread style village has been created by Jack Simon (famous for his outstanding

sets for Bastion Theatre and Pacific Opera.)

A marionette is waiting at the door to welcome all. Silver satin stars shine above Tom Kitten and the kissin' cousins. Toys old and new peep out from under the eaves and can be dimly glimpsed behind frosty windows. For this is a three-dimensional advent calendar— a new door opens every day. Behind the next might be an antique mechanical elephant or a diminutive choir of Christmas musicians. Everyone wants to see what hidden behind the big door at the bottom. But we'll all have to be good and wait for Christmas.

# A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME EXHIBITION

Swallowing the fame of painter F. H. Varley does take some chewing

By ROBERT AMOS

**R**EGARDLESS OF what has to be said about the paintings, Victoria is specially privileged to have the F.H. Varley centennial exhibition at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria until January 24. Other than Victoria, the exhibit will be seen only in Edmonton, Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto. We owe this showing to the efforts of the chief curator, Ian Thom. It is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see this artist's work, and is mandatory for all students of painting, art history, and anyone who ever goes to galleries or auctions.

"He tried to see deeply into the patterns that unite art, humanity and nature... But his findings were always tentative... He was at times indecisive, and was frequently more accomplished on a small scale... He got lost many times, but he never gave up the struggle." So says the catalogue, and I agree. This exhibit shows equal measures of success and struggle.

Varley will always be an icon of Canadian art history. He was a member of the Group of Seven; the National Film Board made a documentary about him; and his works now fetch huge prices. But we can't swallow the fame without some chewing.

The early stages of Varley's training gave him the equipment. Born in Sheffield, England, he learned to paint landscapes, low-keyed and moody, in the style of his day. The broken strokes focus on tone rather than form, and

show a debt to impressionism. Modelling by volume is replaced by a bold graphic pattern, the legacy of art nouveau and commercial art. As a young man he went to war and confronted a subject which couldn't be ignored—a landscape in turmoil, with incidental figures set in an existential field. The artist was trained and ready to go. But where?

To Canada. The subject matter in Canadian art was, more or less, limited to landscape and portraiture. Varley's portraits are masterful, strongly modelled, colored with a unique and intense originality. But he didn't have the temperament to be a sociable portraitist. His best work is the intense depiction of those he loved. And it is very good.

He made a connection with the Group of Seven before they grouped: He could paint in their style with ease—unpeopled scenes, broad strokes of clear color placed with rhythm and separation on a glowing golden wood panel. But Varley's mystic soul transformed this facile manner by introducing all sorts of things into landscape—broken trees, lonely forms, figures, sickle moons, furious brushwork and bizarre color schemes. Varley tried them all. Some work. Some don't.

Varley made discoveries significant to our vision of British Columbia. One of the most salient is a particular shade of blue-green. It is used in the hazy distances of Chinese landscape painting, and it's called malachite green. In the definitive (and justifiably expensive) catalogue, his grandson, Chris Varley, explains "the perceived 'color vibrations' emanated from objects, by the early thirties

saw his objects through a 'film of color'."

The second contribution is the moving focus. As Varley said, "the sea is here, and the sky is vast; and humans—little bits of mind—would clamber up rocky slopes, creep in and out of mountain passes, fish in streams, build little hermit cabins in sheltered places, and curl up in sleeping bags and sleep under the stars... I often feel that only the Chinese of the 11th and 12th centuries ever interpreted the spirit of such a country." Only those Chinese, and Varley.

Varley's work is not always so successful. Country churches, groups of figures in the landscape, woodland groves, the stuff of many gentle landscapists—these were not his *metier*. He could usually make this sort of subject into a good composition, but often the color is murky, the drawing cursory, and the paper cheap and browning. A great deal of the work on show is far from being stimulating. Because it's a big show, it's far too big to show him only at his best.

The large works are not my favorites. *Liberation* and *Dharana*, two of his most famous, may have been a glory to work on close-up, but from a distance they turn to pewter and putty, with a message too deep for such agitated painting.

But there are small surprises. The slightest sketch of all, *Dead Soldier*, has incredible power. Here is a drawing far beyond technique and prettiness. Just the subject, and the grime and haste and honesty of a moment forever imprinted on one man's mind.

These 150 paintings are surely the most important exhibit of Canadian art history we've seen in so long. •



Victoria's herbalist shop: the old Chinatown sketched by Robert Amos

## “Take two snakeskins and call me...”

**U**NTIL TWO weeks ago Man Yuck Tong, an 1880s herbalist shop at 544 Fisguard, was an authentic haunt of the old Chinatown. Behind orange plastic sunshades and jade plants, regulars occupied stools near a stove at the back and shared a curious water-pipe while the tourists bought wind chimes and wicker swans and kung fu shoes.

Though in later years it gave the appearance of just another oriental souvenir shop, the drawers of herbs, the cases of natural medicines and tools of the trade were all still there. But the clientele had grown old, and the young ones had been assimilated by western ways and Medicare. Vancouver's herbalists are doing well, but Victoria doesn't have enough new immigrants to keep the traditions vital.

The herbalist has now retired and sold the business. But Victoria hasn't lost this bit of history. The new owners are the Friends of the Provincial Museum. It seems that a few years ago a certain Dr. Ho from the National Museum of Man in Ottawa was here, identifying potential exhibits, and he made plans to buy the shop. But the indefatigable Dr. David Lai of the Uvic geography department decided it would be more relevant in our own Provincial Museum. Lai suggested it to Zane Lewis, head of the museum's modern history department, who passed on the idea to the Friends of the Museum.

The shelves and shop signs, boxes and baskets, and all the paraphernalia of the herbalist lore, including dried snakeskins

## Metaphysical failure

AN EXHIBIT OF STEPHEN HORNE  
at Open Space Gallery, 510 Fort St.,  
until Feb. 6, 383-8833

The Stephen Horne exhibit at Open Space this month apparently set out to rid us of the "aesthetics of objectification on the focusing of procedures on the object rather than on the sphere of relations assembled into art practice." The objects are supposed to be engaging enough to lead us into contemplation of the 'art practice'. It didn't work for me.

For those who saw the picture of *Nietzsche's Hammer* advertising the exhibit, perhaps an explanation is in order. So here it is, from the catalogue of the exhibit:

"Horne refers directly to the metaphysic-  
ure of technology in a work com-  
p . . . with a hammer and the name of  
Nietzsche. Nietzsche's name is burnt on  
the wood handle of a sledge hammer. It  
would appear that the hammer belongs  
to Nietzsche and that the work is a refer-  
ence to his desire to 'philosophize with a

hammer.' But in Nietzsche's philosophy Nietzsche is the hammer and the 'speech of the hammer' is deliberately iconoclastic. In this work, the hammer is both the product and the symbol of heavy industry. Nietzsche's name is purified by its fires, and the letter 's' is dropped from the name in order to speed its visual impact. The hammer therefore, does not belong to Nietzsche nor is it the 'speech of the hammer.' Nietzsche is the hammer's brand, its will to mastery, which is the speech of all things technological. The Nietzsche hammer expresses the unprecedented exuberance of modern man in the face of his creation— technological culture."

What do you make of that jargon, John Duffie?

— Robert Amos



because the place *must* be geared to tourism, and I suppose it makes lots of money. And that's not high art. But the fact is they give lots of wall space to local artists.

Good old Fenwick Lansdowne is represented by signed reproductions of his work. He is an excellent painter. If he would give the people in Victoria a close look at his original paintings it would do us all good. Not that anyone could afford to buy one, but the artists here could see how good he can be. After all, he lives here, doesn't he?

Carl Coger is a real professional, almost slick. I think he does portraits at shop centres. But he can really handle pastels, and moreover, I like his vision of landscape. Also worthy of mention is that his work is relatively inexpensive.

Stewart Brands shows at Crystal Gardens Gallery too. He is a young Victorian who paints tiny landscapes, mostly gardens, of Victoria and vicinity. He uses an intense palette which borders on the psychotic, and his mosaic-like brushwork reminds one of Van Gogh. But he has a sincerely personal vision, and you should see what Victoria looks like through his eyes. He's developing a strong style, slowly and surely. He'll be one to watch.

The Crease Family show at the Archives really does give a feel for "the sphere of relations assembled into art practice." By that I mean that through the personal objects collected we could understand a way of life which often resulted in art.

The Crease family archives are spread out before us. Letters and sketchbooks, photos, blueprints and tickets spill out, covered with signs of life. Of course, it's all tasteful—so were the Creases. The story is clear, the material selected to appeal. The Archives gallery is quiet and dim, the displayed papers and paintings old-fashioned with an upper-class slant. The show is not a dazzler, but there's lots to ponder.

Sir Henry Crease, born in 1823, was British Columbia's first attorney-general. His family were keen recorders of their life and times. In those pre-snapshot days the Crease ladies, ladies of leisure, recorded the ox-carts of Victoria and the Fort, and every fustian gewgaw in the sitting room.

# A R T

## Lots to ponder

FENWICK LANSDOWNE, CARL COGER,  
STEWART BRANDS, Crystal Gardens  
Gallery, 707 Douglas, 381-2111.  
THE CREASE FAMILY ARCHIVES  
B.C. Provincial Archives,  
Provincial Museum, 655 Belleville,  
until Mar. 31, 387-1854.

**P**robably I shouldn't consider going into the Crystal Gardens Gallery, much less reviewing it

## Set up the art and knock it down

**V**OU COULD have started a collection of local art for a song: Nita Forrest \$60. Len Gibbs \$60, Flemming Jorgensen \$100, Herbert Siebner \$90, Jack Wise \$60, Yves Vial \$95. For artists this was bad news but for art lovers the other night at Cal-Minshall Auctioneers, 919 Fort St., it's a revelation. And the prices had apparently nothing to do with the quality.

Sitting on rented chairs, the buyers scribbled notes on the back of envelopes. The lighting was cruel, the numbered tags stuck to the paintings with a certain finality, bespeaking broken homes, a property adrift in the world. Auctioneer Don Cal just kept setting 'em up and knocking 'em down.

Of 108 items offered, only eight achieved their lowest estimate. Eight drew no bid at all, and the rest brought in bids disappointing to the artists and auctioneers, but offering bargains for buyers.

The quality of the work contributed to the slight interest of the sale. There just wasn't much to buy. The choice items were two woodcuts by Walter J. Phillips (\$2,100

and \$700), and two woodcuts by Edwin Holgate (\$550 and \$525). Two watercolours by Samuel Maclure were eagerly bought for \$425 each. An unappetising orange and ochre panel by A.Y. Jackson, from 1960, was withdrawn from the sale when the bidding made only \$2,500. On the whole, it was pretty thin fare.

Max Maynard's oil on paper paintings brought bids well over the estimate, selling typical work for \$450 and \$775, but those prices may have been enhanced by the presence of his dealer and his nephew in the audience.

For the other Victoria artists it was a slaughter. Perhaps the artists themselves sent a few items to the sale to keep the wolf a few steps back from the door. These days, anything's worth a try. But the small audience seemed to be made up of buyers for antique shops and a few doctors looking for a smart investment. The rest were "tire kickers", out for the free entertainment.

Auction fever seems to have been cured in Victoria, a city where only recently it ran rampant. Don Cal did his best to perk up the bidding, his auctioneer's chant encouraging prices higher and higher. But his enthusiasm ran a bit thin. "That's a bargain," he announced, "Pastel landscape with mountains and it's signed. I have 50 do I have 55? Are you all done and satisfied at 50? At 50, depressingly low. I can't believe it," he goes on, "It's horrendous. The artist is 82 years old. Do I have 55?"

Though there aren't many buyers this year, a look at the art history of this country will show it's a wise time to buy. W.J. Phillips made many of his woodblock prints during the depression, and sold them very cheap, even trading them for potatoes. They're precious now. A.Y. Jackson's work went for rock bottom prices in the 1930s. In a few years we'll look back on this time, when you could buy a Jack Wise for \$60, and remember when it was a buyer's market.

— Robert Amos

# Be critical

NORTHWEST COAST INDIAN GRAPHICS  
Vincent Rickard, E. Hall, M. Blackman, Douglas  
and McIntyre, Vancouver, 1981, 144 pp., \$35.

This book is a book  
full of clear reproductions, a book for

“collectors and experts on Northwest Coast history”. It was written by two anthropology professors from State University of New York at Brockport and Victoria’s own Vin Richard.

Unique to this volume is the range of artists shown, 16 in colour and 79 in black and white. There are extensive appendices of artists’ names and tribal affiliations, and a history of Indian prints going back to 1949.

Otherwise the book treats, in condensed form, subjects which are better treated elsewhere, such as the technique of screen printing and terms for printmakers. This and most other books on Northwest Coast Indian art suffer from a common failing. Each attempts to summarize the entire complex history of native peoples, from flora and fauna to mythology, smallpox to Mungo Martin. It’s an amazing story, to be sure, but it’s a tall order for the introductory chapters of a book about contemporary screen prints.

The reproductions, clearly the justification for the book, are not in any apparent order, grouped neither by artist, subject or date. And the book makes no critical response to the work.

Northwest Coast Indian graphic art is a bastard; son of Dzoonokwas or Sisioohl and long winter nights in the rain-forest; daughter of effete European printmaking traditions, the artist’s proof, remarque prints, and museum mounting. When the movement is a memory, we will remember the kitsch of worlds in collision, St. Veronica’s handkerchief in formlines. We’ll forget about artists who never rose above the saleable Indian vernacular. It’s the rare artist, for example Art Thompson, who gets off the fence and does more than trade on the tourist penchant for “heritage”. This book treats all three equally.

It seems expensive at \$35.

— Robert Amos



# Precision, grace and imagination

THE LEGACY, P. McNair, A. Hoover, K. Neary  
British Columbia Provincial Museum  
Victoria, 1980, \$14.95

**T**he Legacy is a delight and a bargain. Nowhere else will you get so many color plates or such provocative reading for \$14.95.

This is a catalogue produced by the British Columbia Provincial Museum, hence its (subsidized) low price. The exhibit it accompanied was shown at the Edinburgh

Festival in 1980 and included a judicious selection of contemporary Northwest Coast Indian art in conjunction with superb museum pieces from years ago.

This book also retells the story of the history of the region —flora and fauna, society, contact, art and decline, in seven pages. But Peter McNair does it with precision and grace. The book goes on with imagination. A bent box is "unfolded" for us in color plates. Form lines and templates are clearly depicted. The proximity of historical and modern photographs is rich.

If you've been backstage at the museum

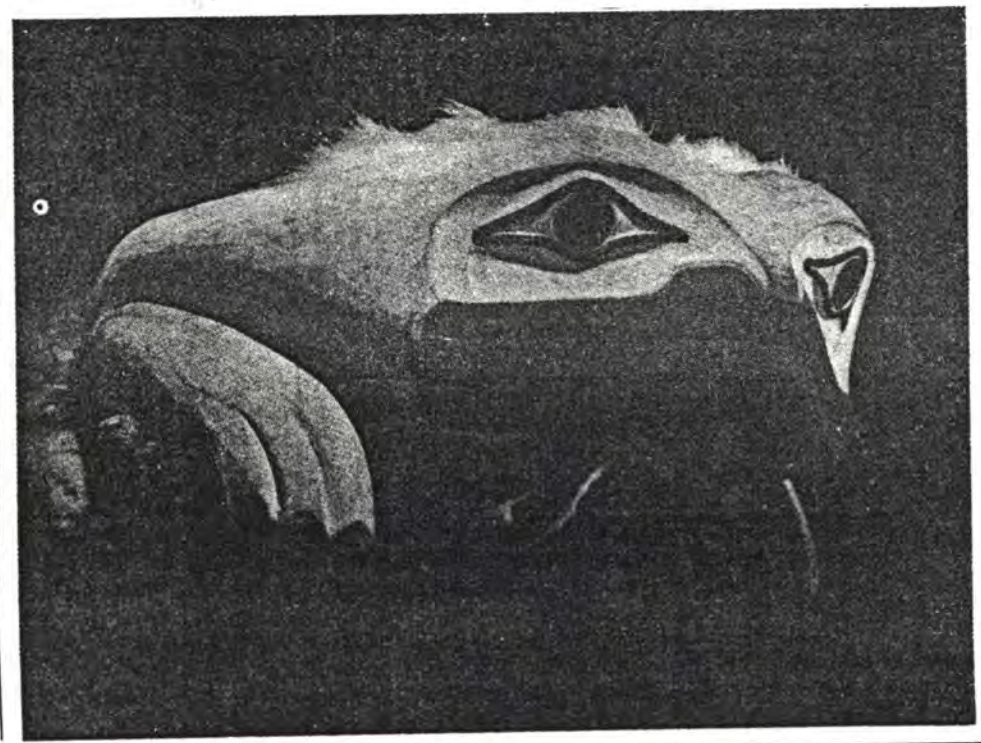
you know that Northwest Coast art does not look like what we've come to expect. The variety of effect is unlimited, in design, colour or application. This book represents it as more exotic than precious, showing abstract paintings, a bignose snot-thrower mask and so on.

The artists emerge from the text as men and women of skill and training —it is the connection of artists and their work that makes the museum an art gallery.

The text is so good you want to match up every word with the accompanying picture. Unfortunately the layout is so "designed" that I had to keep fingers in three pages at a time. But if you only buy one book on Northwest Coast art, this is it. And if you have the rest, you'll love this one.

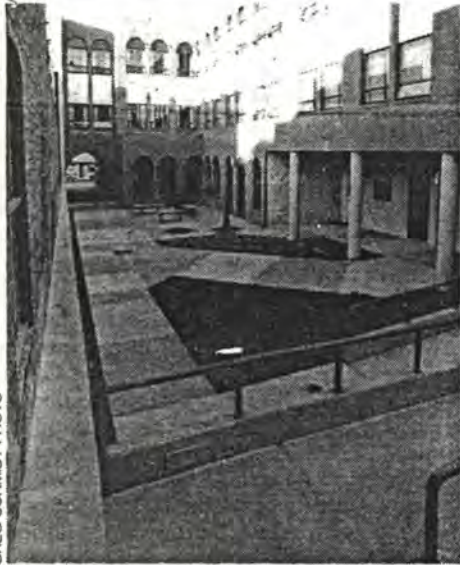
— Robert Amos

From the Legacy: Haida mask by Robert Davidson (left) and Haida frog headress by Reg Davidson (below)



## Hospital re-opens

A SERIES of small explosions rocked 555 Herald Street. But it was just fireworks, signalling the reopening of the new Victoria Chinatown Inter-



GREG SCHMIDT PHOTO

The new Chinese long-term care home

mediate Care Facility, a gleaming new 30-bed facility, built with help from the municipal, provincial, and federal governments. From sod-turning to opening, construction took only 371 days.

The centre replaces the original Chinese Hospital, built in 1899 on the same site by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA). Running the hospital had always been a financial burden on the association. In the early days, a Chinese person leaving Canada to return to China was obliged to make a \$2 donation to the hospital. The receipt was his "exit permit", and no boat-ticket could be purchased without one. After the 1920s, most Chinese returned via Vancouver.

The building actually functioned as a special boarding house for elderly Chinese men. Jurisdiction, status and funding went back and forth between city and the Association after the hospital went broke in 1929. In 1962, a labourer named Dong Gong left the hospital his estate of \$25,000 which, in part, paid for a renovation in 1964. But in 1979 the hospital was finally closed because it had been running at a loss for years.

But the need for a long-term care facility to serve elderly Chinese in their own community still existed, so Dr. David Lai, of UVic's Geography Department, took matters in hand and rallied support. The city

leased the site for \$1 a year. Mortgage funds of about \$1.5 million were made available through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The Ministry of Health and the Capital Region Commission contributed their help.

The care centre is a unique facility. Open to all the elderly, Chinese or otherwise, it provides Chinese cuisine and a Chinese-speaking staff. The 30 beds will soon be filled, and those who already make this their home look pleased indeed.

— Robert E. Amos

# A R T

## The bravura approach

WALTER DEXTER and LENI HOOVER  
Whales Gallery, 1007 Fort Street, 385-5525  
Until April 3.

**W**alter Dexter is a craftsman, and is capable of superb control in every facet of pottery. So when he cuts loose and lets chance and the unexpected inform his artistry, you'll see a show with more than the usual to look at.

Whales Gallery is presenting just such a show. Dexter's biography is extensive, beginning in the early 1950s and ranging the length and breadth of western Canada. Almost 30 years of teaching here and exhibiting around the world have brought awards and medals in profusion, and enough experience to equip him with a

profound understanding of what he is doing. When he speaks, we listen.

Dexter is best known for his well-controlled red glazes. But this exhibit features unorthodox *raku* wares, and they are eloquence itself. The well-potted shapes are confident and capacious. Oversized "tea bowls" are a big double handful. The lidded straight-side jar is anything but timid. He makes amphorae, tall vessels with handles joining body to neck, with conviction. They seem Mediterranean in effect, not at all Japanese.

In fact, unlike many potters, Dexter's work is not consciously oriental. This collection of pottery exploits a huge range of glaze colours. One typical pot is glazed pink, pale yellow and dark green on a smokey grey unglazed ground. Decoration may be brush-drawn with abandon, inscribed graffiti, burnt by chance, and deeply crackled and stained—all this on the same pot. This is not the restrained *shibui* of the Japanese tea cult. This is the full-bodied bravura approach of a consummate craftsman, a Canadian and an artist.

Dexter's flying brush is never in danger of becoming precious. There is something pleasing about the instant trace of the brush fixed forever in the firing. The firing takes an act of the human will and

turns it into elemental nature. For all the attention Dexter gives his pots, they are not self-conscious. One can't help feeling that he must really enjoy making them.

Leni Hoover is showing her gouache paintings in the same gallery. The brush strokes of her paintings are right up front, as in Dexter's pottery. And her concerns are, like his, elemental: fire, water, earth and air.

Hoover has been four years working on this series of paintings. One of the self-imposed limits is a four-colour palette of cadmium red, cadmium green light, prussian blue and ochre or gold.

The colours are applied first as a wash in broad, formal patterns. The rough texture of the paper retains the granulated pigment in the natural sedimentation patterns of a river valley.

Here is controlled, precise mapping. The effect is almost scientific. Because of her controlled technique, the imagination is allowed plenty of room to play in these works, but they yearn for further exploration. Her failure to penetrate deeper connections between the organic nature of the painting and the overlying draughtsmanship leaves one hungry for something more profound.

— Robert E. Amos

## Gorgeous gadgets

**G**OODWILL ENTERPRISES, 560 Yates, long popular for ridiculously inexpensive tweed jackets, white shirts and bowling shoes, now has a parts department. "I call this an electrical handyman's paradise," says Warren 'Buck' Raymond, the new manager of the



GREGOR SCHMIDT PHOTO

**Buck Raymond: bins and bins full**

department.

"Since we opened a week ago there've never been less than four people in here," he says. And now a dozen customers are milling about among the radios and cords, tape recorders, ranges, elements, controls, picture tubes, tuners and clocks, windows for washing machine doors, vacuum cleaner wands, searching for the right obsolete knob, or just admiring bins full of gorgeous gadgets. There's an atmosphere of mutual help as Buck Raymond satisfies another customer. "Yes, ma'am, 49 cents for an electrical cord for the iron." No hype, no packaging, no guarantee. But the price is unbeatable.

The electrical repair depot of Goodwill Enterprises is in their Bay Street plant. About 10 people work there, and what they can't fix they dismantle for their own repair stock. Now, if there's a surplus, it

comes to the Yates Street Store.

Maybe you know people who throw away the drier because the drive belt squeaks. It's obviously time to trim some of the fat off our lifestyles. There are a lot of folks willing to do more with less, and to do it themselves. The parts department is a new idea, a good one, one which we will see more of as we go deeper into the '80s.

"Heads for your vacuum cleaner? Sorry, they haven't come down yet. Next week maybe. This place is really popular, and we'll be getting more stock as it goes along. We have everything electrical." Buck is standing in front of a shelf of slightly obsolete adding machines and other moribund mechanical marvels. "Some work, some don't. Take a chance." You can hardly go wrong. Raymond's good will is obvious, and enterprising in the best sort of way.

— Robert Amos

A R T

# Visions from the subconscious

PHYLLIS SEROTA, Kyle's Gallery  
1545 Fort St., 592-2211, until April 10

**P**hyllis Serota's current show at Kyle's is her first exhibition of paintings in Victoria.

The first thing that attracted me was the visual impression — a variety of bright colours and bold compositions sing out from the walls. And immediately after came the imagery, the story line, the way that Serota is putting her life and feeling right out front. In this she resembles a feminine, self-referenced Max Bates, a happier Richard Ciccimarra.

She gives so much in her work — there is none of the ripped-off boredom with which formalism often leaves its audience. Her subjects often spring from psychological concerns — despair, waiting, separation, masks. Dreams from our collective subconscious make paintings which are at

once striking and obvious. *I Dreamed Last Night I Was on a Boat to Heaven* is Dante brought home. And her nude on a bus crowded with oblivious fellow travellers is alarming in its familiarity.

Especially noteworthy is her painting of Polish defectors, a group portrait of delicate human dynamics. Paintings of contemporary events are almost untouchable by galleries and yet the imagery is something that media compels us to share. To add something to this media fix, to treat the subjects as more than pop art, is a rare event, almost unique in recent Canadian art.

It is the events of Serota's world which are the real meat of the show. *Sadie and I* is a portrait of the artist and her dog walking in the oyster light of a Victoria morning beach scene. The carefully judged distance between woman and dog in the painting makes visible a living relationship. In another, a nude woman rising from the bed on which her lover still relaxes, relates a human story we can all understand. (Why it is hung almost out of sight, next to the toilet, is another story). Rather than the psychosis which often drives people to paint, here we see a gentle, loving psychology in pictures.

As a painter, Serota is no slouch. Her even tonalities, set in handsome harmonies, show facility. Yet she paints basically to get the message across, not stopping with the beautiful but seeking to set up deeper resonances.

The inclusion of her self-portrait in the show reveals that she can paint the human face in a very articulate way. Many of the faces in her show seem a little blank. If she wants to take her art more into the particular realm of "warts and all", I'll be glad to follow her.

But at the moment there's lots to see. She doesn't lack technique, and her insights are loving, humanistic, and satisfying.

—Robert Amos

## Sunday Afternoon at the Industrial Site

After tea. time <sup>windy</sup> a sea-side walk. Over the Johnson Street Bridge, on the ~~rail way~~ <sup>bridge</sup> tracks. No trains there. The other side of Victoria. What a strange place.

There's a big pink warehouse on the foreshore - a great spot for a hotel. ~~Head~~ <sup>across the harbour</sup> of the Parliament Buildings and Empress, Rattenbury's neo-classical wax museum, The Princess. Over here, among the big white tanks and the boxcars one wonders how the developers can keep their hands off. What goes on up <sup>on the hill top?</sup> ~~the hill?~~ A mountain of gravel and tips of broken concrete. Isn't this Victoria's ~~helicopter~~ heliport? Turn to look at Victoria's most <sup>supposed to be</sup> beautiful view across the inner and outer harbours to the Strait and see - The Tower!

The Tower used to rise above a cluster of buildings, but they've been chewing up the vacant warehouses for weeks. Now there's nothing but the lone tower, rising five stories above the world. A concrete eagle's nest for the <sup>deaver,</sup> master of all he surveys. The steel cage steps ~~go up~~ hang derelict from the room at the top. The cement floors up there was a ~~minefield~~ minefield of black holes, the very stuff of bad dreams. Whatever you dropped fell for a long long time. Steel frame windows without glass commanded views of fisherman's wharf and the Olympics, the Loho and Meggie and the planes.

It looks like the tower will go soon. Down in the ruins the wrecker's day shovels sit ~~idle~~ <sup>golden</sup>. The lights of the Parliament Building turn the twilight sky to ultramarine. Wind beats waves against weathered rolls of roofing paper at the shoreline.

A guy in a pickup pulls over, window down, to talk in the gathering dusk. "Work over 't mill," he says, gesturing with his bandaged finger. Lime Bay Shake Mill. "They got rid of this building pretty quick. Some kids got trapped here <sup>took</sup> for ~~about~~ six hours to get them out. So the parents got it tom down." No doubt it was dangerous.

16  
What about the tower? "Maybe dynamite it", he suggests. "I used to do night watch here, check all this stuff. But it's going fast. Mill might be next. Then what am I gonna do?"

He says they might make a park here. Or a hotel. But as an abandoned industrial site, it's sublime.

# Guerilla art

**L**INCOLN CLARKES got off with a warning the other night. And the police confiscated his valise full of spray paint until he clears out of town. He was at it again, decorating the construction fence on Fort and Quadra. "They caught me red, blue and yellow handed," the 24-year old Clarkes admitted.

Clarkes' zig-zag spray panels appear (and disappear) with erratic frequency on construction fences in Victoria, Vancouver and Toronto. They show a persistent effort and good design that no casual spray-bomb sloganeer can match. His paintings are like laundry soap box graphics, hit-and-run pop art. By now he has done about 200, including more than 20 in Victoria.

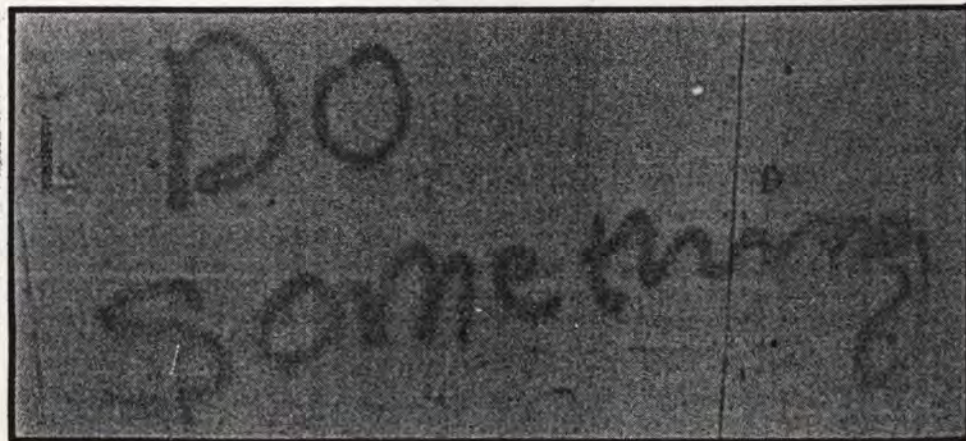
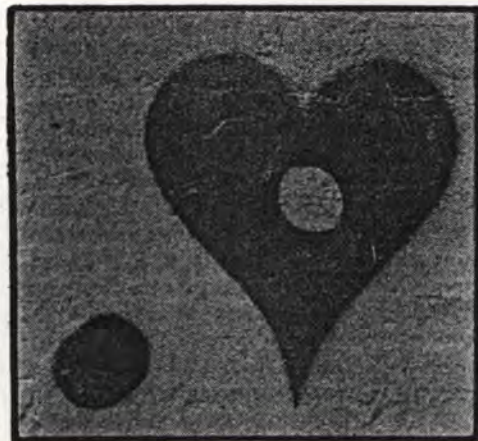
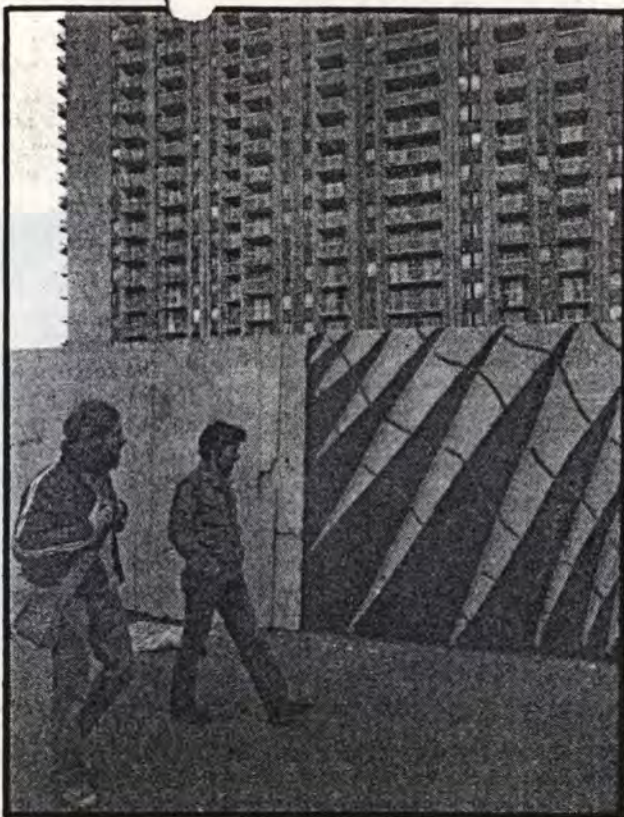
Clarkes has been doing this work since the spring of 1980. It was such a good idea that now it seems obvious: the artist provides some colourful relief in his environment and meets the public where it lives. Art galleries are not answering these needs. "I couldn't afford canvas and I didn't have the studio space," says Clarkes. Now people gather near the street works, put up posters as close as they can, even steal the panels. And there is a segment of the public which has come to look forward to and appreciate his work. Clarkes also encourages media coverage— Vancouver Art Gallery's *Vanguard Magazine* recently reviewed his work.

The forces of uniformity destroy his street art regularly. Clarkes' addition to the boarding around Vancouver's new Art Gallery had to go— private property versus vandalism, you know. And his relations with building site people are limited to run-ins with the foremen ("What are you doing painting on fences instead of working?"). So he works after hours, undisturbed except for the danger and threats from police.

How does he respond to the heroism of this Robin Hood role? He seems gentle, almost altruistic, hardly a vandal at all. "Somebody has to do it," he says.

—Robert Amos

Clarkes' graffiti can be found throughout Victoria, but its most prominent location is on the board fence surrounding View Towers, Quadra at Fort.





Detail from Lloyd Cook's pastel *Stop-Frame Fetish*, one of 100 works of art on display at the New Era Social Club: bizarre but necessary

## Artistic Eros

**I**T'S HARD to find the third annual Erotic Art Show, but it's worth the trip. The show is on until April 10 at Chinatown's New Era Social Club, 551½ Fisgard, an artist's club room which has been a centre for bizarre but necessary activities for four years now.

Up the long dark stairs is a show of about 100 paintings, photographs and sculpture by fifty artists. It is essentially wide open, unjuried and follows the *Eros* theme, a theme every creative person has dealt with, usually as a side issue to other preoccupations. Almost everyone comes out of the closet to be part of this show.

Among the fifty artists exhibiting are sculptors Neil Dalrymple, Harry Schafer, Deanne Pettipas and Luis Ituarte, and painters Lloyd Cook and "Angel", with techniques ranging from quivering sculptures in wire to pastels and oil glazes.

—Robert Amos

ly cooks. If your idea of jazz is Bob James, however, beware.

# A R T

## Difficult but satisfying

STONES GALLERY, 1715 Government  
Jim Lindsay paintings Until April 24

**J**im Lindsay is a painter who always puts on a good show. He was formerly an art teacher at the William Head Penitentiary, one of those jobs which an artist takes to support his family. And it's one which demands a certain vigour, a personal intensity. I imagine that to teach in the prison one must hold firmly to well-founded beliefs, with gravity— I mean this has got to be one heavy guy. Lindsay is just that. You can see it in his solid and well-made paintings.

Lindsay hasn't taught in the pen for years now, but has worked as a painter in his basement on a quiet street in town. His neighbours don't know what he's up to, but the National Gallery does. And so does

the Nickel Art Museum at the University of Calgary. They held a one man show of his paintings last month.

The large canvasses at first glance seem to be gratuitously abstract gestures, squiggles and blobs applied with haste and a colour sense which is anything but pretty. Borders of geometric form, quickly brushed in, often enclose and amplify a central image. But his paintings leave no doubts. Take a good look, the abstract image begins to "look like" something— a head in the sky, a landscape, or a figure.

Slowly, what at first seemed an accident in paint becomes recognizable as a woman sitting on a bench in an airport. The horizontal black band above her must be the runway. Then the top-most blue stripe can be the sky. And those green slashes of paint really do shimmer and weave in the air like search lights. In making these transitions, Lindsay can take us from abstracted colours in composition to something anecdotal, almost romantic, without gimmickry. The shift is done with such consummate paint-handling that it takes a bit of patience before the levels of the work become apparent.

And yet once you've seen one work change from the unnameable to the carefully depicted, you'll want to try out your perceptions on the other paintings. Jim Lindsay's paintings are rather difficult at first, but very satisfying in the long run.

David Bruce's colour photographs, one of several photographic exhibits currently showing in town (see *Calendar* for details), are also on display at Stone's Gallery.

— Robert Amos

### THE WORD FROM AFAR

It is always with great anticipation that we eagerly await, from our distance, any news and reviews of sculptures by Darcy Gould. ("The new 'now' art gallery", *Monday*, Mar. 12-18)

Having had the pleasure of bearing witness to this Canadian's magnificent talent it was with delight we received the Robert Amos review of Gould's first show in his chosen home base of Victoria.

Our delight quickly turned to dismay as we wandered through this exercise in subjective journalism.

The love, care and attention to detail that have become Gould trademarks permeate his works, catching even the most untrained eye. Yes, frequently his subjects are women— or "women's parts" as Mr. Amos writes with such obvious distaste—but witness Gould's fine appreciation of woman as beauty personified. Apparently Gould is proud to admit through his art that he genuinely likes women.

We respectfully suggest that Mr. Amos may be more concerned with remaining on safe reviewing territory than offering alternative, artistic perspectives.

It is presently somewhat trendy to cry loudly at any suggestion of further exploitation of women. Generally this is both true and very necessary but such a stance here as Gould sculptures are among the finest modern representations of the female human body as a wonder of nature in the tradition of Rodin and Mollo. Please, enough of this intellectual only art critique.

We need more art we can feel from our

hearts as well as from our heads. Equally important to address is the question of Canadians once again leaving it to non-Canadians to first recognize internal universal talent.

Must Gould follow that too often repeated pattern of Canadians first achieving recognition elsewhere prior to receiving their just reward in their homeland? We sincerely hope not.

For our own part we are definitely looking forward to the Gould sculpture exhibit arriving in Australia later this year.

We hope Canadians will be equally delighted to support him in his international endeavors.

Lorraine Bradbury  
Sharon Simpson  
M. McHugh  
A. Fairclough  
Perth, Western Australia

### PORN AND HUMILIATION

It is obvious that Mr. Hofsess has been well-schooled in the *Playboy* philosophy and just can not see beyond it ("Sexuality in the 80's: The Feminist Challenge", *Monday*, Mar. 26-Apr. 1). He takes up the pro-porn banner, intoning statistics to show pornography is not correlated to violence, and using a "scientific

base" and "levels" to present undesirable insults at face value. Through fact that pornography is because it is physical and sexual personality

### SUPERFICIAL WIT

Robert Amos' review of the Vancouver Island Invitational at the Victoria Art Gallery (*Monday*, Jan. 8-14) barely deserves to be called a review. It did very little to either encourage or challenge the readers to view the show for themselves. Neither any quantity of information nor any depth of understanding were present. Mr. Amos' comments about the work were at best clichéd attempts at superficial wit. Their tone was perhaps to front with a smile the rather underhanded swipes he took at his former employer's present curatorial policy.

My own reaction to the show was regret that each artist could not be given the entire space which they shared. Their cramped quarters made it difficult to view any individual work in isolation. George Allen's work I found particularly interesting, especially the small, square, green, yellow and blue "weedy" one and the long one with the red canoe end.

It's unfortunate that *Monday* did not accord both artists the courtesy of a reviewer who actually meant to review their work.

H. Campbell  
#1-1608 Quadra St.

MONDAY MAGAZINE—APRIL 16-22, 1982

### CANDIED ANATOMY

I was very disappointed in the review by Robert Amos, ("The new 'now' art gallery, *Monday*, March 12-18) on Darcy Goulds' showing at Stones Gallery.

It seems unfortunate to me that in 1982 Canadian artists should suffer the most negative reviews from their own countrymen.

Mr. Goulds' Toronto show seemed to draw a much more sophisticated and aware review than did the typically west coast provincial attitude displayed by Mr. Amos.

As a feminist I find Mr. Goulds' work to be not only tastefully done, but sensitive and flattering to women. I feel that Mr. Amos, for whatever reason, entirely missed the point of Goulds' work; which is that of displaying women as beautiful sexual beings. Too bad Amos perceives Goulds' work to be that of anatomies as confection.

Sandra Mander  
2260 Emmerdale Rd.  
Vancouver

Tape 6 Job 2-0402 Vcr Art Gall Summer Vanguard Joanne Apr 19

Vincent Varga  
Maltwood Museum  
Victoria  
April 12 to 26

Vincent Varga's installation at the Maltwood gallery is about focus. Eighteen two-foot squares, thickly coated with shiny black acrylic, hang suspended in a rectangle, delimiting a dim zone in the middle of the gallery. In their changing highlights simple signals can be read — parts of triangles, fan shapes, forked sticks. Iridescent purple like potassium permanganate, tarnished silver and thin limewash white have touched high points, applied with studied casualness or aggressive haste. These sheets dangle and lilt in the air currents, slick surfaces responding to a spotlight.

At one end of the zone a spotlight, on a tripod, stands high. Across the middle is a screen which acts as a lens or a filter. Made of clear plastic sheeting, it carries marks which define the focus. All but a six foot square in the centre is scribbled over. The square is inscribed with a circle. The circle is inscribed with a triangle, point down. The triangle is lightly sanded in arcs, giving the effect of a fresnel lens. It casts a bluish shadow on the floor.

The cone of blue shadow spreads across the floor. One further square of glossy black acrylic lies in its field, as a crucible for the effect of the focussed light. Not surprisingly there are ashes and charcoal there, the remains of whatever got in the way.

Looking back to the hanging square, dark non-colours and obscured imagery, they seem to have absorbed the spent spotlight radiation. The ashes and charcoal are any object returned to its simplest components.

In conversation, Varga elucidated some of his concerns and intentions. The spotlight end of the situation features a certain geometry. The rational side of man's nature is implied by the markings on the surrounding painted squares — triangles, fans. On the other side of the screen are signs of intuition. The forked stick as wishbone or divining rod appears not only on the hanging pieces but is drawn in the ashes of the crucible. The central screen is in balance. The triangle within circle within square lacks only the human figure to become Leonardo's 'man as the measure of all things'. Each viewer becomes the measure.

In fact there is another element in this piece. Between crucible and screen is another triangle, point downward, this time made of fishing line marked in black at regular intervals. The possible referents of this item — surveyor's measure, drawing in space, sight lines — are not convincing. The element weakens the symmetry. Only through the apparent simplicity of the piece do its subtleties begin to show, and this fishline triangle is extraneous.

*we* — Varga asked me what it felt like to be inside this piece. In retrospect, it did make feel at ease and pleasantly able to reflect on its home-made cosmos. Unfortunately that's a reaction only possible for those willing to submit to its forces — the artist or the art critic.

The piece begins as a spot of pure light, acts through irreducible geometry, and ends as carbon darkness. The hanging sheets, their marks and memory, are a witness to the events of time. It's quite calm in there by the ashes of the campfire.

Robert E. Amos

End of Tape 6

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**A R T**


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**New glass and old**

GLASS, North Park Studio,  
1040 North Park, 381-3422, until May 4

**T**he new North Park Studio is presenting an exhibition of new and antique glass. It's a subject I know nothing about. But the objects are understated and sensuous.

They don't need any explanation. The question of "what do you do with" delicate, dangerous, dust-catching *objets d'art* is simply answered: you look at them.

The show offers every inducement to viewers. Among the items for sale are a set of six Daum drinking glasses, a Tiffany candy dish, two Steuben lamp glasses and a little Lalique ring dish with a moulded green glass rabbit. Those big names will surely draw the curious and the collectors. And the antique lighting by Waterglass Studios enhances what is already one of the loveliest display spaces in Victoria.

The best part, though, is the new glass, gathered from many of the best American artists in this trendy new field. Many peo-

ple know the name of Dale Chihuly, recently featured in *Life Magazine*. A basket-like vase of his is right up front in the window, and nearby two undulating sea-anemone shapes in pink and blue nestle together. On the walls are mysterious slabs of milky glass made by Paul Marioni. Faces loom up from the whirling glass like St. Veronica's handkerchief. Jenny Langston of New Mexico is well represented by a number of sturdy vases. Squares and squiggles of coloured glass are inlaid into smooth shaped bowls. John Reed displays work etched or sculpted by sandblasting. Many of the artists have a connection with the Pilchuck Glass Centre near Seattle.

The "stained-glass" windows are slightly punky. They eschew the use of coloured

glass, instead using "mechanical" glass—ribbed, grooved and pebbled. The "drawing" with wire and metal is zig-zag and sharp. No romantic images are included.

The North Park Studio is the showplace of three architect-designers who work upstairs. Persian carpets on an exposed aggregate floor, an oak mantelpiece and a few recycled architectural ornaments set a sympathetic tone, right out of *Architectural Digest*. The workspaces which surround the gallery lend a glow of healthy well-being.

This exhibit was put together with love, from a specialized point of view. Education, rather than sales, seems to be the purpose. A pleasant experience, indeed.

—Robert Amos

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# A R T

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## Images of the east

36 ARTISTS FROM SUZHOU, CHINA  
McPherson Playhouse Mezzanine  
386-6400, until May 31

**T**his is the best art show in town. Thirty-six artists from our sister city, Suzhou, have sent 60 paintings and woodblock prints of landscapes around their home. While they show varying degrees of skill in execution, the rich imagination displayed is inspiring.

The ink-and-colour paintings make up the largest part of the show, and look typically Chinese. This year the themes are old-fashioned throughout; not a tractor or a power plant in sight. But the wonderful traditions of Chinese painting, including the high perspective which enhances the space and depth, and underpainting of un-

leashed calligraphic abstraction, are capable of limitless influence to painters, modern or otherwise. Two little roundels, scenes of children in a garden, are especially fine. And of course one can see mountain ranges laid in at a stroke, or mineral colours smouldering blue over deep deep ink washes.

The oil paintings are not very appetizing. The springy ink line does not translate into oil paint, and the artists seem to have abandoned their own marvellous approaches to space in favour of the dead end of one point perspective.

But the woodcuts! These prints are so sophisticated, surely part of a huge living tradition. The block carving is exemplary, whether done with minute precision or rude vigour. The inking of the block, and the dampening of the paper, are used to create a galaxy of stunning effects—moonlight, rain, reflections on water, deep shadow. Scenes of city life, buses and houses, show up in this democratic medium.

The bright gouache scenes of communist glee that we saw a few years ago at Victoria's Art Gallery are missing. But there's lots to look at. Our thanks to the McPherson Foundation and the Chinese/Canadian Friendship Association.

— Robert Amos

Parsley, sage,  
rosemary and thyme



A R T

### Airbrush excitement

MILES LOWRY, Gallerie Untitled, Government St. between Fisgard and Pandora, 384-4554  
VARIOUS ARTISTS, Leafhill Galleries, 47 Bastion Square, 384-1311

**M**iles Lowry, at 23 years old, has been building up steam and now he's let it loose at Gallerie Untitled.

The extensive collection of his paintings in all media is highlighted by his work with airbrush— gently cubist figurative work and Matisse-like still lifes. Decorated ceramics, glass amulets and intriguing stone carvings arise from his knick-knack background and, occasionally, ascend to the heady realms of art. A more austere and coherent selection of Lowry's work would have given us a more serious tone but at this stage he's ringing the changes with his extensive talents. Lowry is one to watch.

K.C. Tebbutt's Gallerie Untitled— behind those red, yellow and blue banners across from the McPherson Playhouse — has now been painted and carpeted and seems to be ready to take itself seriously. Its innovative marketing program looks unworkable. The future may not be rosy, but it will definitely be exciting.

Leafhill's new show looks much like its old one. Harry Heine's technique is always worth study. Among painters of west coast fish boats, Marke Simmons shows quite

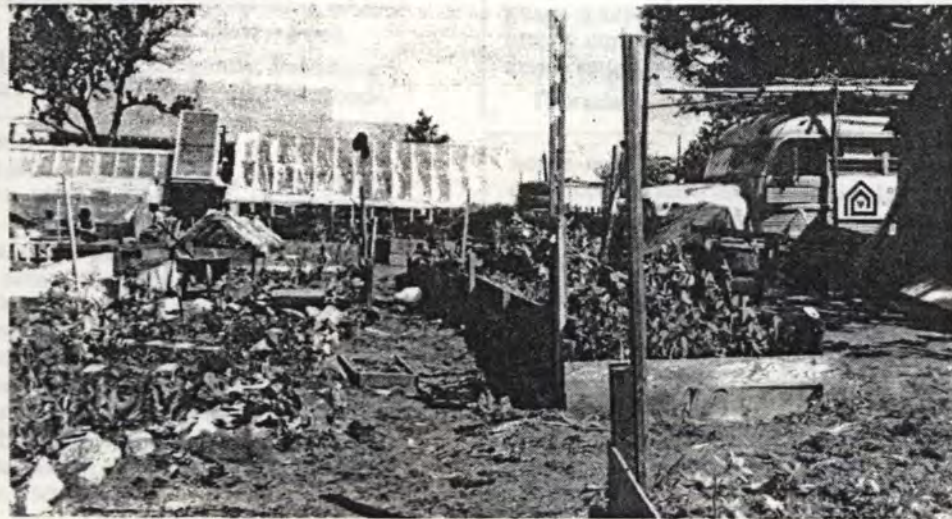
well, with his complex notions of lighting. For those whose artistic judgement is backed up with "concern for our environment" and minutely rendered detail, there are a variety of stiff birds and animals, a few very slight Len Gibbs items, two small Walter Phillips woodcuts, and Dorothy Oxborough's big-eyed, fat-faced native kids.

— Robert Amos

## Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme

**D**O YOU need organically grown bedding plants at rock bottom prices? How about herbs for drying or transplanting? Tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflowers and strawberries are ready to leave their Fernwood home and take up residence in your garden. Parsley, chives, fennel, sage, thyme and a surprising seven varieties of mint are grown at the Fernwood Solar Farm (behind Vic High, at North Park and Chambers).

This urban farm began two and a half years ago as an allotment garden in a parking lot. With the financial support of Labatt's Breweries, a greenhouse was constructed. Now fat winter cauliflowers burst forth under glass, solar panels gather sunshine, and trays of strawberry plants flourish, well in advance of the season. No longer on the allotment plan, it's now one big well-planned garden, under the guidance of a full-time farmer **Stewart Boutilier**. Extensive plots are intensively cultivated, full of companion planting and "volunteers" seeded from last year's crop. Rockeries, liquid manure tanks and seaweed compost bespeak the wisdom of a 100 per cent recycled philosophy. The garden can absorb as much energy as willing helpers put in. Many of the gardeners are incentive workers from the local human



GREGOR SCHMIDT PHOTO

resources office, or first-time offenders doing their community service sentence, but more hands are always welcome. Eight hours a month entitles one to a share of the produce. There are always a few folks digging in this natural paradise, with the bees under the apple trees.

Saturdays are best for plant shopping, and later in the season low-priced vegetables will be available too. So dig in!

— Robert Amos

The Fernwood Solar Farm: fat cabbages and seven mints

## Why charge admission?

W.J. PHILLIPS: 100 SELECTED WORKS  
Cal-Minshall & Co., 919 Fort Street,  
383-6211. Until July 9.

**W**alter J. Phillips (1884-1963) has been the success story of Canadian art speculation for almost 10 years now. The price of his colour woodcut prints has risen from less than \$100 to more than \$3,000 in that time. Though the increase may never be so steep again, the interest in his work will not diminish.

Cal-Minshall is presenting for sale 100 works of the highest quality by Phillips—

watercolours, woodblock prints and engravings.

Phillips was born in Britain. After training and youthful perambulations (to the South African diamond mines), he brought his young family to Canada, settling in Winnipeg in 1913. The English watercolour style—clear tones, evenly brushed and blended—he adapted to Canadian scenes, strengthening the colours. Later, on a trip to England he met and studied with the Japanese woodcut artist Y. Urushibara. Back in Canada his watercolours took on a further simplification, discrete areas of colour representing what would later be carved in cherry wood.

Phillips laboured diligently, becoming Canada's premier, if not only, colour wood-

cut artist. Printing editions of up to 250, from half dozen blocks each, on dampened paper in Winnipeg in the winter, without a press—it was hard work. But large editions and low prices helped him keep his work before the public and he survived the "Depression" as a practising and professional artist. Then the far west drew him on and in the late '30s he sketched the Rockies. Phillips loved trips up the coast and was one of few artists to appreciate the art of the Northwest Coast Indians. In later years he taught in Banff, and he ended his days in Victoria.

The work is always pleasing. Masterful, asymmetrical designs are composed of firmly bounded shapes, with nothing left to chance or accident. The accuracy of his

colour choices is impressive—just the right azure sky, the mauve shadows of snow, or the oyster light of evening falling on boat bows. The tree which cuts dramatically across the foreground, the gentle reserves of white indicative of snow, and fading twilight tints of an evening of the lake—this artist depicted a view of Canada we all can recognize.

If Phillips has a failing, it is just that safe perfection which always pleases, never excites. He was not a great artist, like his contemporaries L.L. FitzGerald, David Milne or Emily Carr. But his formal language is expert and inventive, his output is utterly consistent, and it was meant to be democratically available.

This sale, at what is otherwise an auction

house, is a bit of a novelty. And raises some questions. Where did these works come from? And who would choose this time to try to sell them at higher prices than ever before? And, most important, why is there an admission charge? Theoretically, one is buying an entirely unnecessary catalogue. But, in reality, it simply costs \$2 to look at the show. If the admission went to charity, as it often does on Old Bond Street in London, or if the work was not for sale, as at the Art Gallery, there would be some justification. But here is a very good show, a superb educational resource for art history and practice. And the admission price will keep away all those who need to learn from it.

—Robert Amos

# Sir John A.'s floating thigh

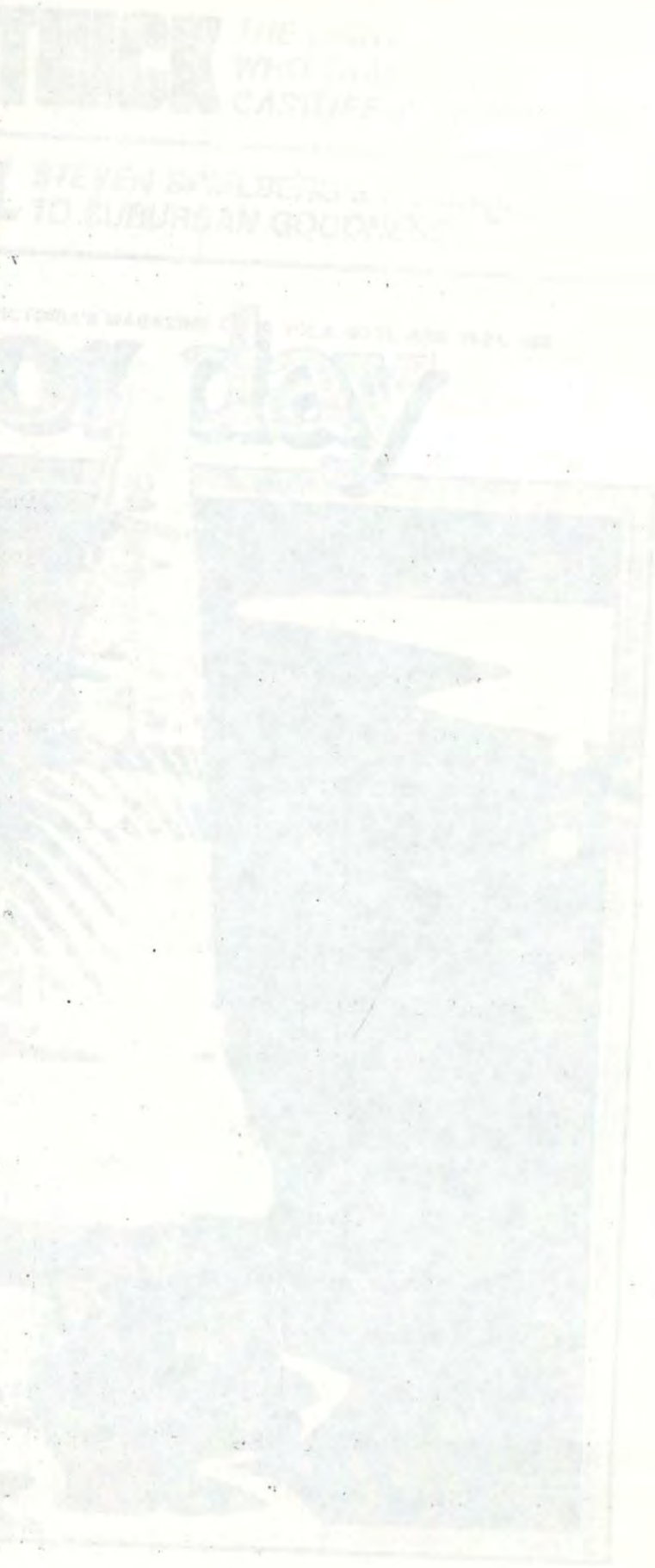
OUR FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND PRIME MINISTER, IN STONE  
Pandora St. entrance to city hall  
Until it crumbles away

**A** short time ago, this city unveiled a statue of Sir John A. Macdonald. It was made by John Dann of Montreal and it now stands outside the front door of our city hall.

Regardless of everyone's good intentions, the statue is flawed. The scale model, which was on show upstairs at the MacPherson Playhouse, seems correct. But the larger-than-life size outdoor model is anatomically impossible. The thigh bone just won't join to the pelvis, causing Macdonald to be locked into a permanent awkward lurch. Something should be done.

Here on the West Coast we have one of the world's great carving traditions. We also have sculptors like Harry Schafer, producing technically superb work in bronze, with little or no public support. Now, about this sculpture from Montreal...

*- Robert Amos*





# PETHICK

THE LIGHT SCULPTOR  
WHO TRANSFORMS  
CASTOFF JUNK INTO ART

**E.T.** STEVEN SPIELBERG'S HOMAGE  
TO SUBURBAN GOODNESS

# Monday

VICTORIA'S MAGAZINE VOL.8, NO.25, JUNE 18-24, 1982

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# FROM HOLOGRAMS TO THE HORNBY ISLAND DUMP

By ROBERT AMOS

**J**ERRY PETHICK is an inventor and an artist. As a promising young sculptor from London, Ontario, he won a place at the Chelsea School of Art and later studied at the Royal College of Art in London, England. His interest in three-dimensional images later led him to discover holography. As it turned out, at that time holograms were only in the hands of the United States Armed Forces who were making them six floors below ground level in Detroit, Michigan. Through Pethick's efforts and inventions, this elaborately technological medium was taken out of the hands of the military and became available to artists and others. This research resulted ultimately in the founding of the San Francisco School of Holography.

Pethick later left in other hands the lasers and dark rooms. He moved, with his wife and young son, to British Columbia's Hornby Island, in 1975. Two years later their home was destroyed by fire. Soon the inventor was building a new house. He found that factory-reject thermopane window panels were cheaper than plywood, and so glass walls and roofs became the main feature of his "inside-out" house. As always, Pethick's artistic vision was being expressed in new and unorthodox materials.

Pethick has a way with materials. He strips the husks of washing machines—to their essence, revealing superb building materials: aluminium tubes, white enameled steel panels, huge plastic rotors. These are supplied gratis by the Hornby Island Dump/Free Store. Silicone sealant (better known as bathtub caulking) holds the pieces together with its own flexible logic. Glass bulbs, globes, lenses, plates and mirrors gather to tell a story, or retell a legend. The Venus of Willendorf is remade of hundreds of lightbulbs, for example. The sculptures are "painted" with

Light sculptor Jerry Pethick pursues his visions with a total disregard for conventional uses of old refrigerators, mirrors, and religion



diffraction grading, that sticky plastic film which sends out rainbows. And, remarkably, the productions are of genius, world class. This fact has not gone unnoticed. Following a stunning man show at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1978, Jerry

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Pethick has been working on a big new project, entitled *Stratagems Distortion*. Nanaimo's Malaspina College showed the first section in February, Seattle's And/Or Gallery presented the second part, and currently three rooms at the Vancouver Art Gallery are devoted to the work as part of the stimulating *Mis En Scene* installation. He looks forward to the time when all nine sculptures and three panels can be seen together.

The sculptures and the "flatwork" are complex light transmitters, alive with moving reflections and glowing spectral colours. Those who would like to "get their eyes in training" can see his work at Stones Gallery (1715 Government Street, June 15-30, 383-4610) or at the Vancouver Art Gallery (1145 West Georgia Street, until July 4). The Victoria showing will be comprised of the "flatwork", drawings of a singular sort.

The following interview was recorded at the artist's home. He's seated with a quart-sealer jar of home brew beer in his hand. Three or four fellow islanders idle away another idyllic afternoon. Old lightbulbs full of water and things on strings dangle from the ceiling, moving slowly in the Hornby Island breeze.

Pethick is gap-toothed and grizzled, dressed in a grey woollen undershirt and tattered work pants. He's talking about snow-blindness and inflatable dams. Laundry and disembowelled automobiles dot this clearing at the end of the road. Here, Pethick is lord of the manor, ignoring economics, staying out late, and playing host to the throng of locals and poets and practising non-artists who come over to see him.

**MONDAY:** You started out as a sculptor.

**PETHICK:** Somehow along the way I got interested in light. When I was working in plaster I began to paint it—a dual process which was very off-putting. You make something dimensional and then totally change it by putting colour on it. That's how I got into plastics; the colour is inherent in that medium. And also with plastic came the idea of transparency, reflections, and all that stuff. The light, then, became more obvious.

It was about that time that I began to explore holography. (Holography is a system of photography of the interference patterns of coherent light. When the photo is illuminated a three-

dimensional image occurs.) I spent eight years working with holograms. When I saw the first one at the Imperial College, I said to the man who made it, "I understand you've made sculpture obsolete." He said, "I hope so."

What was exciting about holography was, it was an illusionary reality that you couldn't tell from "real" reality. What became interesting, though, was not the image of the object in the illusionary space but the space itself. You could actually define an illusory space, whether there was anything in it or not. You could actually define a space within a space. The only commodity you really had to work with was light and space.

Holography puts you in a very rarified atmosphere all the time. You have to be in a dark room, and it gets very boring to be spending all your time in the dark. I would go home at nine in the morning—it's another day and I was going to bed. When making holograms, it's much quieter working at night—less vibration. And anytime you wanted to look at anything you had made it was "lights out—lights on". Then, later I'd go out in the sunshine and, "hey, there's plenty of light here for everybody, you know! What am I doing?"

I realized I was interested in light, not holography. Even when I was doing holograms I was illuminating a lot of them with ordinary white light, not with lasers, and there were a lot of spectral colour constructions in them. With the sun and diffraction lenses you have the same way of manipulating holographic images.

**MONDAY:** What attracted you about diffraction grading?

**PETHICK:** The nice thing about diffraction grading was that it was being mass-produced, manufactured. (Diffraction grading is a plastic film milled with grooves, like a phonograph record. The grooves are optically calculated to break up white light into spectral colours, prisms. The material is often mirror-backed and sends out rich and unpredictable colour phenomena under all kinds of lighting.) You could go to a store and buy it and make art out of it. Nowadays you can do the same with holography.

Spectrafoil is a kind of mass-produced spectral hologram and you can use it to get spectral colour, you can just cut it up and use it. The same way as you can use paint. Diffraction grading was used for fishing lures. I got into it

before they started using it on the sides of vans. The fishing lures were very beautiful works of art—the beautiful blues and greens, on pieces of stainless steel, like some kind of weird jewelry. The people who make it are playing with a physical phenomena, reproducing natural effects seen on butterfly wings, feathers and fish scales. They are the same people who have been making 3-D postcards.

When I was doing holography I was also doing a lot with fresnel lenses, in the sense of cutting them up and re-assembling them. (Fresnel lenses are best known as the clear plastic discs popular on van rear windows, wide angle lenses which enable one to "look around corners". They are also milled in an optical way to organize light coherently. This type of lens is used in lighthouses and for theatre lighting.) I was very interested in playing with the dimensionality of the things—from two-dimensional to three-dimensional.

And mirrors. When I was doing holography, sometimes I'd have to clean off a mirror when I needed a piece of optical glass. I'd clean off the scratched mirrors with nitric acid. I remember seeing the first drop of nitric acid—suddenly it was clear—mirror clear. And that change seemed very dimensional.

**MONDAY:** So the viewer of one of your pieces recognizes himself in the mirror.

**PETHICK:** And rather than looking at the piece they must look through it, as with the holographic model. The viewer's eye moves back and forth through the planes focusing at different focal lengths. The reflected light and spectral colours shine out and surround the viewer.

The observer becomes part of the "sculpture". The light bouncing around envelops the spectator. As in physics, the observer is no longer separate from the experiment.

**MONDAY:** I've heard it said "Pethick may be a good artist but he's really a master at bathtub caulking".

**PETHICK:** Bathtub caulking is really silicone sealer. It's like anything else. It's paint. It's putty. It's clay. It's made to hold glass together. And it does it so well that it will break down before it will pull off the glass. So, obviously, if you want to make things out of glass the way to do it is to select some way of using silicone. It's like rubber so, providing you have a layer of silicone between the layers of glass, you have some flexibility. Of course, glass is very flexible

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Jerry Pethick: productions of genius

itself. In technical terms it's a liquid. It does flow to the bottom of the window. If you increase its flexibility by using silicone it becomes extremely strong and not very fragile. I've been through a lot of materials. I spent years working with plaster. Once you got used to it you could do anything with it. And plastic is the same way. Regardless of the material, after a few years one can do anything with it.

MONDAY: What about aluminium tubing?

PETHICK: It's round in section, so if you unify the surface

by rubbing it with steel wool, you get a bright reflection, a line of light shining off it. So it's nice to use for framing pictures. The light line moves with the spectator. It's not so precise as a square edge. And aluminium is lightweight. You can cut it with a knife, work it with hand tools. It doesn't rust, and it's strong for its weight.

MONDAY: And it's supplied free of charge by the Hornby Island Dump. Like the baked enamel panels from dismantled kitchen appliances.

PETHICK: Enamel is a primary and wonderful light-reflecting material. The white is not a pigment so much as real light, absorbed and reflected by a surface which is really glass. When you see cloisonné or enamels the colours are beautiful because they're not just pigment but light colours. There is a relationship between plastic and enamel in that the colour is through the whole material. Plastic has the same qualities of partial absorption and transmission of light as enamels do.

MONDAY: So enamel is a kind of baked-on glass.

PETHICK: Yes— these panels are glass canvasses, which are perfect for using with silicone. Because silicone is glass. Stones are the same, to a degree. And ceramic— anything ceramic which is glazed will hold with silicone.

MONDAY: Beyond the materials themselves, you have many ways at hand to energize the space around your works.

PETHICK: I've thought of using sound with the sculptures. But silence has a lot to do with separating a work from the rest of the world. Or glass boxes. A display case takes the most intimate personal objects and gives them a whole other realm.

Special lighting and separateness are good showmanship. And good showmanship has a lot to do with religion. Those little altars you see in Europe— whatever relic is there, it's authenticating religion. Maybe the "third hand of St. Somebody"; they put it in a box and the local handyman does the lighting. And awkward presentation works in its favour, to authenticate it, so that you believe in the idea. All the snakeoil salesmen know about that.

MONDAY: One of your glass boxes has a model of St. Theresa inside. Why St. Theresa?

PETHICK: Did you know there were two St. Theresas? The first, the one I picked, had the first "home for way-

ward women", and also she is the patron saint of thieves. And then there's Bernini's masterpiece...

MONDAY: Your St. Theresa is made of test tubes, fixed together to represent the head.

PETHICK: It seemed to go along with the immaculate conception and all that.

MONDAY: The subjects of your work, the content, are exceptionally diverse. The Venus of Willendorf made of hundreds of lightbulbs. The lighthouse which attracts the storm. Camille Pissarro working outdoors at an easel with wheels. Sir Isaac Newton's Cathedral. Boccioni's nightmare. Is there some large theme which engages you throughout all these pieces?

PETHICK: I've been working with the disparities. People are led to believe that there is a disunity within the self. There is a psychological and philosophical acceptance in western philosophy that you need to be divided or you're not really aware of yourself. There is supposed to be a separation between the being and how it is recognized. At some point I suddenly felt that it was all a plot, in the sense that philosophy, from Greek times, separated mythos and logos. Reality had to be abstracted into language. And language completely constructs the person. No longer was language used as communication, but rather for communication, the difference between simple conversation and axe-grinding.

It seemed to me this disparity was maybe a plot. The dual thing has been nurtured constantly since the 14th century. It's been very beneficial to church and state. And, in the last few years people have been paying a lot of money to get someone to tell them that you really have more than one person inside yourself and you've got to live with it. This is instead of saying "of course you start off with being 85,000 different people, but what does it matter? It's all within the same skin."

The whole idea of that divisional system is just bullshit to keep you from recognizing a certain potential. It is a maintained disparity, really. But there is no disparity. Everyone is unified. Philosophy and everything comes out of this dual model-making. And this comes out of language, basically. So I'm following it through myself, playing with my own alphabet of ideas, bringing disparate notions together and trying to effect a reconciliation.



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# BEING AN ARTIST IS A BAD JOKE

By ROBERT AMOS

**T**HIS YEAR everyone's thoughts have turned to economic survival. Times are especially difficult in the arts. Sales have dried up. Government funding won't cover the rent, and there's not a trend in sight. It's all a bit daunting to young artists. And so I asked a senior artist what it all means.

Herbert Siebner has learned by long experience that life for the artist is unpredictable. He was born between wars in Germany. Politics and warfare made irreversible changes in his teenage years. After studying at the Berlin Academy from 1946 to 1949, he came to Canada in 1953. There he found he had to educate Victoria so he could make a career for himself as a "modern" artist in this town. Faced with impossible situations again and again, he never wavered in his dedication to painting. Over the years both success and scorn have come his way. He seems always to have been surrounded by philistines, in 1944 and 1953 as in 1982. And yet he has accepted changing fortunes as the lot of an artist— "I never mind going up and down," he says.

In 28 years in Canada, he has had 90 one-man shows, received numerous government grants and has been elected president of the group of Victoria artists, the Limmers. Though an Honourary Citizen of Victoria, Siebner considers it a very badly designed city, just one step short of Disneyland. He has never lost his sense of humour. And passing fashions have not swayed his art. Perhaps we can draw strength from the dedication of this artist who is committed to his work, come what may. The struggle continues for us all.

**MONDAY:** What was it like in Berlin after the war?

**SIEBNER:** From 1946 to 1949 I was studying and no one had anything. Of the students, no one was working. Naturally it was a very idealistic society amongst us because you either had a sense of humour, you had wit, you had intelligence or you had bodily charm or whatever. That was all.

I came, actually, from a very wealthy home. We had about five servants at home. But when I was 17 we lost everything and after the war we had to move out of the country. So having been born into a very secure and sheltered society, even if I have absolutely nothing I never feel poor.

There were 10,000 artists in Berlin. One was sitting on top of the other. One tried to snatch the patron away from the other.

**MONDAY:** Were you living in a tiny room somewhere?

**SIEBNER:** My first place I had called my own was about six by 10 feet. Large paintings, and everything, were hiding under my little sofa. There was also a tiny little table. Later on I was quite fortunate, because Berlin was almost three quarters bombed out. You couldn't find any rooms. A friend and I bought a studio through another friend—well, it was a half bombed out house but it was a large area, except it was extremely cold—no heating, no furniture, nothing. It was 1947-8, when the air-bridge was in Berlin.

**MONDAY:** How did you pay the rent?

**SIEBNER:** I was still a student then. Everyone was selling something on the black market. Anytime I sold some cigarettes or some booze or anything, I smoked or drank the whole lot and it was gone. Ah, they were turbulent times.

Particularly at this time you could not survive on the ration of whatever was given to you. What you got you could always carry in your hand. For a whole day—three slices of bread, a piece of cheese, an even smaller piece of meat, butter or margarine like this (sugar) cube and that was all.

The currency right after the war was American cigarettes. A cigarette was valued at 12 marks. So I was sketching a soldier in the park in a portrait gallery. He asked me, "you want seven or eight cigarettes?" I said, naturally, "eight." That was one of my first sales—1945, eight cigarettes.



Siebner in Berlin in 1951 (right), and now: What is fame? Life is always going up and down



But there were 10,000 artists in Berlin. One was sitting on top of the other. One tried to snatch the patron away from the other one. Oh, it was a hard time to survive, but I never took life too seriously, though I was serious when I was alone.

And we were very economical. Hannelore was the ideal person because she never complained. She was a dancer. She was used to an artistic background in life, but she had always sympathy and never demanded, you know, that I become serious and work. If some money was there, that was fine; next day was nothing. And then, having many friends, they always came, they bought something or I did a little sketch for supper. This way we existed.

'If people like to visit us and come to admire our furniture, they can go to hell.'

**MONDAY:** What circumstances made it possible for you to immigrate to Canada?

**SIEBNER:** Hannelore's sister lived in Victoria and she described the place. There was only one other artist here, a Czechoslovakian artist, Jan Zach. So I said it sounds like heaven, after living in a city with 10,000 artists standing around.

Another thing was very important. I could not teach in Germany. I had completed my studies and everything was fine, but in order to protect the older generation, there was a minimum age for teaching—35 years. I was 29 when I immigrated and I had the chance of teaching here.

So we came out. I think we had about \$3 between us when we finally arrived.

And the first two years were very hard because, you know, first of all learning the language, then entirely different customs. Coming from a very tolerant city like Berlin it was very difficult entering Victoria—Victoria really was Victorian. I mean, if you met a person at a party you were not allowed to talk to him. You had to be properly introduced, or they didn't answer. Very strange. The first two and a half years were very turbulent.

**MONDAY:** What was the artistic status quo then?

**SIEBNER:** Only flower painters. Only hobby painters. I was teaching at this Norfolk Gallery. Then we had some disagreement. Idiomatic. So I quit, and rented a little house on Hillside and all my students followed. That was how I met Molly Privett, Ann Kipling and Michael Morris and so on.

**MONDAY:** The teaching paid the rent. How about exhibitions and sales?

**SIEBNER:** I had the first student show in 1956 at the Gallery (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria) but as for sales, I would say I sold my little sketches for about \$5. Actually in 1955 I started printing. The prints were even less, sometimes \$2 a print. But \$2 lasted you. It was fantastic... particularly when you were unspoiled.

At one of the shows there was a painting that Molly Privett bought for \$450, an enormous sum then. Even later (1962-3) we had \$4,500 from Canada Council to stay over a year in Europe.

**MONDAY:** In Canada did you take employment other than painting and teaching?

**SIEBNER:** No. I never did this, because to me "work" is the only four-letter word I know. You have to do something which you normally wouldn't do, just to earn money, for somebody else. Even teaching. I could have been hired at the University of Washington or even UBC but for me it's a prison. I hired myself out as a guest lecturer. That's fine, but otherwise...

The price of security is that you have to give up your freedom in exchange. And to behave. You know I cannot

How Herbert Siebner came to Victoria from post-war Berlin with \$3 in his pocket—and still refused to behave or get a straight job

behave. If I am teaching I give all my joy, sympathy, whatever to the students. But sitting around the faculty members—I hated this always, you know, the father-son complex.

Art cannot be taught. Neither can you really learn it. You can learn technique, style, history. That's all.

**MONDAY:** Are there any of your former students that give you particular joy?

**SIEBNER:** Ann Kipling—naturally she has developed in her own way. I would say I was only an early influence to anyone. Even Flemming (Jorgensen), or Michael Morris, Nita Forrest and so on. I encouraged them more than I led them in a style. Actually, the only thing you can really do is to wake something up in someone so he becomes not only dedicated but he can find a joy in discovering something—that's all you can really do.

**MONDAY:** Have you known a time when the artists came together and developed something larger than their individual efforts?

**SIEBNER:** Not really. We tried it—we had the Point Group and later the Limmers. Bob de Castro, Cicimarra, Elza Mayhew and Nita Forrest and so on. You can do it as a spur of the moment thing. When we more or less started Limmers, Max Bates came and we said together "you cannot organize artists, anyhow. How much have they really in common?"

The most idiotic thing here is, once you form a group, you need a president, a treasurer, a secretary. You have to have two lawyers. It's completely insane.

**MONDAY:** In the early 1970s you were quite a famous artist in Victoria but now you don't seem to be so popular. Does this make any difference to you?

Art cannot be taught. Neither can you really learn it. You can learn technique, style, history. That's all.

**SIEBNER:** I only see myself strictly as an individual artist. What is fame? What is subsistence? If I have altogether maybe done 10 good works (which I doubt I have) it's the only thing which is really there. It's honesty towards yourself. Success? I have to repeat myself? Live a life like Toni Onley? For me it's the exact opposite of what I really feel. Living in a modernistic society people judge you only by this.

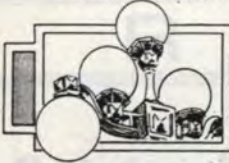
Art is not for sale, really, and you should not sell yourself.

**MONDAY:** Art seems to be difficult, an almost impossible career.

**SIEBNER:** To me life is like a bad movie. I never know when I'm supposed to be stepping in or stepping out.

I never mind going up and down. Most people have to hope in the illusion of always going up. It's idiotic. Right from the beginning, I was always used to the adventure of being an artist. You know, for years and years we never had a bank account but we always paid cash. So we were never in debt, even today. So many German families, or other immigrants, moved in and bought everything new. They wanted to show off. I said, "If people like to visit us, if they come to admire our furniture, they can go to hell."

I never expected too much. An artist was always—and still is today in Germany, unless you are a professor—a bad joke. Even my family was always hiding me. I was a black sheep. Either you became an officer, lawyer, doctor or merchant. Then it stopped. Or scientist. But art? Don't mention it. You should be sent away.



## Art in the Alley

When I first saw it I thought, 'what the hell...' but later I came back and it came to me.' Some ordinary guy was explaining to his wife how Ted Polkinghorne's rugged black canvasses had gripped him. "A thunderstorm. I get it, a thunderstorm!"

He was talking about last weekend's Alley Art event in Waddington Alley, between Johnson and Yates. Robert Kidd's scout-staff arch spans Waddington Alley, easily creating the "sense of place" which many modern artists try so hard to create in galleries. On this sunny weekend afternoon the artists are having a sort of picnic. Baskets of paint, huge panels of colour, plenty of milling about and nothing for sale. The alley was alive. Let that be a tribute to organizer Luis Merino and John Russell.

In the centre of it all Luis Ituarte was slapping paint on the iron pipes which made up his quivering cosmic cricket, a large version of the attenuated sculpture he's been making. Phyllis Serota was painting away on an eight foot square which I hope will soon grace some public space here in Victoria. She pointed out Lance Olsen's painting. I've never quite been able to appreciate his art, but Phyllis turned me on to it. Just let the message go—she's dazzled by his range of tone and knowledge of materials.

Andrew Leone has taken advantage of the architecture of the alley to fit his collages into place. As designer of the windows: "Simple Emanu-El he knows about such things. Under the watchful eye of Pier Group, Liz Scully and Stewart Brands are separately at work on the sidewalk. The lady who does the walking tours for the Hallmark Society was pleased to find I was spilling paint on the old bricks. Good clean art. Not like the punk and revolution one could have expected. But then, there is already lots of graffiti, here behind the Harbour Light.

There seems to be room for every trend, and plenty of good feeling. Probably very few passers-by will be converted to connoisseurs. And it seems unlikely that this energy level could be sustained for a weekly event (though I already await its annual recurrence). Mostly it's a chance for the artists to catch up on what's been happening and keep up a high public profile. As such, it promotes good relations among the labourers of one of Victoria's most important industries—art.

—Robert E. Amos



Luis Merino: art for the looking



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## Outstanding woodworking

THE CABINET MAKER/DESIGNER,  
Maltwood Art Museum and Gallery,  
University of Victoria. Until September 29  
727-7211

**F**irst you meet *Lily* in the foyer. She is a "pleasure pulling boat"—rowboat to you and me—of mid-19th century style, 5 metres long. She is made of cedar, oak, mahogany, ebony, juniper root, sitka spruce, yew, cane, copper, bronze, ivory and gold.

Then you enter the Maltwood Museum.

Martin Segger, director of UVic's Maltwood Museum, has done us all a service in presenting *The Cabinet Maker/Designer*, an exhibition of 22 Vancouver Island woodworkers. Standard Furniture helped with the design and advertising for this extensive collection of work, chosen by the artists themselves. It's displayed against old Persian carpets, some fantastically worn to muted shades. Katherine Maltwood would have been pleased.

New audiences—for example, middle-aged men—are attracted to the museum, and are allowed to touch things (gently). They kneel down to look up under, to study the joints and respect the joinery. The home handyman or young construction worker is not your usual gallery-goer. But here he is, examining Donald Kreye's frame and panel chest, constructed with blind mortise and tenon joints—functional object, historically derived design, honest and well-executed carpentry. The Maltwood has never had such a turnout.

There's more: a dining room suite from Tools 'n' Space; a vanity table and bench by Knut Larsen; a 5 by 10 foot teak billiard table from David Peacock; and unusual instruments made with love and imagination by David Pottier. The sounds of Pottier's tuned wooden drum are welcome in the gallery.

The design elements are eclectic, of course. Exotic woods often replace a concern for simple form, but maybe that's because the showier elements were chosen for this display. The "pilot's desk" by Cameron Russell is well-made and imagi-



**Brown's drop leaf: discrete, superb**

native, but the hand-carved propellor drawer-pulls are a bit of misplaced ingenuity. Yet it is this sort of flourish which attracts attention, even more than the beautiful pentagonal wall-cabinet with hand-made hinges from Ken Guenter's shop.

Ed Colin of Hornby Island who, won the "Best in Show" award at the 1981 Vancouver Celebration of Wood Exhibit of the Craftsmen's Association of B.C., is displaying a cabinet for engineering blueprints. The proportions are handsome, and the workmanlike action of the rollfront gives this piece a confident authority.

Laurie Milne of Comox brought a table and a desk. The wood joins up just so at the corners—a test of real craftsmanship. And restraint sets him off as a designer whose work will endure. The long low table is a perfect melody, graceful and modest.

And finally, a talent inexplicable and far beyond the ordinary. It's hard to believe that Gregory Brown was born as recently as 1945, and that he's self-taught. Lily is his

boat, and anything I could say would slip off it as the highlights roll along its perfectly formed hull. His display in the gallery is discrete, educational, superb. Beneath a small turned and inlaid box is a reddish wooden stand. Even there, the finish is such that the grain of the wood is transparent, gleaming, flowing like a river of amber. A few of his handmade saws hang behind, calm in their irreducible logic—form perfectly following function. An inlaid drop-leaf table stands finished beside another in process. This seems part of the cabinet-making tradition of the age of periwigs and sedan chairs. Yet here it is, alive and mysterious. A craftsman this good has no need for artifice. Gregory Brown is an important cultural property.

This exhibition will have a salutary effect on all who make things. It's full of ideas, and a display of such good work sets high standards. All the contributors' addresses and other contact numbers are listed in Morriss Printers' catalogue, a steal at \$6.95. It can't help but encourage the patronage of local woodworkers.

—Robert Amos

# IN ONE EAR



*Any resemblance  
to true events in  
the above story is  
entirely  
coincidental.*



Vancouver Island. (The first, also led by Burkan last November, attracted about 40 people).

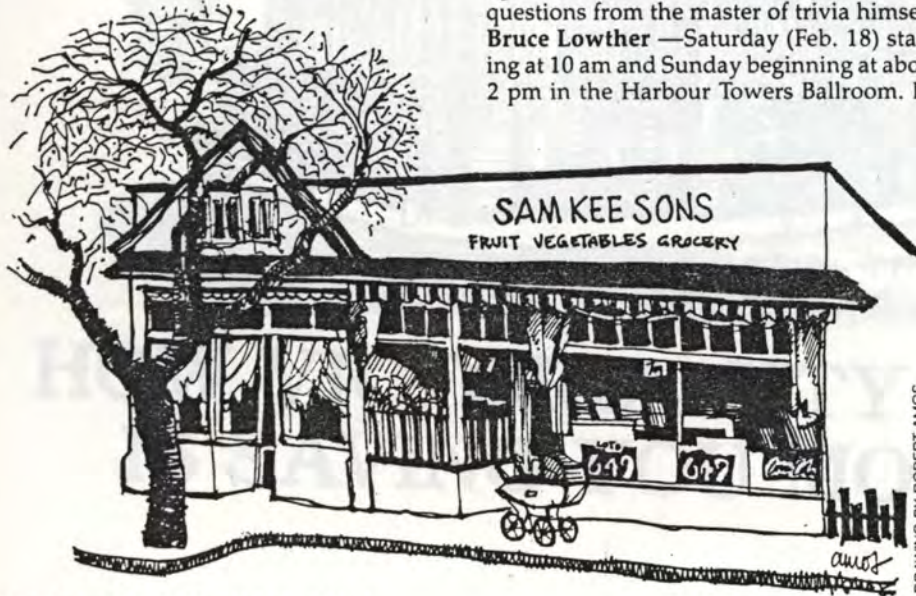
Overcoming fear and developing self-confidence are what Burkan emphasizes in his four-hour lecture session. The firewalking is "a final test of what Burkan is teaching," explains organizer **Jill Goodacre**. "It's completely voluntary— if you're hearing 'don't walk', don't."

Goodacre has walked twice, the first time in a course Burkan offered in Nelson last summer. "The first time I was in almost a

# IN ONE EAR

■ It's a tradition: The Hallmark Society picks the best heritage building restorations for its annual awards on Heritage Day, Feb. 20.

■ Trivia Question #1: What is the most popular game around? If you guessed it, you may want to see trivia experts in action this weekend. Ten high school teams are pitted against each other— and against trivia questions from the master of trivia himself, **Bruce Lowther** —Saturday (Feb. 18) starting at 10 am and Sunday beginning at about 2 pm in the Harbour Towers Ballroom. It's



DRAWING BY ROBERT AMOS

Sam Kee and Son's grocery at the corner of Moss and May streets

**SECOND READING** *Richard Van Dine*



CITY HALL VICTORIA B.C.  
Robert Angus 1975

**HOW VICTORIA CITY HALL  
IS SAVING YOU MONEY**

# Leave only the skies

SKY PAINTINGS: EMILY CARR  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria,  
1040 Moss Street, until September 5th

**H**ow do you judge a painting? Judge it by its faithfulness to the model, a model you know. Judge it by the thrill of recognition when you see it "in the flesh" (the real thing is the reproduction). Judge it for visual density, rich tone and glowing light when seen in a gallery full of other paintings. Judge it by the unleashed intensity of colour, broadly brushed in rhythm, felt deep within the artist. Judge Emily Carr's *Sky Paintings* by any of these standards and they come up winners.

Emily Carr. Sure, you've seen it all before—streamlined trees, copies of totem poles, painted with cheap materials. The colours are often murky or just too green. If her forest interior subjects leave you feeling "seen one, seen 'em all", this show is different. The sky paintings are light-coloured abstracts, quite modern and each one unique. They are, in my opinion, the best of Emily Carr.

How do they fit into Emily's development as an artist? After her schooling, she painted quasi-anthropological studies of totems, art with a historical purpose. Then she fell under the influence of Lawren Harris and his theosophy, painting the static geometric matrices which underly forest and sky. Following this she found new freedom expressing the living rhythms of the natural world through her powerful calligraphy. This last phase is vigorous, impelled by Carr's approaching illness and old age. These great late paintings are driven by what Dylan Thomas called "the force which through the green fuse drives the flowers".

"I woke up this morning with 'unity of movement' in a picture

strong in my mind. I believe that Van Gogh had that idea... The spirit must be felt so intensely that it has power to call others in passing, for it must pass, not stop in the picture but be perpetually moving through, carrying on and inducing a thirst for more and a desire to rise."

Emily Carr,  
*Hundreds and Thousands*, p. 138

Years of labour had taught Emily Carr to paint not just the visible forms, but to express her soul. Emily the pantheist found in skies the ultimate subject through which to meet her God. She was an active and avid worshipper of the holy spirit in nature. It was moving on the winds, glowing with light, breadth and majesty in the sky over the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

The sky is a wonderful subject: vast, formless and everchanging. It allows the artist almost complete freedom of expression. It can be painted in innumerable ways. And what a lot of ways Emily Carr painted it—arching, dappled, swooping; breezy, still; dull, deep or radiant. It is more difficult than we think to make lines of paint imitate charged blue emptiness. In some of her works the skies are experimental, organized to give halos of visible spirit to the trees. But when Emily drops the props, those stage-struck spar trees, and gives us just the sky and its reflection in the straits, her essential and inspired genius is there for us to see.

Genius? Inspired? It's going to be hard to impress Victorians with those claims. We've been so often disappointed by the province's Emily Carr Gallery on Wharf Street, its terrible selection of art and overdone decor; and by musicals and window displays which might not have amused the artist herself. Finally, we've been uninspired by the absurdly high-priced scraps which art dealers drag out of her past. Haven't we seen enough?

Not until we've seen the skies. The rippling, heavenly inspired skies. Leave out the trees and stumps, the logging and the sand pits. Even leave out half the paintings in this show. Leave only the skies painted with an intense love that can change a little blue streak into all the Olympian distance—love that can put the angels in the heavens and bid them sing.

In the end I am asking you to go and see just one painting. It's called *Sky*. It's the one without a frame and it is on loan from the National Gallery of Canada. It's a master-

piece, the most beautiful painting ever made in Victoria.

Our thanks to Ian Thom for bringing this (and so much else) to the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

—Robert Amos

### APPLES AND ORANGES

I strongly disagree with Robert Amos's comments in "Leave only the skies" (*Monday*, August 26-Sept.1). In a review of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria's exhibit of Emily Carr's sky paintings, Amos states: "Genius? Inspired? It's going to be hard to impress Victorians with those claims. We've so often been disappointed by the province's Emily Carr Gallery, its terrible selection of art and overdone decor."

The Emily Carr Gallery is part of the provincial archives of B.C. and as such is primarily concerned with documentation. To quote should eminent Canadian archivist Hugh Taylor: "Better material should gravitate towards galleries, not to archives, and rightly so." Therefore, Carr's works of genius and inspiration belong in the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

The Emily Carr Gallery, however, helps the viewer to better understand sky paintings, by providing some of the context for Carr's works.

Thus, the Carr Gallery fulfills its function and is a welcome extension of the provincial archives of B.C. A strong feeling of our history and identity is provided for the citizens of Victoria as well as the many interested visitors.

As for "overdone decor", that is a matter of personal taste.

Kathleen M. Barlee  
1218 Fairfield

exhibit is excellent but the punch of this positive statement is deflated by weak and unfounded negative opinion of the Emily Carr Gallery.

Robert Amos has failed to grasp the purpose of the Emily Carr Gallery and the focus of the current exhibit, which is to present a full range of Carr's talent, tracing the growth and change of her art. It is a retrospective, a general study, which complements and is in turn complemented by the fine detailed exhibit of the sky paintings at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. The two galleries have an excellent working relationship. Two of the Carr originals in sky paintings were lent to the Art Gallery by the provincial archives, a fact Amos fails to mention.

As far as the weak, off hand dismissal of the Emily Carr Gallery is concerned, Amos stands apart from the vast appreciative group of patrons. The "we've been so often disappointed" is perhaps the royal "we"?

Kerry Dodd  
966 Bank Street

### A WEAK DISMISSAL

The review of sky paintings by Robert Amos ("Leave only the skies," *Monday*, Aug. 27-Sept.2) was a great disappointment. Yes, the Emily Carr

# CAPTIVES

REPORT FROM THE WHALE-HUNTING FRONT— BEYOND THE PROPAGANDA BATTLES



**ANGER** DO EDUCATION CUTBACKS HAVE TO CAUSE SUCH BITTERNESS?

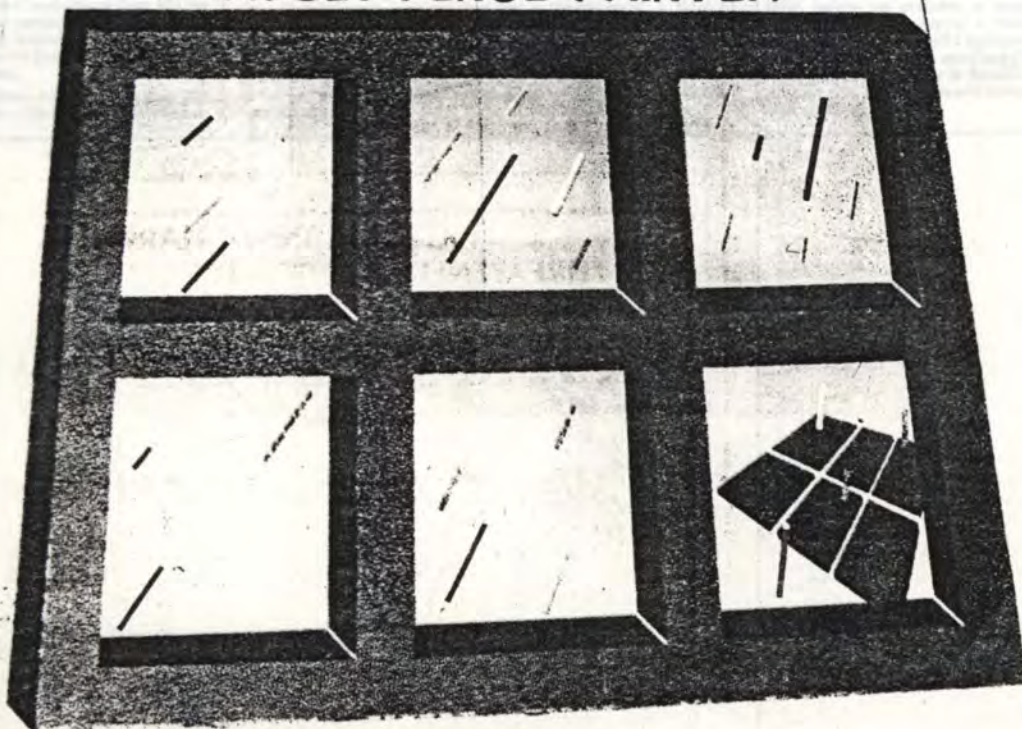
# Monday

VICTORIA'S MAGAZINE

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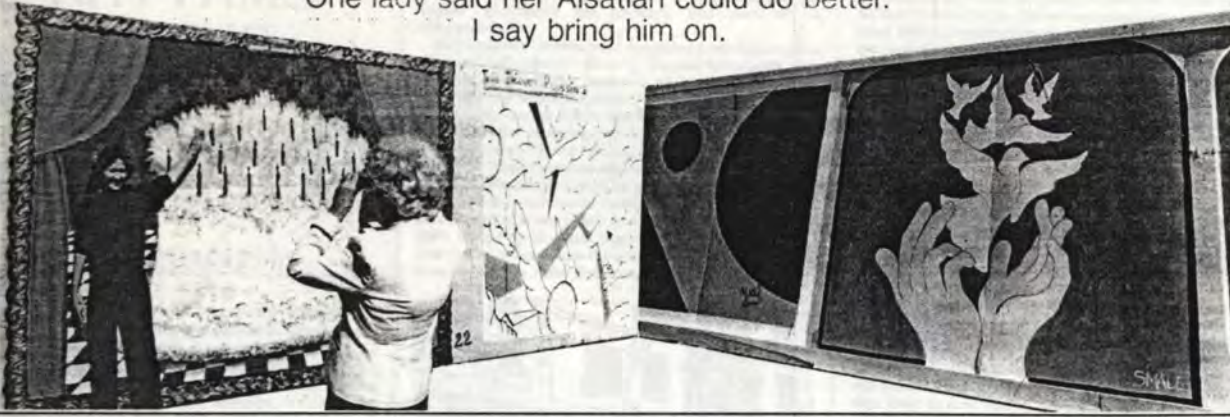


CONFESSIONS OF AN ADULT FENCE-PAINTER



# TRUE CONFESSIONS OF AN OUTDOOR ARTIST

One lady said her Alsatian could do better. I say bring him on.



Scenes from the Fort St. fence: a chance for artists to work in the open, and for spectators to confront the creators

By ROBERT AMOS

MARGARET SHORTER brought her baby. Balancing it on her left hip, she painted right-handed. The paint was in the pram beside her.

Down the way, Jim Lindsay held a spray can and was ping up and down, leaving vapour trails of gold on the 4-foot fence. Artists can be a coy bunch, nurturing antic illusions in garrets. But here they were on the street — at the corner of Fort and Quadra — for the great fence paint-in. Once upon a time that wall was a light blue blight, home of the self-proclaimed "graffiti convention", urging us to do the spin rinse and wash the whales. Now it is decorated with thirty-odd murals. The artists gave their own materials and countless hours of work, providing the city with a constant show, painting to night, for seven days.

Most people were genuinely happy to see someone at work. In our culture, workers and makers are generally seen — visitors must report to the office, no customers behind the counter; "we don't make them here but we'd order one for you". Yet people love to watch something happen, especially if it involves bright colours and an element of chance — can he do it? Observing Victorians were full of compliments.

On Sunday Sept. 19 there were no fewer than 200 walk superintendents at a time, and for a while one

lane of Fort St. was blocked off by bodies. Add this to the thousands of drivers who go up the road every day and you get some idea of the audience this fence is giving to Victoria's artists.

Of course, just as real men don't eat quiche, so they don't understand art. "You call that art?", "My kid could have done that." "They spend our tax money on that?" they say. These are things one viewer says to another to establish the solidarity of the philistines. One lady said her Alsatian could do better. I say bring him on. Another man wanted to know who paid me. I told him I was an artist working for love. He thought that was some sort of joke; people habitually ask me if I am an art student. Real artists only live in Paris, or in magazines.

Kids hang out, like energy vampires getting a contact high. Idiots and indigents lure the street artist into conversation to validate their perceptions. Media buffs show up with tape recorders, video cameras, note pads and Polaroids. Something is definitely happening.

The artists came to record their visions. Some — Ituarte, Vial — took a workmanlike approach. They came and executed bold flat designs and left after a day or two. Others — Costaz, Leone — are painters used to the big scale, and set about with confidence born of experience. But others found themselves in for a very long haul, trying to scale up little oil paintings onto the rugged plywood surface in the bright sunlight. Pliers to pull out staples were in demand and Stewart Brand's sunhat looked like a wise idea. Painting a 4x8 foot panel is not as easy as it seems.

Linda Proe said she almost chickened out. Was it the public that spooked her? No, it was the other artists. Painting among one's peers becomes performance art, daunting indeed. But so good for us. The studio secrets — Merino's purple, Serota's underpainting — were out, and generously shared. As were stools and tools. The artists met one another, recognized common goals and developed a mutual respect to replace the insular self-protection of the garret-bound. And they felt, perhaps for the first time, the true public reaction to their work.

Many of these artists and a number of others will have another chance to hear first-hand reaction when the next public panel painting venture starts Saturday, Sept. 25 on the Inner Harbour walkway below the Empress Hotel.

The Fort St. panels were put up in the first place to hide a vacant construction site, left by the landowner 12 years ago when his attempt to put up a twin to View Towers was opposed by the city. Landowner George Mulek has finally bowed to pressure from the city to at least clean up the lot behind the fence. The two panels removed to do this have now been replaced.

Vote for your favourite! Island Blueprint has put up merchandise certificates for first (\$300), second (\$150), and third place (\$50). Ballots are available at Monday, 823 Broughton Street (until 5 pm Friday) or at Island Blueprint, corner of Fort and Quadra, (until 2 pm Saturday), or in last week's issue of Monday. Ballots must be delivered to Island Blueprint by 2 pm Saturday or to Monday (use the mail slot) by 4 pm Sept. 26. The winners will be announced in the next issue of Monday.

# CITYFAIR

## RHYTHMS IN THE SOUNDSCAPE

The voices of a city: Greek yells, exhaust vents, and glad tidings from the cathedrals

By MARK HAMMOND

George Cacos yells an order to his brothers Peter and John, sometimes in Greek, more often in English. Comments about rowdy customers are always in Greek.

An instructor calls out a rhythm; the percussion student plies: paradiddle, paradiddle, rim-shot. It's slow, not etrical, and he calls for it again. Then twice more.

The taxi radio crackles like the famous cereal; drivers risk close to one another, carrying on quiet conversations about bothering to leave their cars.

"Whatcha staring at? Never seen legs before, mister? raid to talk to a working girl?" Laughter, risible, rises on the small bazaar of hookers near the bank.

These are the alley sounds.

They converge in a courtyard, they amplify one another, and they only come out at night. The courtyard, really eyes converging, lies at the heart of the Yates, Government, Johnson, and Broad block in the centre of town.

Here the Cacos brothers manage their Night and Day restaurant, serving food not yet reviewed in *Monday*. Taxicabs idle, and the dance students in the Duck Building and music students at Ward's learn the first rhythms an ever moved to (they all come from the human pulse, that's how rhythm (they have started"), and the hookers to make a closed bank look busy again.

Government Street holds some of the best soundscape in the city. Night, or very early morning, seems to make it clearest.

Moving down Government, pub-yells burst out of the Bastion Inn, still best loved as The Churchill. Small time druggies make small town sales, voices pitched with less caution than you might expect. Drivers mistake the dopers' girlfriends for hookers, and roar off in disappointment.

Further down Government, bagpipes drone high up in a rehearsal hall. Scottish dancing, the soft fall of girls' feet, the fine accent of the master— all this carries out the windows and down the street.

The worst sound hits at Harbour Square.

Imagine the airchange system of a great building— powerful furnaces, the exhaust from kitchens and restaurants and condominiums and squash court locker rooms and the underground parking garage and the two dozen shops and the washrooms— imagine all these forced back onto the street at one point. At nose level. At a sound level that's buried by day, and stunningly loud at 11:45 pm. I don't know if this vent is the only vent in the building, but it seems so. The noise dominates two blocks.



"No boy, you not go here. This not for you. Goodbye." A slam of the door, and the snapping and clicking mah jong tiles sound less brilliant.

In the renewed remains of Chinatown, once second only to San Francisco's Barbary Coast and Grant Avenue in size, special sounds pattern the street.

There are restaurants, of course. Ywoks banging, fantasti-

cally musical voices demanding pork and egg and bean in an endless note-fall of melisma and urgency, with water taps running everywhere, and the loud snatches of Cantonese conversation. Quiet Chinese restaurants are rare and no fun.

There is the gambling, too. In the '50s, before the shake-up and firings in the city police, before the Archer report looked at these habits, Chinatown gambling was big business. Today it's more discreet, and doors slam in the face of unrecognized visitors.

The martial arts schools excite the yells of tradition-noisy kids, and the Dragon Dancers, and their plain loud drums, and the singing lessons at the Chinese Public School— all this records and reflects Chinatown vigorous again. If only the Gate of Harmonious Interest could sing its ornaments.

Quadra Street, from Glad Tidings at the arena to Christ Church at Pioneer Square, is a kind of church chorus alley in our town. There are more than 130 choirs in Victoria. Most are religious. For many years— no one can remember when this wasn't the case—they have all rehearsed on Thursday evenings.

Walk Quadra on such an evening.

Hear the revivalism and 20th century brass at Glad Tidings Pentecostal— a splendid auditorium, electric guitars, and a kind of Jerry Lee Lewis attack on the keyboards. At First Baptist, it's much quieter: old voices, deeply meant; old hymns, deeply learned, the music of ancient conviction. Over in First United, the traditions of Roberto Wood sing on, and the large choir moves easily from anthem to anthem. Further down at St. John the Divine, one of the great organs in Victoria can be heard. At Pandora's intersection, the Metropolitan and Central Baptist Churches compete for traffic attention.

Up the hill at Christ Church, choirmaster and organist Norman Hurtle enjoys the finest instrument and most curious acoustics in the city. He's moving the chorus back to professional standards, and his urgent and directing tenor carries over every other voice.

Have you heard the CNIB buzzers on Blanshard? They advise the blind when it's safe to cross over. Have you ever heard the Johnson Street bridge lift? It's wonderfully quiet. And do you remember the old 9 pm curfew whistle?

There is a Victoria that lives for the ear alone. There are city sounds that define and move us in ways we cannot guess, the city subliminally advertising and relating itself.

By HELEN TERRY

Homes are more than merely places for eating, sleeping, and bathing. They are private islands of escape where behind closed doors we can nurture bodies and minds to help us face the pressures awaiting us once we step beyond our front stoops."

Annabelle King, editor  
Decormag

You're thinking about doing over the living room. *Architectural Digest* and *Decormag* have been turning up on all the best coffee tables and they're talking up post-modern classicism. What is post-modern classicism? And what's in fashion in Victoria?

Interior designers in Victoria want to create the timeless look that is never dated. They say their customers don't want a trendy image, but just a familiar, comfortable domain. There are heirlooms and personal preferences to be considered, and it's not up to the interior designer to impose his or her taste on customer, even if he is *au courant* with the latest materials and designs available. However, we'll take a look at the latest fashionable styles.

What is this post-modern classicism? Geometric spaces picked out in the "new colours" (they used to be called pastels). Into this spacious minimalism the designer will add recycled or copied architectural elements of a charming and eclectic variety—corinthian columns, saliente arches, quotes from Palladio and Inigo Jones. "It's not a new style for me," says Mike Cullen of North Park Designs (1040 North Park, 381-3422), "I've been building eclectically all my life."

Most other designers in Victoria say post-modernism is unlikely to have much effect on residential interiors in Victoria. We see high fashion in restaurants and clubs, but at home our tastes have been shaped by our older country background of antiques and heirlooms. Victoria's attitudes and location make more suited to the current pervasive

## FROM A FORTRESS TO A HOME

*Interior design is more than a few slip covers and end tables*



Cameron Woodward-Ewen (left) and Alan Oliphant of Design Associates: a pervasive interest in Oriental fashion

interest in "Oriental" as a fashion style. The opening of China to the west a few years ago brought with it a renewed interest in Chinoiserie (a taste which already captured Europe's heart in 1750 and continued through Queen Victoria's reign), and today many Oriental goods are available in Victoria stores. Tien-tsin carpets have become the fashion floor-covering. "We can send a painted sketch to their factory and the Chinese send us a sample, computer dyed and cut to our design, in just a few

weeks," says Cameron Woodward-Ewen of Design Associates (1417 Strathcona, 595-2344). And to lend weight to his statement he showed me three .75 square metre carpet samples, each dyed in three different designer colours.

Oriental, or any other style, is achieved by use of accent items featured in an otherwise neutral room. Interior designers' showrooms stock fascinating furniture, paintings and *objets d'art* which have been brought from the markets of the Far East. At Sterling McBean Interiors (710 Broughton St., 383-3037) silk pillow covers from Thailand and batik cotton from Indonesia are ready for

the home-decorator to work with. They also have a selection of *tansu*, Japanese chests of drawers which are now a highly sought after furnishing item. Ann Wilson of Sterling McBean was quick to tell me that the shop has no interior designer, though advice is readily available. Rather, this is a shop where the interior designer can shop. A big part of interior design is knowing what's on the market and where to find it at the best price.

Furniture shops are well aware of the popularity of the Oriental style. Both American and Canadian manufacturers are accentuating the horizontal lines and brass fittings which bring a touch of the east to furniture scaled for Canadian living. And fabrics to cover traditional furniture shapes are increasingly patterned and printed with oriental motifs.

The rise in price of oil-based vinyl wallcoverings has made the elegant grass cloth papers of Asia a better bargain than ever. These wall coverings include strips of bamboo or knotted straw loosely woven together and mounted on papers such as exotic tea-chest gold.

At Standard Furniture (737 Yates, 382-5111), Ann Creighton is able to show sofas in lovely chintzes or handsome brocades in styles other than Oriental. The classics of interior design are still with us: French provincial, American colonial, the clean lines of the International style. There are reminders of decorating styles which have come and gone—the Spanish look of the early sixties, or the fringes and furbelows of Victorian taste. Creighton presents extensive lines by famous designers, like Laura Ashley, which are co-ordinated from carpet, fabric, wallpaper and right on to table napkins and pillow slips. Her expertise is available through Standard's Design Studio, usually at no cost to their customers.

Before you get any ideas about how easy it is to pick a style and redesign your living space, remember there's more to it than choosing a few slipcovers and end tables. Some of the effects an interior designer works with are almost subliminal. Not only the design of the carpet but its thickness has a subtle effect on your

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Fran Willis at the North Park Studio: a long way from simple cosmetic effects

response. The quality and location of lighting is an area in which a professional designer can really score points over an amateur. The flow of a room, its traffic pattern, is often best understood by a professional. No longer does furniture have to back up to the wall in a succession of tiny rooms. Numerous conversation areas are encouraged, and other spaces centre on the piano or television, the areas made separate by plants or glass brick walls. There are many elements on the designer's palette.

Wall treatments often extend beyond paint and paper. Your interior designer is happy to act as contractor, designing and ordering wall units from local cabinet makers. He can invent a new fire-

place or discover an old one, and create window treatments with a full knowledge of what's on the market, tempered with his client's needs and lifestyle.

Our notions of residential design are undergoing transformation. Until just a few years back the home was a fortress against the elements, divided and subdivided on a grid pattern. Often it seemed all the living went on in the kitchen, and the living room was reserved for Christmas and funerals. Our modern leisure culture and the abundance of space in the suburbs has brought about the ranch

### At home our tastes have been shaped by our olde country background of antiques and heirlooms

style, the rec room and the casual convenience of the open plan. Now, with the advent of new materials—thermopane windows, teflon coated upholstery, and fade-resistant fabric dyes—our interiors can open up to embrace the out-of-doors. Thus the interior designer's job begins to expand into the architect's realm, to greenhouse windows, patios, sunporches—the interconnection of the outside and inside of the residence. The transition from fortress to an environmentally sympathetic home has been slow. It is the job of the interior designer to help us shape our old-fashioned or inconvenient residences to modern living styles.

And what is an interior designer? If we're going to get an outsider help us spend a lot of money, we should know

who that person is. The manager of Pacific Office Interiors (1524 Fort, 592-8822) echoed many people's prejudices when he jokingly referred to the residential specialists as "inferior desecrators". He himself sells office furniture exclusively and makes no bones about being a vendor, a merchant. "Decorator" is a name generally reserved for those whose talents are limited to paint, wallpaper and upholstery choices, often a euphemism for "house painter" or "furniture salesman".

Interior designers are a cut above. In Canada there are 16 colleges (among them Camosun College) and one university with interior design courses. The four-year course at the University of Manitoba is taught through the faculty of architecture. Graduates of such courses can draft mechanical drawings for all phases of construction and wiring of their projects, and specialize in some

### The transition from fortress to an environmentally sympathetic home has been slow

particular area of the field—perhaps commercial or office design, residential or institutional interiors. Some come to be associated with furniture shops, some with architects' offices, and many are in private practice. Of course, a few live up to the stereotype, draping yards of fabric hither and yon and convincing Mrs. Bucks that everything will look "just divine". But more likely you'll find a well-trained and conscientious professional concerned with making your home or

work-space more pleasant, efficient and comfortable.

Interior designers have professional organizations which require special examinations for admission. Jeannette Taylor (1150 Douglas, 382-7141), whose studio is located in Eaton's home furnishings department, is a member of the Interior Design Institute (IDI). Glenn Oliphant of Design Associates belongs to The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID). Such certification is not necessary, but it lets you know that you're dealing with an ethical professional.

How do interior designers work? On the low end of the scale, he or she may be consultant to a furniture store. When purchasing a major item—and remember, a sofa can easily cost \$5,000—the services of the consultant are available at no cost (if you go through with the purchase) to help you sort out the correct style or upholstery from literally thousands of possibilities. The consul-

The search for gracious design: the nouveau riche taste needs educating



## THE COASTAL SEAHOME

Designed by Harold J. Aune



tant visits your home, measures the rooms and works out a floor plan and colour scheme to suit.

The interior designer in private practice is most likely to be called in when you consider renovating an older home, or if a new home needs its character firmly established at the beginning. At other times, perhaps the function of a home changes—when the children leave the nest and entertaining becomes more important, for example. The emphasis is on a coordination of all interior spaces. A well-designed home will not only reflect the character of its residents; it will function more efficiently, to provide maximum utilization of space and effectively ease the stress of living. And the interior designer can bring into focus the predilections of a busy person who has neither the time nor the visual specialization to do it himself.

At this point the role of the designer involves a lot of psychology. This ability to guess the unspoken wishes of a client is of profound importance. Client and professional may enter into a long and close relationship as the interior of an elegant home evolves. What begins in one room often carries on to others. (Clients gradually upscale the quality of their home as time and money allow. Once the subtle, almost neutral, themes have been set, the slow accumulation of just the right furnishings and accents can engage designer and client for years.)

At the North Park Studio, interior design is often the outcome of an architectural project. Unlike business interiors, where the designer has to fill an empty shell, their residential projects acknowledge the continuity from landscape design through window treatment to arrangement of the interior space, furnishings and fabrics. That's a long way from the simply cosmetic effects!

The designers work at drafting



**A well-designed home will not only reflect the character of its residents; it will function more efficiently**

boards in their studios just out of sight. But up front is usually a comfortable room for meeting clients, showing off their skill, and displaying some of the well chosen accessories in stock. Harold Tweten's Interiors (1608 Fort St., 382-9233) has a special shop for commercial customers, and the front room is like a superb executive office, its casual elegance highlighted by a Walter Phillips print. Well-chosen original paintings mark a room with personality and a

sense of richness once available only to the wealthy. Design Associates is appealing to the collector, featuring Burmese lacquer, Thai carving and Japanese paintings, simply displayed in glass front cabinets with concealed indirect lighting. North Park Designs have a gallery showroom to display the work of local artists, always in good taste.

Back near the drawing table, a veritable library of sample books bring the merchandise of the world within arms' reach. Carpets and drapes, paint and paper of course; but also Italian tiles, chair caning and a variety of bricks are close at hand. With the customer's needs in mind a presentation evolves. Architectural drawings, floorplan and elevation, and more interpretive sketches accompany swatches of all sorts of materials. Sometimes a wall panel will be built, showing a complete width of wallpaper, wainscoting, baseboard and cornice, with upholstery samples attached.

It's up to the designer to contract and supervise constructions and installations. His planning, market research, on-site visits and consultations add up to a lot of time and attention. Yet the eventual cost is about the same as if the customer had purchased the components himself and paid the retail price. The designer makes much of his income between wholesale and retail price and a good designer can save a lot of time and money by his knowledge of good workers and suppliers. He can assure that the work is done on time and with a minimum of disturbance. For jobs where more time and fewer materials are used, a consulting fee is charged. So, getting involved with an interior designer is not expensive—he will work within your budget and may save you costly mistakes.

If you have money to spend and want to plan for best results, designers can deliver the "timeless" quality—decor

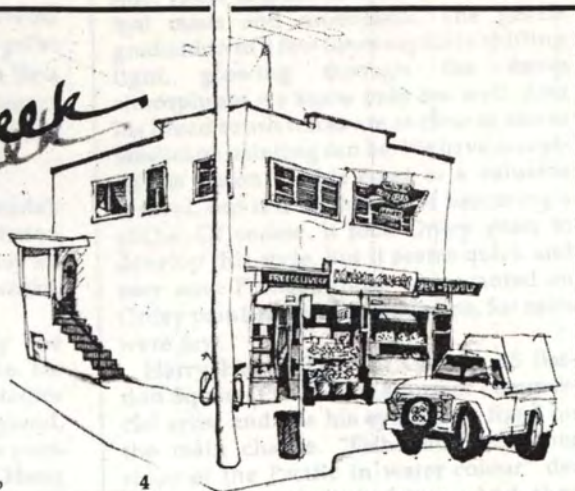
45  
that doesn't date. A... that quality can be expensive. At the high end, designers are cunning magicians capable of creating spaces with a special, almost sacred aura—the board room, the reception hall, the formal dining room. Designers are technicians for ritual spaces. Theirs is a sophisticated art, unobtrusive but profound in its implications. Yet the interior designers want to amend this image of "carriage trade only".

Good design is accessible to everyone, and those who need it most are the middle-income groups, the *nouveau riche* whose taste needs education. Their homes may be tools of social leverage, to entertain the boss or present the correct image to associates. These rarely admitted but very real social purposes of the environment can be well served by an interior designer. He can help the young and upcoming go beyond the inherited taste for Woolco rococo.

Perhaps more important is the benefit a well-ordered home can be to those who live in it. Better layout planning saves steps. Colour coordination and lighting enhance mood. A coherent plan for furnishings is more economical. A home which is well-designed can reflect the aspirations of its inhabitants, giving reality to things the hardworking person dreams of but has perhaps neither the time nor expertise to achieve.

And what is there for the average person? Keith Armitage, a freelance designer, told me "the best deal is the consultation fee". It may seem a bit steep at \$50 per hour, but to have a few hours of the designer's advice is well worth it. He can put you in touch with a larger pattern for living, thinking of your home as a complete, designed unit. He can create themes for colour and furnishings which are in tune with the times, and show you the space from the specialists point of view. After that, it's up to you to make the changes in your home, but the \$100 or so is money well spent.

*This week*



COVER PHOTO BY MIKE GLUSS

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With a trend of shorter exhibits, some of the most important art shows can't be reviewed before they're past. And the well-publicized artists are often left out in lieu of informing the public of the lesser known artists. Here those imbalances

are slightly redressed.

Victoria's most famous artist, Canada's most popular artist, the wealthiest artist in the west, and the local best seller: they all had shows here in the past four weeks. How many did you see?

Fenwick Lansdowne is probably the most famous artist living in Victoria. He sells his utterly accurate ornithologies through a gallery in London, England, though he paints them here. His new portfolio of reproductions, "The Birds of Hong Kong", has just come out and went on now for less than a week (Crystal Garden gallery, 707 Douglas, October 7-13). The gallery was gorgeously done up, with real bird paintings and cyclamen. But the pictures were just the usual photo-reproductions of Lansdowne water colours, served up in an ornamental red folder big enough to use as a coffee table. Not a real painting in sight. Fortunately, this shortcoming has been recently redressed. Now on display is a large oil of herring gulls. It's not a new work, but it's a beauty. Perhaps if someone buys it you'll see more of the real thing. After all, it's only \$42,000.

Robert Bateman, at the moment, is Canada's most popular painter. The Marshall Gallery (1636 Cedar Hill Cross Road, October 16-23) put on a show featuring lots of pricey Bateman reproductions as well as half a dozen birds and animals painted in acrylics. Bateman combines a strong compositional sense with the finicky precision animal art lovers love. Unlike Lansdowne, Bateman places his subjects in the landscape. Rocks, mist and floating kelp are major elements in his picture of herring gulls, while Lansdowne needs

just a few barnacles. Bateman combines sure technique with imagination to make work that pleases both naturalists and aesthetes. There is no reason (except "collectability") why reproductions should cost many hundreds of dollars; but if they are sufficient pretext to bring his "price available on request" paintings here, I won't complain.

Bateman seems to be the year's most popular artist. Do you remember the million dollar man of the year before? Assumptions and prejudices get in the way of our appreciation of such a character. If Toni Onley (Kyle's Gallery, 1545 Fort, until November 5) was just another painter, if his every sketch did not cost \$1,600, then per-

haps our sympathies would be more on his side. There is much to admire in his minimal mists and mountains. The gentle graduation of a few tones captures shifting light, glowing through the damp atmospheres we know only too well. And his broad brush traces are as close to zen as landscape painting can be. We have accepted his vision of this coast as a valuable symbol, but it is in danger of becoming a cliché. Of course, it took Onley years to develop this style, but it seems quick and easy now. Perhaps those who wanted an Onley painting already have one, for sales were few.

Harry Heine (Leafhill Gallery, 45 Bastion Square, Oct. 2-9) is a former commercial artist and has his eye firmly fixed on the main chance. "Fishboats and other ships of the Pacific in water colour" describes almost every picture. And they were snapped up on opening night, almost every one. Heine's ship drawing is crisp and adequate, but his Payne's grey or indigo mists are the dominant feature. His hundreds of followers would do well to study the bold, graphic underpinnings of his wave forms and the shifting, pearly light which plays across the boats. He's hit a resonant chord, he paints with ease and confidence, and he gives the illusion of value for money. No wonder he's Victoria's best seller.

That's the high end of art in town: safe bets, settled styles, and not too many sales. This year the money is made on short exhibitions, an established public image and "limited edition" reproductions. Who's next for stardom?

—Robert Amos



Harry Heine's seashore: mist and gulls

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## Max Maynard (1903-1982)

**A**RTIST MAX Maynard was born in India in 1903 and came to Canada in 1912. As a young man in Victoria he was well-known as an associate of Jack Shadbolt. During the 1930s those two frequented the studio of Emily Carr. Her influence helped to shape Maynard's style, emphasizing the sweeping natural forms of the British Columbia forest and coast.

In 1931 his paintings were displayed in the National Gallery of Canada. But most notable was his organization of the Modern Room at Victoria's Island Arts and Crafts' Society's annual show in 1932. That exhibition was a milestone in Victoria's art history, the first public acknowledgement of "modern art".

His works were often seen in Victoria, Seattle and Vancouver until 1942. Then he became a professor of English literature at the University of New Hampshire. There he continued to paint, developing his oil-on-paper technique, often using black paper for a luminous effect. On retirement he returned to Victoria, his "spiritual home".

In Victoria he was warmly received, not only as an historic figure, but as a talented artist and as a charming man. One-man-shows at Kyle's Gallery and at the Burnaby Art Gallery enlarged his public. Despite failing health he continued to paint with unabated skill, most recently working on pictures from his cruise up the Alaska coast.

He is remembered as a romantic, an energetic spirit who rose from his bed in the isolation ward to attend his most recent gallery opening, and who stayed up all night painting. He was looking forward to active participation in the retrospective planned for the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, from May 5 to July 3, 1983.

—Robert Amos

## The new art sales craze

LATELY, MOST of the art sales in Victoria have been at charity auctions. The big daddy of them all, the second annual at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, saw 199 items knocked down in about three hours, grossing almost \$35,000. Three weeks before, the University of Victoria's Inter-Faith Chapel fundraiser, in conjunction with a \$100-a-plate dinner and an evening of entertainment, raised \$32,000.

But it didn't stop there. In aid of the Nuclear Disarmament Referendum, auctioneer-restaurateur **Wendy Siegel** and **Pagliacci's** brought in \$3,600 with a combination dinner-party and charity auction.

And then there was the Western Canada Wildlife Council benefit, which aided seven environmental groups. It was instigated by **Robert Bateman's** gift of 10 prints, and included locals like **Della Paranich**. At the Newcombe Auditorium, the full house came up with about \$8,000. Can anyone doubt that this is a most popular way to buy art?

Of course at these events, people are not

just buying art—they are supporting their favourite cause and receiving art in return. The works were donated outright to support the Inter-Faith Chapel. The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV) will return 60 per cent of the money to the artists and retain 40 per cent for operating expenses.

The volunteer auctioneers are a big part of the show. **Don Cal** on video is even more charming than **Ida Clarkson**.

Artists who bring forth work have many motives. There is the much-vaunted publicity angle, not to be sneezed at when big audiences look at work that might otherwise never have left the studio. And these auctions have turned into the most stimulating group shows in the year's gallery-going. The way the AGGV does it, it's less a charity than a forced sale for the artists.

The promoters know there are plenty of willing artists. UVic had given honorary degrees to **Bill Reid** and **Toni Onley**, and sure enough those two donated handsome work. The AGGV recently had shows of many of the artists whose work came up for bids. An entirely different subculture considers "Pag's" homebase and made donations of all sorts (including a vasectomy) for auction. The art dealers too, make sure to keep their "stable" of artists up front and in the public eye.

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If you've ever had your own work up on the block, then you know the ringing in your ears when your number comes up, the hot flush, and (usually) the numb disappointment of finding that the general public doesn't think you're worth what you think you're worth. What exactly does it mean that **Kay Ratcliffe** regularly sells her work for \$450 in the gallery but it only fetches \$350 at the auction? The charity auction crowd has their favourites, regardless of tastes in the big world. At UVic **Christine Richards** and **Ardath Davis** were hotly bid for, local loyalties holding them high. Out-of-towners just didn't see a chance.

Are auctions a good place to buy art? The artists choose what to send, aware of the publicity but knowing that they won't likely get a "gallery price". For the bidder, there's auction fever to contend with—the hammer is coming down, the auctioneer telling you you'll hate yourself in the morning if you don't buy something. And there are some good deals: good work by **Siebner, Thorn, Pat Martin Bates** for under \$350.

There never was a more fickle audience than auction goers. At UVic **Millicent Shapiro's** work didn't reach her minimum and was sent home. But at the AGGV one of hers made \$1500, almost twice as much as the next highest in the evening. Many artists seemed to take a perverse pleasure in watching a **Toni Only** reach only \$850, nowhere near his "sticker price". Down at **Pagliacci's** the fans had different favour-

ites. **Phyllis Serota, Laird Campbell** and **David Bruce** got solid support. But there's no logic, when you can buy a **Jim Lindsay** oil for \$50 and **Mimi Jones** brings in \$375 for a watercolour.

What can we make of all this? Charity auctions moved 400 works of art this fall, more than the annual turnover of any single gallery in town. It's bound to have some effect on the profile of art sales in this city. Will the public be educated or satiated? Why do living artists sell at charity auctions when their contemporary works just die at the regular "fine arts" auctions? Perhaps artists will always be seen as the simple solution for fund-raisers; perhaps auctions are the necessary alternative to unenterprising commercial galleries. These events do indicate, though, that there are lots of people who don't mind buying art, if they can convince themselves it's "for a good cause".

—Robert Amos

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CRAFT FAIRE**



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**B**ARRY TILL, curator of Asian Art at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, has brought a lot of expertise to his position. Now he's bringing every major historical Chinese painting in Canada to the gallery. The exhibition, entitled, *Major Chinese Paintings in Canadian Collections*, (Dec. 9-Feb. 13) will be a unique experience, "as good as anything in North America", says Till. "As far as quality, 30 of them are first class, can't be beaten."

In this exhibit the oldest paintings ever exhibited in Canada will be shown for the first time. "One is from 669 A.D., one from 670, and one from 828 A.D. They are being lent to us by Mr. Arthur Menzies, former Canadian Ambassador to China," says Till. The paintings came from *Dun hunang* Buddhist grottoes. The grottoes date from the Fourth Century A.D. There are approximately 500 of them left today, and inside they're all painted. In the 11th Century, one of the caves was filled with paintings and walled up by the monks, who feared an invasion. This cave was lost until the early 20th Century when Sir Aurel Stein was able to buy from it about 6,000 paintings for \$40. He hauled them off to the British Museum. Another 6,000 went to the *Musée Guimet* in Paris, and a missionary named James Menzies also purchased a few of them. His son, the ambassador, has agreed to loan those to this exhibition.

Almost all the good Chinese paintings in Canada were once part of the collection of R.W. Finlayson. Barry Till explained, "Mr. Finlayson was always a resident of Toronto. I don't think he ever went to China. But what he did was fantastic. He went around the world and purchased Chinese paintings from the best sources— Spinks and Sons, Bluetts, Sotheby's, and well-known collectors. He had the advisors and he didn't make any mistakes. If it wasn't for him it would be literally a desert for Chinese paintings in Canada."

In the late 1960s, the Finlaysons gave 15 or 16 Chinese paintings to Canada's National Gallery. And to Victoria they gave one very important Chinese item. Victoria has also been chosen as a repository for their Japanese paintings. There are a ( 25 here already, and Finlayson's

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# CHINESE TREASURES

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*From a cave sealed in the 11th century comes the best Chinese art show ever assembled in Canada*

By ROBERT AMOS



**Curator Barry Till: every major historical Chinese painting in Canada**

widow continues to make generous donations. No one can argue when Barry Till says "we do have the best Japanese collection in Canada. And we're getting better all the time."

But the subject of this show is Chinese paintings. I asked

Till if authentic old Chinese paintings ever get out of China today. "Not now. They did in the old days—a lot of them used to belong to the Imperial Family. When the Dynasty was overthrown they had no income and ended up selling some of the national treasures. America is known for having a huge number of specialists in painting. The Europeans tend to specialize in Chinese ceramics. In fact, the Americans are, in my opinion, the most knowledgeable scholars of Chinese paintings in the world. There are a few good people in China but the field has been taken over by Westerners."

What does he mean by an "authentic" painting? "One that is almost without doubt by a certain artist. Chinese paintings were produced en masse. People always copied the masters. Of a particular painter, if there are 500 paintings, probably only 10 or 15 would be real. To buy an authentic painting now would cost at least \$30,000. And only the very best scholars can tell which ones are authentic." The experts have been polled, and Till is confident that in this show 75 per cent are without doubt authentic.

How about one's chances of buying an authentic Chinese painting cheaply? "There's no hope," he says.

Arthur Menzies, former Canadian ambassador to China, spoke at the gallery on Buddhist paintings in China on December 2nd. Later, at the university, Richard Barnhart of Princeton will be giving three lectures. And Michael Knight of the Seattle Art Museum is expected as well. There will be a lot of scholars coming to town to see this, the best Chinese painting show Canada has ever seen. Don't miss it.

As a counterpoint to the venerable paintings at Victoria's Art Gallery, go the Stephen Lowe Gallery, 637 Humboldt St. at the Empress Hotel (384-3917) before the end of January and see the paintings of Stephen Lowe.

Lowe died in 1975 at the age of 37. To some Victorians he remains a legend, almost a saint. His is not the esoteric art of the ancient masters but the popular, decorative and colourful birds and flowers of the modern Lingham School of southern China. On display are about 50 of his original paintings, from the family's own as well as private collections. It's not a sale but it is a chance to see paintings with a breadth and vivacity which has ( r been equalled in Victoria.

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## The pottery is still best

WAYNE NGAN  
Whales Gallery, 1007 Fort Street, 385-5525  
until January 14

**W**hat is Wayne Ngan doing at Whales Gallery? From his home on Hornby Island, Ngan has achieved a reputation in Canada and much further afield as a potter of exceptional ability. And for years now he has been saying that he is going to give it up and paint. This exhibition is Victoria's first chance to see his paintings.

The walls are hung with medium-sized acrylic paintings on canvas. In the foyer adjacent are a number of brush-drawn ink paintings, mostly of birds. Also included in the show is a selection of his pots and plates.

The acrylics are abstracts, harmonies of colour and shape built up in a constructivist mode. They are reminiscent of Kandinsky, and to a lesser degree Miro. They are intelligent, well-made, and yet already dated. Ngan graduated from the Vancouver School of Art in 1963 and his style seems to have been formed then and there. The shapes and colours with which he constructs his balanced tableaux are handled with aplomb, but these paintings already seem passé.

Why would anyone buy a painting when they could get a pot, crafted by this sublime and shining intelligence, at one-tenth the price? Perhaps Ngan switched to painting to cash in on the high prices painters ask. In that case he shouldn't show pots and paintings together. The pots

are more sensual, more famous, more functional and considerably cheaper. And the pots are selling very well, the paintings hardly at all.

The ink drawings were a surprise, and show Ngan has a certain facility with the brush. This is especially evident in the broadly-brushed abstract works reminiscent of his ceramic decor. But the bird paintings were too timid to pass muster. He has neither the patient hand of Stephen Lowe nor the cultivated simplicity of Stephen Sham.

Wayne Ngan is the best potter in Canada. Judging by his activity in Victoria this winter he hasn't really stopped making ceramics. As a painter in acrylics he is competent but not very thrilling. His bird paintings are weak, though he has the potential to create vivacious and powerful abstractions with ink and brush. But why? Of course, the artist will do whatever he chooses. But it's obvious what he does best. Ngan is a potter.

— Robert Amos



### IT'S OUR INFORMATION

Sid Tafler's column ("Some Sticky Questions" Public Eye, Monday, Dec. 3-9) was very disturbing. Although Mr. Tafler focused on the difficulties that journalists are encountering in ferreting information out of the ministry of finance, the problem of secrecy is much more endemic in the provincial government. Although a freedom of information law has been discussed on and off for several years in British Columbia, it appears to be a very low priority with this government.

The notion of such a law is hardly a radical one. New Brunswick has an excellent statute and three or four other provinces also have laws or are actively contemplating them at this time. The federal Access to Information Act was passed in July and will be proclaimed as law sometime in the new year.

As taxpayers, we pay for the information which government officials are apparently hiding from Mr. Tafler and others. A freedom of information law has had a great impact in other governments by changing the attitude of public servants. It also makes the rules of the game more certain for all concerned. A freedom of information law is long overdue in British Columbia. I hope that Mr. Tafler's column stirs others inside and outside government to get on with this vital reform.

Murray Rankin  
108 Moss St.

### REMEMBERED ART

Thank you for two fine articles on art by Robert Amos (Seven Days, Monday, Dec. 3-9)



Though Max Maynard was a dear friend, I fear he was not appreciated as much as he should be for his art. Bob seems to have the knack of telling of Max's artistic life with eloquence and dignity— two things which characterized Max, the man, the writer and the artist. I hope we'll have follow-up reporting on his upcoming retrospective at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria in May, 1983.

The other article, "The New Art Craze" was timely, too. Like many artists who contributed to these auctions, I was not disappointed in the low sales figures. My work went where it was loved and appreciated which is, I believe, why so many artists contribute their works for these art auctions.

I'd like to hear other opinions on this!  
Helen Andersen  
1836 Mount Newton X Rd.

### FORGOTTEN ART

Whatever has happened to your coverage of the local art scene? While your correspondent Robert Amos is philosophizing about wildlife auctions and Don Cal's charm, there are a lot of excellent exhibitions in Victoria which he chooses to ignore. For instance:

- The current Siebner exhibition at the Backroom Gallery. This gallery, recently reopened after the last owner's financial failure, not only needs your support— it deserves it.
- The Oak Bay Art Show. Held early in

November, this was one of the finest group exhibitions I've seen in many years. Twenty-five high quality local artists like Bill Murray, Eliza Hawkins, Joan McGregor, Della Paranich, Rosemary James. I also saw Robert Amos there, not exhibiting but gathering material for his column— or so I thought. Alas, the write-up never materialized.

• An unassuming, but nevertheless good quality group showing of works by McGregor, Cheshire, Ashton, and Young, during November at the U-Frame-It Gallery on Douglas St. was apparently not worthy of Amos' notice.

Victoria's artists need Monday. If Amos can't do the job then get someone who can— please.

Jack Riley  
1245 Beach Drive

*Ed note: For every art show covered in Monday, there are 20 that are not. The same applies— in varying proportions —to touring musical shows, profiles of artists, actors, authors and craftspeople, films and books. Robert Amos submits, often without pay, about three times as much as we print.*

### CREEPING NEGATIVITY

We Canadians are a strange bunch. Everyone has poked a finger in the air at our Prime Minister, including your cartoonist (Bierman's Gallery, Monday, Nov. 12-18). A cartoonist has to make a living and most of the time he will draw what we want to see.

# Computer graphics' greatest hits

**W**HAT'S capable of 79,000 colours, should become the North American standard for video graphics display, and was developed in Canada? It's called Telidon and Victoria's Glenn Howarth is without question the foremost artist working in the medium.

H.G. Bown, Canada's Department of

Communications, developed Telidon, a videotext protocol which can present words and pictures in a language written for Telidon terminals. Dave Godfrey, head of Victoria's computer-assisted learning company, Softwords, was at work in the information revolution. He needed a talented "chef" to cook up some delicious menus and that's where painter Glenn Howarth came in.

In Howarth's opinion, the designs used by B.C. Tel's Telidon (on display at the Victoria Public Library) are quite unimaginative.



Telidon graphic: technology and imagination

This medium has not been considered an art form, and "technology doesn't guarantee access to the human imagination," as he puts it. A good writer, and visually literate, one of Howarth's first tasks was to script and design Telidon display monographs explaining National Research Council projects in a format he calls "Disneyland-colour and high-school clear".

Two years of work led him to a proposal to participate in the prestigious Sao Paulo Biennale, an international art show in Brazil. He intended to install Telidon in operation, stripped of its chassis and exposed in a plexiglass case— "raw technology", he calls it. The images would be a veritable "greatest hits" of Canadian computer graphics. And furthermore, they would be displayed next to the relatively crude French Antiope "alphamosaic" system. As both were aimed at capturing a ripe Brazilian market, the chance for Canadian promotion looked great.

The Canada council recommended the proposal to the Department of External Affairs, who promised to pay most of the costs. They in turn asked the Department of Communications to assist, but perhaps that group couldn't see the art show as more than a trade fair. Rumours flew, and time passed. "Nobody decided against the project," Howarth explained. "It just died." Canada will not be represented at this year's Sao Paulo Biennale.

When will the next chance come? Until it does, "paperless publisher" Dave Godfrey and Glenn Howarth, the best designer in business, will continue punching in pictures in the small office upstairs at Market Square.

—Robert Amos

# NITELIFE

## Comic kamikaze

SHEILA GOSTICK  
X-Changes Gallery, 961 North Park, Feb. 25  
New Era Social Club, 551 1/2 Fisgard St., Feb. 26

**G**awky and mocking, Sheila Gostick lurched into view with her feet screwed on sideways and took the audience with her right from the start. A good crowd of "young people with the standard daring haircuts" chuckled and snorted their way through the next hour and 40 minutes. The Smart Person's Comedienne had arrived in Victoria. "I come here going 'yeah, yeah, yeah'. They go 'no, no, no... well maybe'." Gostick came from Toronto and this is her first tour out west. Her perceptions of us are novel. "Everybody here is just a little bit mouldy," she surmised. An unashamed



Sheila Gostick: "Maybe tomorrow I might torch something...I kinda feel it comin' on"

easterner, she made Salmon Arm sound like a disease.

Though billed as "punk — punky — punk" she's more like Carol Burnett for people who gave up on TV. This is recognizable stand-up comedy styling aimed at new targets. "I feel so bad when I see kids with blue hair. They want something to fight but their lives are just too nice. They've got gold ten-speed bicycles... let's ship them to England. They can rebel against mushy peas and no central heating."

There's nothing that Canadians like better than jokes about Canada. She brought us a bit of Vancouver, the home of laid-back violence— "maybe tomorrow I think I might torch something... I kinda feel it comin' on." Calgary, "where the buildings still have their wrappers on." Toronto, "the city of the future— and always will be."

Perhaps the most interesting feature of this comic kamikaze is her truly Canajun elocution. She can wring endless changes on "ok-uh-no-really-ok-uh-no-I mean-really-ok-no-ok?" and her impersonation of the jerk in the van— "hey baby, hey babe, hey baby, hey, hey, babe" is spot on. She identifies the politician's lust for Old World culture: "It's gonna be really Yurrupean— like he knows, he's been

GOSTICK + FCA

MUSIC RESTAURANT

**ON THE REBOUND**  
Rebounders  
Back Swing



Bo Richards  
RESTAURANT

there, eh? Like, we're all gonna be drinking espresso coffee from little tiny cups, right? Continental or what, eh?" Too true.

The (so-called) young Canadian art world is her audience and her send-up of Performance Art was dangerously knowing. "We're gonna put on a show, but you can't make fun of it," she admonished and then with mock solemnity went through the boring-artist-with-tormented-soul routine in a way that's painfully familiar. "No— you've really got to see the video tape. I get grants for being obscure."

Gostick writhed and winked and pitched lines without let-up. Catholic school— "we got to worship a lot of plaster". Fashion slavery— "mini-skirts are back but now it's different. It's a parody. It's not a bikini, it's a comment." And the new religions— "Give up all your worldly possessions and follow The Way. Call and they will be picked up."

Sheila Gostick uses the tried and true mechanisms to get laughs but she is not some guy in a plaid jacket saying "my wife is so fat...". She looks like us and brings the relief of comedy out of the TV sets and Las Vegas supper clubs and right into our very living room. She provides the release of humour for subcultures who take themselves too seriously— feminists, Speed Queens, performance artists and art school graduates everywhere. Her jokes are effective in proportion to how much you can identify with her. I think I grew up in the same suburb, and I thought she was pretty damn funny. "We must live every day as if it was our last. Cough a lot and lay around thinking up snappy last words."

—Robert Amos

## MUSIC

### Admiring the past

VICTORIA SYMPHONY, Sidney Harth, guest cond., Mozart, Bach, Haydn, Royal Theatre, Feb. 27.

Part of the Victoria Symphony's success story this year, or program of fiscal restraint, has been the substitution of local or national soloists for very expensive "stars". In the case of conductor/violinist Sidney Harth, the guest last weekend, the gain and saving are ours, as here is a musician of outstanding merit who can convince the orchestra to play with precision and beauty.

Physically, Harth belies his musical elegance, as a conductor beating time with a bow, the violin grasped under an arm, is at an automatic balletic disadvantage. Yet, in Mozart's *Violin Concerto # 5 (A Major)*, he showed that most of his work must be

assaults. Similarly, when conducting, he is notable for his restraint and clarity. The Haydn *Symphony # 102 (Bb Major)* was given a reading both energetic and simple, for Harth has no urge to make "Classical" music emulate the gestures of more "Romantic" scores.

There is a basic question raised by elegant, tonally beautiful playing of the Viennese Classics, one of historical hindsight, or applying the standards of contemporary performance to the music of earlier times. In the case of Mozart and Haydn, Harth encouraged, led, and flattered the orchestra into playing as beautifully as anyone in the audience would be likely to remember. Haydn and Mozart would have been pleased, but surprised, especially at the inevitable "legato-cantabile" concept of string sound. So in the Bach *Suite in D Major (#3)*, the effect was one of the 20th century admiring (rather than re-creating or understanding) the 18th century: the sounds were very attractive and well-gauged, but I would question articulation, bowing, and piety, for in creating a perfect image, the essential vitality of the style suffers. Still, the performance had precision and a liveliness of tempi to commend it. If only the Victoria Symphony trumpets could manage Bach's difficult clarino parts with less fear and loathing...

## ART

### The Holiday Inn of art

FEDERATION OF CANADIAN ARTISTS  
TRAVELLING EXHIBITION  
Leafhill Gallery, 47 Bastion Square,  
February 20-26, 384-1311

The Federation of Canadian Artists was founded in 1941 in Kingston, Ontario, but continues to exist only in British Columbia. Here, it is a non-profit, self-supporting art society with over 1,000 members. Among its members are the big names on the right wing of our provincial art scene. A host of supporting members, active members, associates and senior FCA artists encourage and promote one another at workshops, exhibitions and the prestigious Travelling Show, recently seen in Victoria at the Leafhill Gallery.

The FCA Travelling Show is a goal to aim at for those thousand artists and their admirers. It represents the aesthetic aspirations of a large segment of our society. The FCA is the General Motors of art in B.C.—

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Harold Lyon's "The Branding Fire": the FCA is sane, safe, and dependable

safe, sane, dependable. The chosen artists can be depended on for satisfactory technique and middle-of-the-road subject matter. Words like "nice" and "lovely" spring unbidden to the lips in the presence of good representative work by these local uminaries and provincial art stars.

Brian Travers-Smith heads the list. In his painting, perfectly controlled washes and delicious colours surround quaint fishboats rolling at anchor. Robert Genn's updated Group of Seven technique—the blocky brush stroke and stylized trees—are there, too. Dorothy Oxborough displays a portrait of a glamorized Indian Chief, bathed in the reflected golden light of the old west. Into this august company of artist Randy McBeath. He's young, local and very talented. His photographic *Baskets in Snow* is gently and beautifully painted. And he has yet to drop into any well-worn groove of subject matter. These are among the stylist professionals who can be depended upon.

It's hard to be as generous with the works of some locals chosen for this show. Kay Ratcliffe's *Moths of Morning* is not one of her best. It is a very wet watercolour of a bland vagueness not at all relieved by a

liberal addition of salt crystal traces. Her lush florals recently seen at Victoria's city hall show her skills to better advantage. And Carl Coger's pastel, *Southwest Alberta*, seems a flippant choice for this show, considering what this superb portraitist is capable of. It depicts a railroad bridge in front of the Rockies. The bridge bears the graffiti "rock lives", evidence of a humour in Coger's work not apparent in that of his colleagues. Consider Glen Hawkins' *Portrait of a Turkey*—had there been any humour evident, with such a title we would not have expected this stiff close-up of a bird's head. Ardath Davis is represented by a wet-on-wet watercolour of a country lane which exhibits all the mannered imprecision so beloved of amateurs and none of the probing depth evident in more serious work.

The paintings are representational in every case. Subject matter touches the sentimental working man (old truck, the cowboys' branding fire, fishboats) or nature worship (arbutus trees, wood ducks, roadside flowers), and avoids psychology or contemporary themes. It's like staying at

TICK + FCA

the Holiday Inn—no surprises. Regardless of the criticism of individual work, the FCA is a model organization. Government at any level has long since atrophied in its support of visual art. And the more challenging and imaginative artists seem incapable of concerted professional effort. However, the FCA is a success. The FCA is self-supporting. It brings art to its audience and audiences to its art. It sets standards in an age when standards are hard to come by. The FCA is alive and well and an important force of art in B.C.  
—Robert Amos



# Naked politics

**W**HEN *NAKED CITY*, the display of nudes, went up on the walls of city hall (until Feb. 1), 20 city employees signed a letter to the mayor, paintings were taken down in disgust, and Lance Olsen's *Pimp* made the front page of the *Times-Colonist*. The paintings, by a dozen local artists, aren't so shocking—they've been seen before in galleries here—but the reaction is new. Curator Luis (Liberals Awake!) Ituarte couldn't be happier: "I'm delighted with the controversy."

For three years, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria has used these city hall shows to make its presence felt to a municipal government whose support for the visual arts was recently described by George Kidd, the gallery board chairman, as "about the lowest in Canada." The art is marshalled and hung by the gallery, but citizen and artist Luis Ituarte makes the selection. He, in turn, has his own political agenda. He sees the shows as "a beautiful way of criticizing the art gallery," in particular its cool and condescending attitude to most Victoria artists. None of the pieces shown in *Naked City* is ever likely to be shown in the gallery proper.

Ituarte has been volunteer curator of the project for over two years. He shows professionals, like Carl Coger, as well as those who haven't yet the confidence to show in galleries. "The national disease for the artist is insecurity," he explains, and this is his way of doing something about it.

—Robert Amos

## THE WOODWORKERS ARE WAITING

**V**ICTORIA IS blessed with many things that attract furniture makers—a tradition of wooden houses, a reverence for handbuilt quality and a lifestyle that values the creative individual.

In these days of malls and mail order, some people have forgotten that they can have things made by hand, made to order and made to last. Woodworking factories and builders in Victoria are just waiting for orders.

"We've got to get people thinking that they can purchase good furniture made locally," says Jim Mendria of J & L Design, 544 Hillside Ave. (383-2635), a good model for what local industry can do. They got their big start manufacturing a line of oak furniture which was sold through Eaton's and all over Western Canada. With the crash of the retail market in 1982 they switched to custom work and now they make hotel suites, computer tables and domestic items as fast as they can. "Business is absolutely booming", Mendria reports.

Oak kitchen cabinets provide half of their business, though alder is becoming popular. The four employees have proved that custom items can beat the prices in retail stores.

**Lifestyle Monastery Furniture**, 942 Fort St. (383-2431), combines custom woodworking and a retail shop. Their factory on Lamson Road employs seven full-time woodworkers and keeps their intriguing store on Fort Street well supplied with hutches, buffets and tables in oak, alder and pine. In addition they carry "knock-down" imported furniture from elsewhere, and a host of specially consigned items, from gun cabinets to platform rockers for kids. And what you don't see, they will happily make for you.



Wenge wood chair by Mark Wallace

Millwork shops can do just about anything with wood, though mainly they make architectural items—windows and doors, for example—rather than free-standing furniture. **Sluggett and Brown Joinery**, 526 Discovery St. (382-3011), is the biggest, but smaller shops can offer special services. At **Heartwood Joinery**, 3318 Wasana (383-7212), store interiors are the specialty. Examples include the new B.I. Sports Shop and Roots Store on Broad Street. Owners **Stephen Pierrot** and **David Holland** are certified journeyman joiners, and as Pierrot says, "We're not artsy-fartsy woodworkers". They also repair old wooden window frames without removing the window from the wall.

**Percy Erglis** is the man in charge of **Clearwater Wood Industries**, 874 Devonshire (385-7137). As with many woodworkers, Clearwater depends on kitchen cabinets. This shop makes a specialty of veneer and applying it to domestic furniture. Erglis says they get most of their jobs by referral. Word must be getting around—they've been in business for 12 years.

In 1982 the Maltwood Museum (part of the University of Victoria) displayed work of *The Designer/Cabinetmaker*. This was a seminal event for local woodworkers, giving birth to the Victoria Woodworkers Guild (595-2763). It has attracted a large membership who are responsible for much of the best custom furniture in Victoria. Chests of drawers by president **Ken Guenter**, 2549 Forbes (595-2763) are a case in point. Using old joinery techniques Guenter creates one-of-a-kind items out of hardwoods like Honduras mahogany, birch and maple. Dressers, chests of drawers and trestle tables are his most popular designs. Guenter's work got a lot of attention at his recent one-man show at Bente Rehm's Craft Gallery, but he admits it's very difficult to make a living as a custom furniture maker.

**Cameron Russell**, 1175 Chapman (385-6544), is in the guild's current show in the McPherson Theatre Mezzanine Gallery (until April 29, 386-6121). Russell is very good at



Ken Guenter's one-of-a-kind items are in the Woodworkers Guild's current show at the McPherson

desk-building and recently has applied his skills to the dashboard of a Lotus sports car and a box for sheep tattooing equipment. He has shown at craft fairs, as has Guenter, but feels the competition with potters, while friendly, is just too stiff. "Mortise and tenon joints don't show on the surface, so it's hard to make people understand why our work costs so much," he says.

The frustration that woodworkers feel is even more distressing to the designer-builders. **Mark Wallace** of **Design Alternatives** graduated with high marks from Ontario's Sheridan College. In his handsome showroom in the Stores Building, 259 Esquimalt Road (383-8911), the influence of William Morris, Charles Rennie Macintosh, the Bauhaus and Shaker furniture of America are evident. A superb glass-fronted cabinet, eight feet tall in maple, blends modern and ancient Egyptian lines. Wallace has dreams of a shop where people go when they need a cupboard or a cabinet.

Frustrated or not, the designer-builders are around. **Stephen Berry**, 1127 Reynolds Road (479-3360), after years of teaching and travelling, now works with wood full time. His special item is the "back chair", a bent wood design for correct posture which sells for under \$200. Another specialist, **Dean Farley**, 259 Esquimalt (384-3219), designs and builds furniture for pre-schoolers.

**Allan Collier**, 14 Fan Tan Alley (383-2112), designs furniture which owes something to contemporary Italian modes, using coloured lacquers and high tech to achieve high quality. While many people believe "they don't make 'em like they used to", Collier believes he can make 'em even better with new wood materials, new adhesives and new finishes.

Collier's co-worker **Daryl Richardson** is the most progressive furniture designer in Victoria. A disillusioned former architecture student, Richardson now designs forms to suit many functions. Just a few pieces of his affordable modular geometric shapes, covered with coloured arborite, can make a sterile apartment into a flexible home base.

Also in the Chinatown area **David Pottier**, 12 Fan Tan Alley (384-3234) makes hammer dulcimers; **Jim Stiven**, 507 Fisgard St. (386-5354), recreates heritage home detail and **David Peacock**, 502 Discovery (384-3332), will design and build a billiard table in art deco or any other style.

There are old school professionals to turn to as well. **Einar Norgaard**, 18 Fan Tan Alley (388-5936), trained in Denmark and came to Victoria in the 1950s. Since then he's found plenty of work repairing choice old items and executing special projects. **Gregory Brown**, 10763 Macdonald Pk. Rd. (656-6990), the hit of the 1982 Maltwood Museum Show, is a wizard with veneer and delicate antique reproductions, is always months behind his orders.

**Maurice Fournier** works out of **Tools'n'Space**, 338 Catherine St. (383-9600) and does custom orders. Teaching there are **Tom Scotcher**, furniture maker **Michael Uthoff**, and **Matthew Ashton**, a specialist at wood turning. **Tools'n'Space**, now in its seventh year, began as a do-it-yourself shop, but its emphasis is shifting from classes to custom work to selling materials and tools for furniture makers.

Given this talent, the satisfaction of custom ordering, and the claim from most woodworkers that their prices are competitive, all that is lacking is a bit of imagination from the buyers.

—Robert Amos

# ART

## In and out of bounds

THE RAPE OF EROS. Open Space, 510 Fort Street, 383-8833, until March 9

OUT OF BOUNDS. North Park Studio, 1619 Store Street, 381-3422, until Feb. 28

**T**HE RAPE of Eros is determined to educate us with a presentation of a dozen nudes by Joe Average and a sustained series of images from Toronto's Andy Fabo.

The Average drawings are below average—in fact he's better represented in the North Park Show *Out of Bounds*. But Fabo's tarpaulins, sketches and paintings-on-the-wall demand our attention.

Contemporary painting is supposed to break barriers and incite a response. Fabo has painted scenes of phallic plunder at top speed, on whatever comes to hand. A 12-foot high orgy of anal penetration is dashed off directly on the wall of the gallery; angry drawings on old pages of the *New York Times* show men with ballistic penises and volcanic heads; on large tarpaulins snakes, jails and rape are painted in garish colours. Standards of morality, politics and aesthetics are wilfully flouted here.

The thesis, dictated by Open Space curator Michael Harding, seems to be that the power of erotic love has been subverted and directed to other ends—war, aggression, humiliating sex. Fabo works hard to express this hateful vision, letting all the demons out of his personal Pandora's box, and he succeeds in creating a powerful negative atmosphere. In one final painting he attempts to balance all the negative aspects with an evocation of love, but the balance is not achieved.

This tirade of an art show is so entirely out of bounds that Fabo has alienated his audience. He's just too far out.

**N**ORTH PARK is struggling to create a curatorial identity and *Out of Bounds* is an attempt to kick out the jams a bit. While not entirely successful, this miscellany does present some adventurous art.

The hit of the show is Clint Atkinson's huge charcoal drawing *For the Molson Corporation*. Atkinson, formerly a student of Glenn Howarth at UVic, has built up a dense dark mesh of scribble from which he has erased the highlights of an image. Invisibly at close range, from ten feet back it shows up as a carload of beer drinkers.

Michael Lewis' paintings weld the jagged flash of comic books and the angularity of German expressionism à la George Grosz into depictions of the seamy side of Victoria. Lewis, a self-taught artist, is at once naive and historically aware.

North Park is the most progressive commercial gallery in town and one might have expected the cutting edge of Lance Olsen, David Toresdahl or Will Julsing, tough and challenging artists whose work North Park has hung before. Instead, this show is diluted with the gentle pop of Chris Doman's cartoons on glass—mildly novel but hardly "out of bounds." The same can be said of Patrick Amiot's baked sculptures. Amiot's cute scene of four men pushing a car



in the snow, made of painted clay, gets a lot of attention but it does not belong in this show.

Kelly Irving produced a contentious installation piece from his Department of Cow Public Works especially for the exhibition but it was vetoed by the staff. "Out of Bounds" indeed. An excellent chance to educate the public taste has been missed.

—Robert Amos

*Crapshoot in Paradise*, oil on canvas by Michael Lewis at North Park Studio

Into the streets: Some people think art doesn't belong in the ivory tower. Among them are the organizers of a gallery called *Ideas: Sacred and Profane*; Government St., open Thurs.-Sun., 12-5 pm. They base each show on an issue (rape, torture, animal experiments) and invite artists of conscience to display. On principle they are not government funded and if you look at the current offering, *The B.C. Spirit* (until Nov. 30), you'll know why.

Never have so many creative people displayed such solidarity of disdain as they do about **Bill Bennett** and his regime of restraint. **Michael Nahser's** *Sewer Natural B.C.*, **Betty Warnock's** logged-out *Waterland's Dream* and **Robin Campbell's** planed-over and dismembered *Meares Island* set the tone— beyond opposition to disgust. **Jeannie Kamin's** painting of an orgasmic pig-out of cabinet ministers is entitled *Thank God they don't have the bomb*. In another work, **Grace McCarthy** is depicted handing out cake to the downtrodden. **Robin Lambert** identifies a new fascism in which the dollar-sign replaces the swastika. Eventually satire and disgust give way to a chilling vision of evil— **Lance Olsen's**

*Tweed Geeks.*

This is art with relevance and commitment. It's not a beautiful show, but it's a good one. The gallery is to be encouraged. (R.A.)



Southside waitress Bianca Capaldo with Moreland photos: no gimmicks

# ART

## Service with a smile

WAITRESSES: Photographs by Tandra Moreland at Southside Cafe, 1215 Broad St. (381-6644) until Jan. 31

**T**ANDRA MORELAND isn't a waitress— she's a photographer. But she has worked as a waitress. "It's something almost all women have done. It's nurturing," she says. "Yet many women who work at it are just filling in, carrying on, waiting until they become concert pianists, or dancers." Or professional photographers.

Moreland graduated from Fine Arts at the University of Victoria where teacher Fred Douglas was a big influence. Though she has painted and potted and worked in a pet shop, her photographic explorations have taken precedence. Documentary portraits in black and white are the form she has chosen, in the tradition of Nina Raginsky or Diane Arbus. Morehead presents her pictures as large murals, five by three feet in size.

From her Denman Island home she first produced a series called *Women of Vancouver Island*, presented in January 1984 at the Courtenay Arts Alliance. In the process, she photographed dozens of men and women but found "the women appear stronger than the men. The back-to-the-land movement is essentially a matriarchal society. The men were excited by leaving the nine-to-five tedium of their lives but it was all too often the women who had to deal with much of the drudgery, as well as bear the children and attempt to raise them— without indoor plumbing."

The current show depicts waitresses. Though Moreland has photographed hundreds of them, both old and young, not everyone was willing to participate. "Older women kept trying to talk me into taking pictures of the younger, prettier ones," she remembers. They are not at all candid snapshots: Moreland has her subjects face front, standing in their workplace. Whether from fear of the camera, or their employers, or the timidity which comes from a subservient role, some waitresses refused to be photographed.

Those who consented give us a glimpse of the common world in a formal setting. Two types emerge. There are the young ones, confident and forthright who can rise above the stereotype. And there are older women, standing patiently in sensible shoes. These latter seem to have accepted their position, smiling quietly, expecting nothing.

Moreland's photographs are direct, without gimmicks, almost artless. They make up one of the most appropriate shows yet seen in the increasingly popular realm of art in the restaurants.

—Robert Amos

Not to be missed: **Brian S. McElney's** \$2.6 million collection of Chinese ceramics tops a new slate of shows at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (1040 Moss St., 384-4101). This collection, on loan from Hong Kong, comes from one of the greatest private collections in the world and contains superb examples of the great moments of Chinese pottery. Here until March 27, it will go on to the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Curator **Greg Bellerby** has also brought in two rooms full of eloquent, engaging and beautiful paintings by Vancouver's **Gathie Falk** (until March 31); subjects as ordinary as the autumn leaves on her sidewalk and as mysterious as the night sky, creating the best show of contemporary painting we have seen here in years. Eighty of the finest **Northwest Native Prints** (until March 10) are included with the \$2 admission charge.— R.A.

MONDAY MAGAZINE—FEB. 28 - MAR. 6, 1985



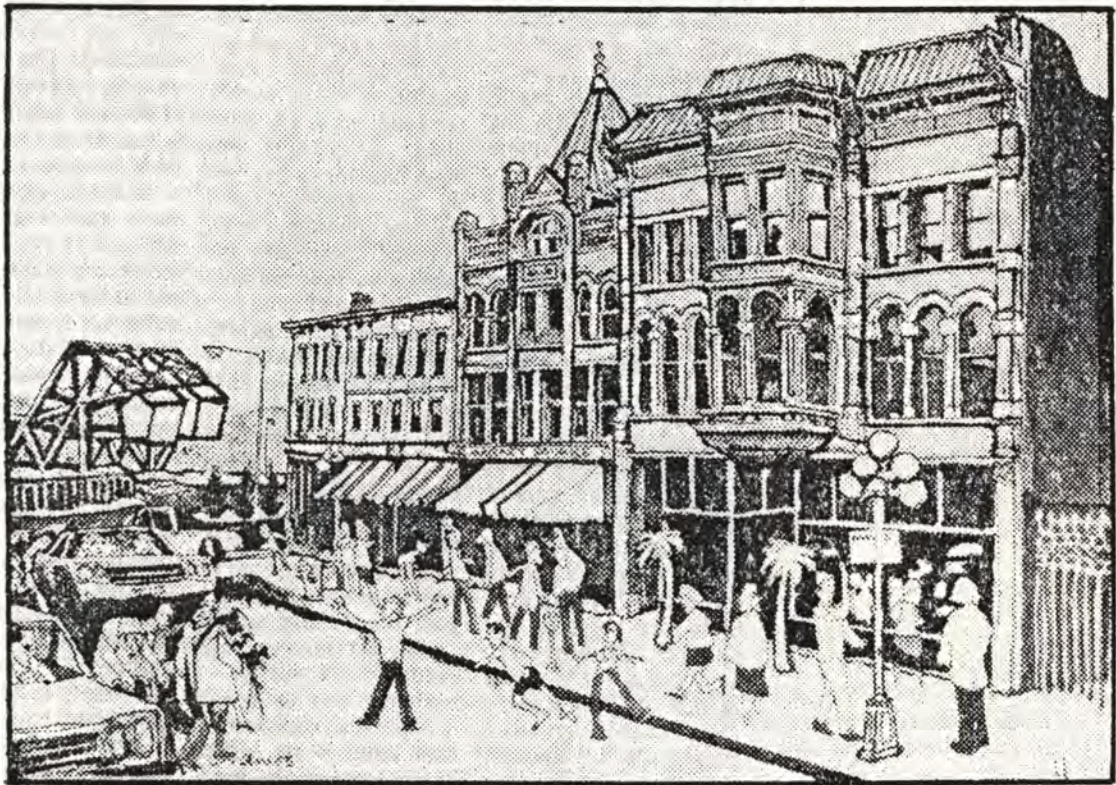
Fire sale afterthoughts: Bidders at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria's fourth annual art auction March 25th avoided a "slow-dancing" demonstration on the front steps by art activist **Luis Ituarte**. In a painted jumpsuit, he demanded the resignation of gallery director **Patricia Bovey** "for the sake of West Coast Culture". In his text Ituarte claimed that the art gallery "is a private club for rich ladies, sponsored by the taxpayer."

While most of the gallery's money does come from the taxpayer, the gallery auction is an important fund-raiser. In this year's version artists donated 108 paintings and sculptures, which in the main sold for about 50 per cent of the prices being asked at the city's struggling commercial galleries. The exception was a small drawing by the late **Richard Ciccimarra** of Victoria (donated by one of his wives) which sold for \$1,150, far and away the best price obtained. (Ciccimarra's profile is starting to rise; one reason: *Monday* contributor **Frank Nowosad** is writing a biography of him.)

The art gallery should be asking serious questions about this event. The artists submit mediocre work, and art buyers come away with bargains instead of beauty. The gallery, which takes from 40-100 per cent of the proceeds, feels it has contributed to the recognition of local talent, but by raising funds through an ill-chosen, poorly hung "fire sale", it undercuts the real value of visual arts in Victoria. (R.A.)

## ave in Old Town Victoria

*[Faint, mostly illegible text columns, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]*



M10 TIMES-COLONIST Sunday, April 28, 1985

# Shore leave in Old Town Victoria

Robert Amos

When gold was discovered on the Fraser River in 1858 the Port of Victoria took off with a boom. Everyone coming into the province had to come through Victoria. The Canadian Pacific Railway was completed in 1884 and soon the town was inundated with 17,000 Chinese laborers trying to get home. Again, in 1896-7, gold seekers bound for the Klondike outfitted themselves on Johnson Street with sleds and snowshoes. Rum-running during the prohibition era in the U.S.A also

kept pockets well-filled in the "Old Town" of Victoria. What was it like for a sailor on shore leave, or for a gold seeker, arriving in Victoria in the 1890's?

The spanking breeze of a sunny afternoon sent many a brig sailing into the harbour but, after months at sea hunting the whale, the sea-otter or the seal, the crew were eager to trade the fresh westerlies for the dust of a city street. No sooner was the ship made fast at Turner, Beeton and Company's wharf at the foot of Johnson Street than rolled up beds went

flying over the rail; lashed chests went sliding down the gangway and the sailors left their ship to the stevedores.

The City of Victoria beckoned. Seamen left behind the jumble of masts and funnels, heading up towards the chimney pots, flag poles and firetowers they'd seen from afar, towards the beacon atop the Oriental Hotel.

In the old days, the area between Wharf and Store Streets, now a thoroughfare at the east end of the Johnson Street Bridge, was heavily built up. There, behind the palisades of

the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway Station, a huffing locomotive waited to pull the train over the bridge and up the island. On Store Street, horse drawn traffic and men in black hats bustled along the dusty road, carrying on the trade which made Victoria the "San Francisco of the North".

Idlers on the verandah of the Occidental Hotel overlooked the scene at Johnson and Store Streets, while on the plank sidewalk beneath there was a terrific coming and going in the shops. Gino Bossi, the proprietor of the Grand Pacific Saloon across the street, stood

in his apron at the swinging doors, welcoming the public into the bar, a world of piano tunes, potted palms and pints of dark ale.

What had been shacks and tents a few years before now took on a look of permanence, with architecture in brick and stone designed by the talented Thomas Hooper. Next to the Grand Pacific Hotel (later known as the infamous Drake Hotel) stood the Senator Hotel, and then the Empire Hotel, and just beyond the Pantages Theatre was the Railroad Hotel. Their handsome facades still stand beside the Johnson Street en-

trance of Market Square.

A man just in from the sea has no need of a bed. Ignoring the hotels, our sailor made his first stop at the barber, then on to the clothiers' to spend his bankroll on the latest fashions. Soon he was outfitted in a smart jacket, glossy trousers that seemed to be made of sheet iron, a collarless flannel shirt and a shiny new pair of boots. Sea togs were dropped off at the Chinese laundry, and would soon be flapping in the breeze behind the Johnson Street facade. A cigar rolled up on one of the two local factories completed his city attire.

Johnson Street held innumerable attractions for the windowshopper even in those days. Hart's Indian Bazaar proffered native goods from the longhouse and both Pardoe's Gunsmiths and Pichon and Lenfesty Gunsmiths could be irresistible to the right sort of man. Yet if a sailor was going to afford one of those lovely rifles, he'd have to save money on his lodgings. In behind the fancy Colonial Hotel (later the Colonial Metropole) were tiny brick "cabins" where a fellow could shack up, and

around the block on Cormorant Street (which we call Pandora) rough plank huts, tenements and tents were available.

Over on Cormorant Street, the Chinatown side of Market Square, the boardwalks and balconies along the three-storey brick buildings were the same, but fruit and vegetables, chickens and crabs and huge trays of fresh fish almost crowded one off the sidewalk. Natives paddled over or walked across the railway bridge from the Songhees Reserve on the other side of the harbor to squat in doorways with baskets of potatoes and clams. In tiny storefronts, oriental tailors and shoemakers plied their needles oblivious to the hurly-burly of pigtailed Chinese toting heavy baskets on long springy carrying sticks.

In the floors above the shops on Cormorant Street, dozens of tiny cubicles were filled with tiers of bunkbeds, and "cheater floors" were built like galleries where ceilings were high enough to permit this. The darkness and lack of fresh air within was compounded by the aromas of incense and bargbeques; while the smell of opium being

66  
processed, a smell like boiling potatoes, often pervaded the old town. Opium was heavily taxed in the U.S.A. but was quite legal in Canada, selling for about one dollar an ounce. The opium factories in Market Square had shop windows on Cormorant Street and forty to fifty per cent of the Chinese laborers were addicted.

The most direct route from Cormorant to Johnson Street was through the courtyard which was to become the centre of Market Square. At the time it was a jumble of lean-to's, alive with the sounds of cockerels and dice. When a sailor new in town stepped gingerly to keep his boots clean, derisive giggles drifted down from the girls idling at tiny windows high above. Their alluring laughter was often drowned out by the music of the honky-tonk piano and the footfall of dancers which rang through the back walls of the Pantages Theatre (now the Jeune Brothers shop at 548 Johnston).

Later in the evening all this area took on a new life. Under clusters of eclectic lights, some of the first in Canada, the commerce of the day

— continued on Page M11

was forgotten and revelry took over. The girls were no longer idle, either plying their trade in the parlors of legitimate brothels or meeting customers in some of the fifteen hotels which lined Johnson between Wharf and Government Streets. Many more women of the night worked unseen, consigned to the "cribs" in the darker reaches of the neighborhood.

Just as this was the centre of warehousing and wholesaling by day, by night "demon drink" held sway. Drinks were two for twenty-five cents and it was said that on lower Johnson Street if you rolled out of

one bar drunk, you'd just roll into another.

Across Cormorant Street in Fan Tan Alley, men in black pyjamas came and went constantly among the red lanterns of countless restaurants. In this alley alone, twelve gambling houses offered games of chance — mah jongg, fantan, dominoes and the numbers game. Acrobats and singers amused the gamblers between games and somehow even the poorest laborers could afford to play. The Chinese opera was always in session in its theatre on the Buckerfields' lot and a ticket was only five cents.

Cormorant Street,

the north side of Market Square, was one of the main streets of Chinatown, and home to many commercial houses which imported food or sold goods wholesale. A number of Victoria's thirty-five Chinese Benevolent Associations set up quarters there, with social rooms, classes in English, tailoring or farming. These societies were also centres for banking and advocacy for at the time, though the Chinese made up half the population of Victoria, they had no rights whatever.

After a night on the town our sailors might ask one another "where did you sleep last night?" with a wink and

a nudge. And, roaring together, they'd go off uptown in search of more amusement. One might see a phonograph

VICTORIA  
HERITAGE  
**FESTIVAL**  
1985

demonstrated over on Government Street, or ride on a trolley to Oak Bay. A carriage ride to Bacon Hill was a fine way to spend a day, and the livery stable on Johnson Street was at hand.

For the more serious-minded, the area near Market Square offered a tinsmith, a sailmaker, a fur dealer and a chemist. Toward the end of shore leave many a mariner was obliged to patronize the pawn shops to trade away his new toys for money to pay gambling debts or the hotel bill.

In the end, down the street they'd go, back to the ship and away, leav-

ing with the good feeling that they'd lived life to the full in Victoria.

Over the years the buildings on lower Johnson and Cormorant Streets became Victoria's skidrow and tenderloin. It took considerable imagination for architect Nicholas Bawlf to conceive a project which would result in a complete renewal of this end of town.

In 1974 Fort Victoria Properties purchased nine connected buildings, including three hotels, all of which pre-date 1900. On the street front the accumulation of signs was removed,

— continued on Page M14

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**Shore leave  
Old Town  
Victoria**

— continued from Page M11

the storefronts were stripped to the original, and worn out elements were restored. Grace notes of the past, for example the conical roof atop the Milne Building, were reconstructed and the whole was returned to its former glory of brick and paint.

Inside, Bawlf's design for the courtyard created the most dramatic change. Once the backyard had been filled with sheds, parked cars and trash, but now it features a two-storey balustraded gallery which encircles a landscaped amphitheatre. Around the perimeter sandblasted brick and huge beams provide a tasteful backdrop to the intimate and intriguing windows of over forty specialty shops and restaurants.

Immense trusses of clear, seasoned timber were recovered from the Ogden Point shipyard when it was demolished. They were re-erected to form the roof over part of the courtyard, now a focal point for the almost endless panoply of entertainment which unfolds there. The Victoria Symphony, dance groups, jugglers and rock bands have all filled the square with music and people.

Market Square has come back to life, a kind of urban shopping centre for people rather than cars. In 1976 it won a Regional Award of Honor from Heritage Canada for heritage preservation. Once again, both tourists and local folk have taken Market Square to heart.

**Borrowed time:** "When people found out I had cancer of the liver I could tell they had just one thought— 'Oh oh, she's a goner.' People are so uninformed about it. They think that just old people get it and most people die. Well, it's just not so. Lots of

people get better and many are finding their lives enriched because of it."

That's artist **Liz Scully** talking, and her bout with cancer certainly enriched her life. She feels she's living on "gift time" and she's not about to waste a moment.

First she created a series of paintings based on her experiences, and this led to the idea for an animated film. Scully found a great need for information about children and cancer, an age group for which it is the second largest cause of death by disease. With deft artistic skill and a fresh sense of humour, she has been able to present the spectrum of emotions which a life-threatening disease evokes, to emphasize that "cancer is not a guarantee that you die," as she puts it.

Scully's work is a bit reminiscent of cartoonist **Lynda Barry**— "I've become very interested in the personal in my art," Scully comments. "It's not just *me* who feels these things— everyone has the same weird thoughts, fears and ecstasies." The story boards on display consider subjects like anger, operations and "being dead," without euphemism. In fact they bounce along with her quirky, positive outlook.

Scully's animated film, though only 10 minutes long, is going to take almost 10,000 drawings. It's going to cost a lot (\$13,000), but it will go a long way towards helping children and their families cope with the disease. The National Film Board has kicked in their support, as have musicians and other professionals. The show at North Park Studio (1619 Store St., 381-3422, until May 1) is designed to elicit more backing. Brilliant expressionist paintings relating to the cancer experience and the original story boards will be on display. And on Monday evening, April 22 from 7 pm, Scully will be there for a talk on childhood cancer and a concert by flutist and composer **Don Druick**. (R.A.)

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—Robert Amos



560, JOHNSON

VICTORIA, B.C.

The railway was completed on November 7, 1885 when the last spike was driven by Donald Smith at Craigellachie, B.C. (He bent the spike on his first swing but succeeded on the second try.) To mark the anniversary, festivities are scheduled in early August in Revelstoke, B.C., 48 kilometres east of Craigellachie. They include a re-enactment of the last spike ceremony by actors in period costume.

Thirty-one snow sheds covering 6-1/2 kilometres of track were built to keep the rail line open in winter, yet even so 200 people died in avalanches in the first 25 years. This prompted the CPR to build the Connaught tunnel under Mt. McDonald. The right of way over the pass was abandoned and is now partly used for hiking trails.

Parks Canada, with help from CP Rail, has built a small museum at the summit of this pass where the rail line's history is told in photos, models and movies.

Kamloops is also doing its part to celebrate the CPR Centennial. From June 7 to July 21 the Kamloops Museum (phone 604-372-9931) will play host to *CPR in the Canadian West*, an exhibit on loan from Calgary's Glenbow Museum. July 11 is the anniversary of the first train to arrive in Kamloops and in honour of the day the Kamloops Railway Museum Society will officially hand over their extensive collections to the Kamloops Museum.

The British Columbia Provincial Museum in Victoria is presenting a special exhibit celebrating the centennial of the Canadian Pacific Railway. This is particularly fitting for British Columbia because the railway was a major component of that province's terms for joining confederation.

A featured attraction will be British Columbia's oldest steam locomotive, "Emory"

or "Old Curly" as it is variously named. Built in 1869 in the U.S.A. it was brought to British Columbia by Andrew Onderdonk, construction contractor for the CPR. The 35-ton saddle tank locomotive is on loan from Burnaby Heritage Village.

Inside the museum a charming and surprisingly varied display recreates the sights and sounds of the CPR. Construction surveys and the Chinese contributions are touched on. The steamships which completed the link to the Orient are featured in model, memento and photographs, as are branch lines, interior lakes steamers, and even airlines. Railway and steamship china and furniture, as well as fashions and graphics add a personal touch. Of particular note is a series of paintings by artists sponsored by the CPR in its very early days, depicting the splendour of British Columbia.

#### **Maritime Museum Honours RCN**

Vancouver is one of the busiest ports in North America. For 25 years the Maritime Museum has been celebrating the maritime heritage of the Pacific. Surrounded by the sea at Kitsilano Point, the Maritime Museum's exhibits include the 106-year-old sealing schooner *Thomas F. Bayard*, now under restoration in the "harbour for heritage ships."

This summer the museum is mounting two special exhibits to honour the 75th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Navy. These are titled *The Fisherman's Reserve* and *Armed Yachts*. At the site visitors can also tour Parks Canada's *St. Roch*, the historic Arctic Patrol vessel of the R.C.M.P. which was the first ship to traverse the Northwest Passage.

Of special note is the exhibit of artifacts recently

brought to the surface from the U.S. ship, *Ericsson*. It's being called the find of the century on Canada's west coast. Divers of the Underwater Archaeological Society of British Columbia last February discovered the well-preserved remains of the *Ericsson* in the shallow waters of Barkley Sound off the west coast of Vancouver Island.

The *Ericsson* is unique and highly significant in that it was originally equipped with a huge caloric engine which ran on hot air, an invention which its designer, Swedish-American engineer John Ericsson, thought would take over from steam. The 1853 trial voyage in New York Harbour was reported in the press with enthusiasm. But we know now that the ship was slow and the engine so large that there was little room for cargo.

The caloric engine was later replaced with steam. Eventually the steam engine was removed and, rigged as a barque, the *Ericsson* entered west coast service carrying coal and grain. Bound from San Francisco to Nanaimo in 1892, the ship was blown by a storm into Barkley Sound where it broke up and sank.

#### **For Steam Buffs: B.C. Forest Museum**

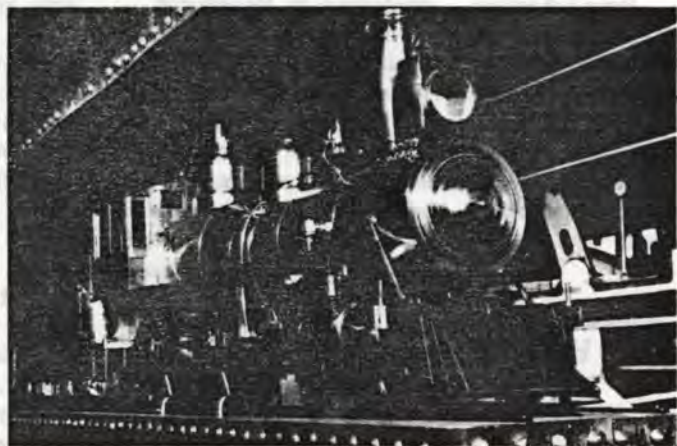
The B.C. Forest Museum in

Duncan, B.C. offers a thrilling glimpse of the era of steam logging in a 100-acre setting of tall trees and woodland tranquility. It has been a popular stopping point beside Somenos Lake, along the Trans-Canada Highway between Victoria and Nanaimo.

The Forest Museum began with the private collection of Gerald Wellburn. Wellburn was a lumberman in the Cowichan valley whose passion for collecting ran from stamps to steam locomotives.

Visitors journey into the past aboard a narrow-gauge steam train. Huge steam-age artifacts are positioned to be seen to the best advantage from the 1.6 km of railway track. As well as turn-of-the-century buildings and logging equipment, the museum features both operational and display steam locomotives including the Number 1 Shay; "Samson," the 1910 Vulcan 18-ton locomotive; and "Susie," the 1900 Vulcan 12-ton. Also on show are steam donkeys and tractors, and logging trucks like the 1918 Maxwell, the 1923 5-ton Republic and the 1920 White. Recent additions include a 30-metre Madill spar, an operational two-man sawmill, and railway equipment from the Yukon and White Pass Railway.

Robert Amos



Fully operational model of 1880s locomotive, built in 1920 by Charles Fox of Victoria. CPR Centennial Exhibition, British Columbia Provincial Museum

Inc., opens at the Arts and Crafts Building of the Canadian National Exhibition, and then moves to Ottawa's Museum of Man (September 24 - January 12, 1986).

## SASKATCHEWAN

### Regina

The Mackenzie Art Gallery of Regina is one of nine Canadian art galleries to exhibit *Canada in the Nineteenth Century: The Stitt Collection*. This exhibition of early Canadian drawings, paintings and sketches, organized by the Art Gallery of Hamilton and on display at the Mackenzie to July 28, is comprised of 100 of the 300 works of art donated in 1981 to the Art Gallery of Hamilton by Mr. and Mrs. Hubert J. Stitt of Toronto.

The Stitt Collection is a mixture of works of historical significance with key, high calibre items beside the charming primitive work of amateur artists. It is the result of the popular 18th and 19th century practice of recording places, people, events and landscapes by means of drawings and watercolours; a sketchbook, pencil and watercolour box were as commonly found in the traveller's luggage

as a camera is today.

*Pat Adams: Woven Skies*, an exhibition of recent wall pieces by this Saskatoon weaver, will be shown at Regina's Dunlop Gallery, Sherwood Branch, from July 17 to August 21, and at the Dunlop's Glen Elm Branch from August 28 to October 2. Highly regarded for its handsome sturdiness, Adams' work has progressed from the exploration of abstract tonal values to more precise renderings of prairie land and sky.

At the Dunlop Central Library Gallery from June 29 to August 4 is *Jeff Funnell: Riel Series*. This exhibition of 48 oil pastel drawings by Professor of Fine Art Jeff Funnell of the University of Manitoba was conceived to coincide with the centenary of the Northwest Rebellion and with Riel's death, and is an unusual combination of art, history and education.

Following the *Riel Series* at the Dunlop Central Gallery, from August 10 to September 15, is *Legacy in Ice: The Vaux Family and the Canadian Alps*. This exhibition consists of 56 photographs taken in the Canadian Rockies at the turn of the century by members of the Vaux family of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and is the first major study of glaciers in Canada. The Vaux family, though strictly amateurs in the field of photography and science, were nevertheless skilled practitioners in these areas and have made a lasting contribution to the cultural heritage of the Canadian Rockies.

### Saskatoon

In Saskatoon at the Mendel Art Gallery to July 21 will be *John Sloan, A Printmaker*. An accomplished painter, draftsman and printmaker, John Sloan is recognized as one of the most talented and versatile artists of America. From the time he began etching in 1888 at the age of 16, until two

years before his death in 1949, Sloan made nearly 400 prints which, today, many consider the most important extant body of graphic art by an American artist.

*Two Worlds*, an exhibition of contemporary Canadian Indian Art organized by the Mackenzie Art Gallery of Regina, will continue at the Mendel Art Gallery until July 21. Twenty-four works from the important holdings of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Indian Art Section, will provide an overview of the kind and quality of art being produced by Canadians whose Indian heritage informs their work.

Although such notable artists as Norval Morrisseau, Jackson Beardy, Carl Beam and Robert Davidson represent all regions of Canada, the emphasis of *Two Worlds* will be on such well-known Saskatchewan artists as Allen Sapp, Michael Lonechild, Arthur Shilling and Bob Boyer as well as on such younger artists as Willie Ermine, Sheila Cuthand and Lorne Pinay. Following the showing at the Mendel, *Two Worlds* will be exhibited at the Mackenzie Art Gallery in Regina from August 2 to September 15, and will then tour Saskatchewan under the Mackenzie Outreach Program.

Northwest of Saskatoon, at Battleford, the twelfth annual Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival will be held on July 19, 20 and 21. As the province's major craft festival, the Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival will feature 63 indoor booths selling the jewellery, weaving, pottery, photography, prints, leathercraft, stained glass and native crafts of the juried, actively marketing members of the Saskatchewan Craft Council. The Saskatchewan Craft Council's annual juried exhibition will be held in conjunction with the festival and later will be displayed at Regina's Rose-

mont Art Gallery from August 7 to August 31.

Margaret Hryniuk

## ALBERTA

### Mennonite Relief Auction

Quilts will highlight the Mennonite Central Committee Alberta sixth annual Relief Auction and Bazaar in Coaldale, Alberta, on Saturday July 20. Items on the block at the bi-annual event are hand-crafted originals and antique pieces donated for the sale.

In previous auctions, quilt fanciers have bid as high as \$1,000 for these treasures. This year, organizers anticipate at least seventy quilts will be contributed to their sale. Designs vary according to current styles, but the recurring theme in Alberta is the wild rose. The provincial flower has been appliquéd, embroidered, stitched or quilted, always to the delight of the bidder.

Assorted pieces of hand-made furniture will be up for bid, including several cedar chests. Articles vary from year to year, with quality being the only criterion for donations. In the past such items as grandfather clocks, doll houses and even a restored antique automobile have gone under the gavel.

The auction is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. A catalogue will be available the evening before the sale. All proceeds from the event will assist the Committee's relief efforts in Third World countries.

Christine Diemert

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### Two Centennials

This year marks the centennial of two of Canada's institutions - the Canadian Pacific Railway and the National Parks System.



From the exhibition "Jeff Funnell: Riel Series," watercolour and pastel on paper, 1985

# Art scene in passing

## Dutch flowers, cuddled fish

GIFTS FROM THE ALICE W. STUART ESTATE, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 384-4101, until June 23  
 CHINESE TEXTILES, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, until August 11  
 GROUP SHOW, Open Space, 383-8833, until July 6

**F**LANKED BY her accountant and her corporate fund-raiser, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria director Pat Bovey went under the hot lights for her first press conference last Thursday. At long last, it seemed, the gallery has joined Victoria's culture club—they've got a nice big operating deficit.



Detail from 17th century Chinese silk tapestry, 'The Hunt'

Of course the gallery didn't just fritter away last year's \$643,856 in expenses. Everyone knows that Bovey runs a tight ship. But the income of \$544,890 was just not enough. Indeed, they can be proud that \$227,540 of that was "self-generated," and doubtless there will be more to come. But the new rules at Canada Council and the National Museums Corporation make it harder all the time to get the grants, and the Intermunicipal grant, which works out to 31 cents per capita, is the lowest in Canada. Therefore the gallery will no longer send shows on tour around the province, and visitors to 1040 Moss Street may find the exhibits change less frequently, and more often they will feature the gallery's collections.

Seeing more of these treasures is not altogether a bad thing. Among the splendours are 20 old Dutch flower paintings now on show, which were a beautiful and generous gift from the estate of Alice W. Stuart. In addition, don't miss the showing of the extensive collection of Chinese costumes which form a display of unparalleled luxury. On exhibit until August 11 are about 50 regal dragon robes, opera costumes studded with mirrors, and an ancient "lappet" necklace ornamented with carved jades and iridescent kingfisher feathers.

Open Space has enjoyed an exciting period since Michael Harding came in as curator of visual art in October, 1983. His projects have included *Urban Targets*, *Beyond the Malahat* and the original *Artlink*. Thousands of newcomers have made their way to Open Space and art activity has been stirred up throughout the length and breadth of the island. Last Thursday's opening of a group show was also Harding's swan song. "I've been fired," he explained, "brutally fired." Actually his position was terminated by the board of directors because there hasn't been money to pay him for some time now.

In any case the style of management at 510 Fort Street is bound to change. Historically, Open Space has been ruled by committee. In recent years Harding demonstrated what could be achieved when one dynamic individual decided what to show. For next season the board of directors will bring in guest curators for one show at a time.

These political considerations notwithstanding, Harding's last curatorial project is a good one. Ted Polkinghorne is an intelligent and historically aware artist. Though known for his large abstract paintings, this time he offers us a sort of film set. We are invited to look through a camera which points through a picture frame into an artificial room at a group of objects arranged on a table. The relationship between the real world and this still life of art seems to be the subject. By the dozens of references to art history which Polkinghorne has built into this construction, the meaning of art is neatly evoked.

In addition, Phyllis Serota's latest, largest paintings are hung for all to enjoy. She has created *Esmerelda and the Fish* in the colourful comfortable forms we've come to love. Have you ever seen a girl cuddle a fish?

Finally, there's Mandad. It seems rare, here on the west coast, to find anyone naive enough and yet sufficiently obsessive to create "folk art." This Mandad is an original, an artist who works with smashed auto glass and coloured silicone sealant. There's no real theme to his work but some of the items are deliciously playful. His *Logical Nonsense Man* is just begging for a punch on the nose.

Altogether, an engaging exhibition.  
 —Robert Amos

sity of Hamburg. And then the psychedelic revolution rearranged his world. Honisch sees flower power and the anti-Vietnam era as a continuation of the effects of World War II, for, as he says, "those were the babies that were bombed on."

Travel through the Middle East to India and Nepal followed, and his years of bold experiments in art and living. Then, in 1973, he moved to Kitimat in northern B.C. and began eight years of secondary school teaching. Through the summers he took a Master of Education degree at Western Washington University in Bellingham, with a thesis on oil painting technology. Already a very good painter, Honisch was slowly learning the sublime discipline of oil painting. Honisch and his wife Usha were married in 1979 in the Punjab in India, and they have two children, Stefan, five, and Erika, four. They now live in Chemainus.

"I hope by revealing myself, what makes me tick, I can suggest that other people become more aware of their inner life, their dreams," Honisch says. "Most of my paintings are based on imagery seen while dreaming or having my eyes closed. When I was younger I wasn't aware of my inner life," he continues. But now he cultivates his subconscious, clearly previsualizing each of his paintings. His pictures are not those come-by-chance images born of feverish expressionism. They are created fully formed in his imagination. "I act only as an observer," he explains, for he is neither shaman/conjuror nor prima donna/ego-maniac.

So, methodically and with great care, he sets down his dreamscapes. Of course, the experiences of his many-faceted life are the source of his imagery. As a youngster he went to church with his family, to churches cluttered with religious symbols, murals, frescoes, statues. The paintings of the Flemish masters have also had a great effect on him, their imaginary religious scenes bathed in the clear light of naturalism. Are Honisch's paintings religious? "I look at religious imagery in a detached way. If I paint a lamb with blood spurting out into a golden chalice I enjoy it as an image, not as an image of Christ. I'm always detached from my paintings."

Often his imagery echoes wartime—downed planes, camouflaged tanks, armoured ships. Yet the scenes are not violent or malevolent; rather they are brooding and enigmatic. For these scenes are not set in the world we know, "the dark dungeon with its attendant horrors," as Honisch puts it: "I try to avoid those reflections and rise above sad memories and rebellion." He has created a parallel world called Sokolniki Park, "where things are the way they might be."

Sokolniki Park looks strangely familiar, as if it was the terrain Bosch painted, and the homeland of René Magritte and Salvador Dali too. The woman on a couch in the jungle in *The Dream* of Henri Rousseau dreams in Sokolniki Park.

Honisch paints with an old-master technique as finely crafted as any you'll see. His drawing is based on the "firm, bounding line" with which William Blake engraved his visions. Honisch paints with dark, even glazes that create a rich profundity of tone. Hung in a quiet place at home, his paintings lure one with a gentle power of intrigue. They are paintings to live with.

The paintings are without doubt mysterious, and the artist admits that most people have a natural resistance to things they don't understand. Yet Honisch desires it. "The kind of art I enjoy most," he reveals, "is images that I cannot figure out, that leave me stunned. Something in me is confounded." Even if you don't understand it completely, his work will yield great satisfaction. Approach it calmly. Relax, half close your eyes. Let the images come to you. Day-dream, remember, wonder. Don't be afraid.

Local artists Glenn Howarth and Phyllis Serota acquired paintings from Honisch's first show at Stones Gallery in 1983. Honisch is exactly the sort of artist who should be well represented in the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and the B.C. Provincial Art Collection. Winchester Gallery owner Bernard Raffo is to be commended for his support of this wonderful painter. Please honour him with your custom.

—Robert Amos

## Romance of the railway

THE SECOND-TO-LAST SPIKE  
B.C. Provincial Museum,  
till Jan. '86 (367-3014)

**T**HIS YEAR marks the centennial of the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway across Canada. To commemorate the event, the British Columbia Provincial Museum is presenting a major exhibit entitled *The New Railway to the Orient: The Canadian Pacific Railway in British Columbia 1885-1985*.



Railway romance: transportation link for the British Empire

Victoria WATCH FOR THE NEXT

# Victoria Downtowner

NEWS ADVERTISER AUGUST 1985

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Plus many open lots all around town.

A two metre model of the Royal Hudson locomotive and a 3.6 metre model of the trans-Pacific linear Empress of Asia are just two of the features of this surprisingly varied exhibit which recreates the sights—and sounds—of the CPR. Surveys, trestle construction and the Chinese contribution are each the subject of special displays while along the walls are the period posters and brochures that lured tourists to travel by rail. More than just a railway, the Canadian Pacific began as a transportation link to the Orient for the mail and commerce of the British Empire.

Branch lines, interior lake steamers, and even airliners are part of the story. China table settings from club cars and steamships, furniture and fashions of the period all give a touch of elegance and add relevance for the million visitors who will see the exhibit. Of particular interest is a number of paintings by Canadian artists sponsored by the CPR in its early years that depict the splendours of British Columbia.

### Recreating all the sights— and sounds —of the CPR

Out in front of Victoria's harbourside Museum stands British Columbia's oldest steam locomotive, "Old Curly." Built in 1869 in the USA, it was brought to British Columbia by Andrew Onderdonk, construction contractor for the CPR. The 35-ton saddle-tank locomotive is on loan from Burnaby Heritage Village.

Since the opening of the exhibition, another highly symbolic artifact has been added. It is a railway spike driven at Craigellachie, near Revelstoke, to complete the trans-Canada line.

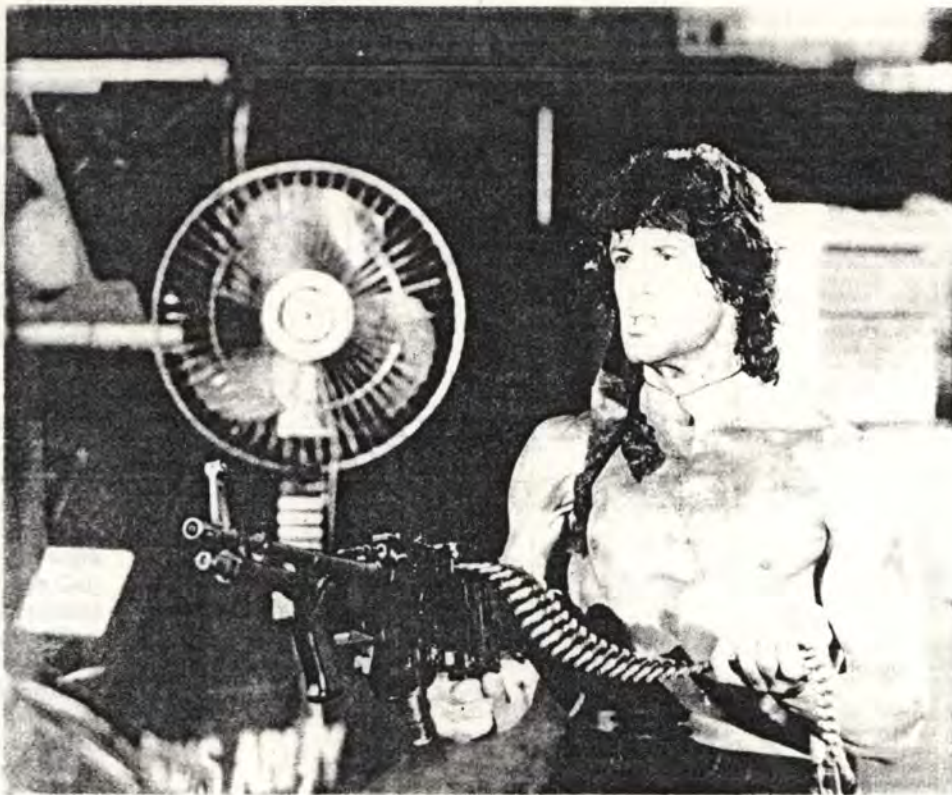
This "last" spike, like millions of others used in the construction, was made of iron. When Donald A. Smith, later Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal, attempted to drive the symbolic spike, he bent it with the first blows of his sledge hammer. This bent spike was pulled up, and a substitute was driven home in its place. Although a few spikes have been said to be the "last" spike, it is impossible to prove if any are the actual one driven on November 7, 1895.

Fortunately, the bent spike, the second-to-last spike, was given to Smith and has remained with the family ever since. It is this spike that is displayed, through the courtesy of the present Lord Strathcona, great-grandson of Smith.

The spike has some small pieces cut out of it. Lord Strathcona had jewelled pins made from these chips for presentation to dignitaries and their wives.

The New Highway to the Orient will be open to the public until the end of 1985.

—Robert Amos



## FILM

### Where did Rambo keep all those bullets?

I'M HANDY with a submachine gun. I can use a lance, bow, sabre and pistol either mounted or on foot. A hobby interest as a university student in archaic weapons followed by some

time in the infantry has provided me with a set of skills not commonly found in provincial government employees.

Mind you, I can't say it has done me much good. Oh sure, I sleep a bit better with my samurai sword by the bed. (I also have a pump shotgun, but while people still respect sharp steel, they are so accustomed to seeing firearms inauthentically used on TV that I can just imagine some idiot intruder trying to kick a shotgun out of my hands with a trick move he saw once on *The A Team*. Yuk.) All this makes it difficult for me to watch mayhem in the movies without spitting up my popcorn.

I don't mind the violence as much as I mind its misrepresentation. Too often the impossible is presented as merely difficult and the unlikely as the norm. Credibility is

**Rambo: a graduate of Hollywood's fire hose school of machinegun use**

rare. Since directorial zeal so often sacrifices realism for a hyperbolic, lurid machismo—and thus ruins the film for me—I thought I'd take this chance to share with you some technical trivia. That way they can be ruined for you, too.

Firstly, firearms have to be fed. Revolvers carry six rounds. Dirty Harry makes the point nicely in one of his movies ("Did I take five shots or six? ... Do you feel lucky today, punk?"), but it is too often forgotten. Rifles and shotguns are good for up to about eight shots, sometimes as many as twenty. In all cases, anyone who carries a firearm and expects to use it carries lots of extra ammunition, heavy and bulky though it is,



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ONE OF the great cultural treasures of any region is a fine regional painter. Christopher Pratt sums up the down-east feeling for some people, and Allen Sapp has recorded the Prairie feeling as has no one else. Since the death of Emily Carr the west coast hasn't developed one distinct stylist who expresses the landscape— with the exception of the remarkable E.J. Hughes.

And yet Hughes is virtually unknown on Vancouver Island, his lifelong home and exclusive subject. Two reasons account for this. He is a noted recluse and has avoided interviews and openings entirely for years. And, since 1951, he has sold all his work through one dealer only, the Dominion Gallery of Montreal. His careful and patient paintings are in Canada's greatest art collections, the National Gallery and all the rest, but few can afford to hang his works in their home.

Even so, Hughes' carefully considered images can show us new ways to perceive his region. At long last a retrospective exhibition and fine catalogue will acquaint the country with this remarkable painter. Hughes was born in 1913 and studied art in Vancouver. Working on the few mural commissions available in the 1930s led him to an appointment as a war artist. His brilliant war work was part of the opening exhibit at Vancouver's new Art Gallery. After an honourable discharge he continued working, methodically building straightforward compositions which mainly depict Vancouver Island. Man in nature is his unvarying theme and though his apparently simple approach has led some to call his work primitive or naive it is without doubt deep, sophisticated and well-crafted.

Hughes is still painting and may continue to be almost a hermit. But as a result of this tour his work will take its rightful place in the hearts of Canadians as a clear look at the land they love.

—Robert Amos

E.J. HUGHES RETROSPECTIVE,  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria,  
to April 29, 384-4101

# FOOTNOTES

**Artful dollars:** Robert Vanderleelie will be opening Victoria's newest art gallery late in September, and this young and energetic entrepreneur isn't at all daunted by the mood of anxiety prevalent among Victoria's gallery owners. "We've been through it all in the last two years," he says, referring to the successful gallery he operates in Edmonton. *Visual Arts Newsletter* of Alberta says that the operation "has gained a reputation for presenting challenging and progressive contemporary Canadian art" and we can expect to see many of the same artists presented here.

Prairie artists such as **Quentin Caron**, **Ann Clarke**, and **Ed Epp** will be introduced here, and Vanderleelie has already begun meeting B.C. artists, with an eye to showing them in Edmonton. In addition, a tasty garnish of the "old masters" of modern art will add tone to what promises to be a thoroughly professional gallery. Vanderleelie's first solo artist showing will feature the work of Victorian **Loraine Stephanson**. Although some artists keep a low profile, the convivial Stephanson regularly brightens the day for patrons of the Demitasse restaurant, of which she is the co-owner.

*[Faded text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]*



*[Faded text, likely a caption for the drawing above]*

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# Looking over Emily Carr's shoulder

FIELD SKETCHES TO FINISHED WORKS.  
Emily Carr Gallery, 1107 Wharf Street,  
until Oct. 26. 387-3080

**V**ICTORIA IS the home of an art museum unique in Canada. Seven years ago, the Provincial Archives of British Columbia set up a harbourfront gallery entirely dedicated to the work of one artist—Emily Carr. This richly appointed gallery features not just a static arrangement of Carr's best known work. Rather, an ongoing study of all aspects of Carr's work is presented in shows which change every six months.

By now we've all seen the masterworks which form the Emily Carr Trust, the collection which is housed at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Victoria's own Newcombe Collec-

tion is quite different. A large number of sketches and paintings were collected by Carr's friend William Newcombe for their anthropological interest rather than their artistic merit. This group consists largely of unfinished items—field sketches, rough drafts or abandoned attempts.

Curator of the gallery, Kerry Dodd, has learned over the years how to show this Newcombe Collection to its best advantage. At the moment 10 "pairs" of paintings are on show, combining sketches with the finished paintings that resulted. To do so Dodd has brought back Carr's best work, paintings Carr sold during her lifetime to the National Gallery in Ottawa, Hart House, and the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto. Thus we have a rare—if not unique—chance to see these superb works in Victoria once again.

The gallery succeeds in the difficult task of representing Carr for those who are seeing her work for the first time as well as pleasing those who've "seen it all before." And it is of special value to artists who will appreciate the process by which Carr transformed her paintings. Her sketches are dazzling in their freshness, and as they were intended for her eyes only we share the special intimacy of "looking over her

shoulder." Changes are evident in the colour schemes of the finished oils; the compositions are more considered and figure groups are added.



**Transformed paintings: the dazzlingly fresh sketches of Emily Carr**

For her next show, Dodd will borrow famous pictures by the Group of Seven, the very ones which inspired Emily Carr in 1931. They'll be matched with Carr's own work of the time. The Group of Seven works will come from Ontario's McMichael Collection, and in return McMichael curator Ian Thom (late of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria) is borrowing Emily Carr's portraits for a special showing there.

For those who think they know all about Emily Carr, or who think the Emily Carr Gallery is only for tourists, the exhibit *Field Sketches to Finished Works* should come as a pleasant surprise.

—Robert Amos

## Castles made of sand

CANADIAN OPEN SAND CASTLE COMPETITION, White Rock, July 21

**C**OMING BACK from a fourth place finish in the Best Sculpture category last year, Victoria's Sandblasters hit the beach once again for the 7th annual Canadian Open Sand Castle Competition at White Rock, B.C. The event, which attracted an estimated 150,000 fans, featured over 150 teams competing for \$18,500 in prizes in six categories.

The Sandblasters started building castles three years back, "just for the fun of it," notes team captain Fred Dobbs. But now he and nine buddies are taking it seriously. Among the 10 are three artists and two pastry chefs, but really the only requirement is a willingness to plan and work together—and given the tonnage of sand involved, no 97-pound weaklings are allowed.

For their first competition the Sandblasters built a huge typewriter, and last year they used the standard 40 by 40-foot plot to create a scene of Pinocchio in a rowboat, surrounded by whales. This year's subject was Victoria's Parliament Buildings, 16 feet across at the base with Captain Vancouver's head five feet in the air.

Every sand castle starts with a shovel and pail, but the team also brought along plywood forms. After two hours were spent compacting bucket loads of moistened sand, the carving began. Using templates, they hastened to complete the elaborate facade and some of the domes. Dinner knives, spatulas and paintbrushes were called into



CAI BENDOW PHOTO

service, and for a finishing touch letters spelling "Welcome to Victoria" were countersunk into the sand and filled with rose petals. All this took four hours and then... the in-sweeping tide dissolved the legislature, and all the other sculptures along with it.

Judges had been watching throughout the afternoon to see that no mechanical devices were used, and that no adhesives were added—a cement "sand castle" just isn't cricket. Some contestants do get a bit carried away with powdered paint and tiny flags but our Sandblasters are purists in that respect. They did, though, employ a five-gallon sprayer to keep the Legislature from drying out too fast.

The 43 contestants in the Best Sculpture category raced to a tight finish. The Sand-

### Built in a day: is the tide turning for hometown team the Sandblasters?

blasters, despite their matching team shirts, weren't in the top three, but they "felt really strong in the end," according to team member George Graham. "I was really surprised that we actually pulled it off and got it looking somewhat presentable." The grand winners were a team from Sandy, er, San Diego who created an eight foot high Viking warlord in a chariot pulled by a brace of vicious polar bears.

And next year? The Sandblasters will be back. First they'll take in the contest in Oregon as observers, then use the meet at Parksville for practice, and finally take another try at the Canadian Open.

—Robert Amos

## ART AND THE CATHEDRAL

Christ Church Cathedral Memorial Hall, Victoria,  
British Columbia

by Robert Amos

In the searching and celebration of the Christian Life there are many types of expression. Words and music are our constant companions in church, but those artists who work toward a visual epiphany are rarely met with. Many among us labour away quietly, painting and drawing, exploring their faith. *Art and the Cathedral* brought forward dozens of these artists so that their meditations might become better known and act as a catalyst to our Christianity.

From May 26 until June 9, 1985, the Memorial Hall of Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria was the site of the exhibition which drew some six hundred spectators. More than fifty artists participated, and in addition lectures on art were presented.

The artists had been requested to bring forth work with a Christian theme and quite a range was on display. The first item met with in the show was a small icon-style painting of the storm on the Sea of Galilee, wherein Christ is the calm centre of His group of disciples. This was interpreted by Sechelt's Elizabeth Low. Close by were two elaborately ornamented depictions of the Blessed Virgin Mary by Muriel Willard. Also included was the more traditional appeal of *Madonna at Prayer* by Pat Gough. In a more modern vein was a "construction" by Paul Rode. This involved a wooden box which housed a painting of the Holy Land, a model of a primitive house from Bible times, and a large round stone. A line of scripture from the Book of Job completed this thought-provoking sculpture.

Some people chose to depict the wonders of God's creation — the birds and the beasts of Darlene Churcher, the sheep made to lie down in green pastures by Ross Pomeroy. Others attempted to capture an image of transcendence, as exemplified by *The Shower of Grace*, a hanging plexiglass structure created by Jacqueline Cornford. A pastel by Elizabeth Goward explored the same theme. Images of Christ Himself were numerous and featured Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the cross, and also on Pandora Street outside Victoria's Mustard Seed Church. The Parish of Salt Spring Island loaned all fifteen of their paintings of the stations of the Cross, a series done by Caroline Hamilton.

Clerical stoles, models of stained glass windows and paintings of churches had their place too. Though perhaps only marginally illustrating a Christian theme, a lovely little painting of the garden of the Deanery of Christ Church Cathedral by Colin Pattle deserves mention. Carole Sabiston's imposing altar frontal is seen only briefly in the Cathedral itself during the short period of Advent, but this show offered the perfect chance for all to enjoy its gorgeous colours.



**ELIZABETH LOW'S ICON** was one of many exception works on view at the Cathedral.

Larger and more abstract works created a striking effect in the hall (which had been newly washed and painted for the event). Harry Stanbridge is a widely known abstract painter whose faith is the dynamic force behind his large canvases. Their luminous counterpoint encourages discussion of the ineffable. Perhaps the most gently provocative of all were three paintings with a circus motif by Jim Gordaneer. Many viewers wondered what was meant by a picture of Jesus crucified among the jugglers and the clowns but this metaphor, in bold colour and strong form, offers poetry and, to some, inspiration.

Linda Kyle, the driving force behind the exhibition, set her sights very high, and mounted a show of real artistic integrity, yet with a place in it for Sunday School art too. Credit is also due to the many helpers both within the congregation and the wider community. No one was turned away for lack of professional polish and it was not at all necessary to be a "card-carrying Christian" to participate. In the end the show provided a lot to think on — about the artists' search and the forms which revelation can take. Next year's edition is eagerly awaited.

\*\*\*

September 1985

# VICTORIA STAR



“It’s not going to be one of those hoity-toity scratch-your-chin kind of art shows,” says artist Paul Dishaw. The gargoyles looming over Fort Street give fair warning that *Deep Space* (at Open Space, 510 Fort Street) is going to be fun. Dishaw, a painter who has worked extensively in set design, and Joan Wilkinson, a sculptor most recently seen at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria’s invitational show in July, are collaborating on a multimedia installation. The theme is “space travel, outer space, life on other planets, and the deep space within us all,” says Dishaw. Already two nine-foot tall “creeps” and a host of little creeps have invaded the town and there’s lots more to come— sculpture, wall painting, lighting effects, and a giant opening party in collaboration with Event!, the arts-business promotional campaign that starts the same day (September 27 at 8 pm). —R. A.

## takes over

*[Faded text, likely a continuation of an article or a separate short piece.]*

## Victoria leads B.C. in Summer Games

*[Faded text, likely an article about the Summer Games.]*

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# Street festival takes over



Artists, musicians, poets, dancers...take it to the streets in Chinatown for a five-day festival combining the visual and performing arts with the colourful heritage of Victoria's Chinese community. (Chinatown Street scene by Robert Amos)

by Barbara Little

Victoria's magnificent Chinatown gate becomes a proscenium arch this weekend.

The Gate of Harmonious Interest will frame a stage that will highlight the first

annual Chinatown Street Festival of the Arts, August 1-5. With the gate a stage, Fisgard Street will be closed to traffic making it a true pedestrian mall. Besides the entertainment there will be artists painting on-site, artists living in the area will open their studios, and there will be

a variety of sales and demonstrations booths, all creating a colourful atmosphere.

While the Asian Lion Dancers take to the street to celebrate their culture, upstairs in Don Mee's Restaurant musical strains from a cabaret-style evening will be overheard. And throughout the five-day gala happening, street musicians will serenade Chinatown visitors.

A display of Chinatown's archives, a bonsai exhibition in Buckerfield's store, and 26 artists' studios will be open to the public. Artists will be at work outdoors on eight-foot-square panels during the holiday weekend. A honeycomb tenement building, buried behind stores and alleys has been revitalized for the festi-

cal.

Most of the events are free, only Don Mee's cabaret and the O.A.P. Hall have paid admissions.

**The Idea is Born**

The idea was seeded by the Bank Art annual exhibition. Like the tentacles on an octopus, various support events have grown, using the original theme. It took a committee of six determined people to put together the last two months, as in any project of this size, have been justifiably hectic for the adventurous founders. They are introducing a unique concept in a city which already has more festivals than it can count...each one totally different.

*Continued on page 7*

## Victoria leads B.C. in Summer Games

by Sam Margolis

The fifth Canada Summer Games will be held in St. John, New Brunswick, August 11-24 with \$18.3 million in funding from all three levels of government—federal, provincial (New Brunswick) and municipal (St. John). The St. John 1985 Canada Summer Games Society has built an aquatic centre, a 400-metre all-weather track, and improved other existing facilities.

Of the 326 B.C. athletes that will be competing in the games (all 22 and under), the largest contingent will come from the Victoria area. In all, 75 athletes, managers and coaches will make the trip all the way across the country to St. John from the capital region, and that's more than the total number selected from the Vancouver area, says Jim Richardson, chef de mission for the B.C. team.

British Columbia is expected to do well in a wide variety of events such as

track and field, lacrosse, swimming, rowing, tennis and archery.

University of Victoria track coach, Ron Bowker, who is the B.C. Canada Games distance coach, believes there will be a "strong improvement in the middle-distance events."

Nine Victoria runners will participate representing the Vikes Racing Team and the Victoria Track and Field Club.

Bowker notes Sian Spacey (women's 5 kilometre walk) and Brent Clark (men's 10 km walk) for their recent improvement and their possibilities of coming home with medals. Both Spacey and Clark are from the Victoria Track and Field Club.

Vikes 1500-metre star, 19-year-old Steve Bachop finished sixth in his last national race and second in the B.C. Canada Games trials.

Dave Coey heads the 3000-metre steeplechase coming in first in the provincial team trials with a time of 9:13.8.

*Continued on page 3*

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# A·R·T·S

## CHINATOWN FESTIVAL

Continued from page 1

Hopes for a permanent annual event run high, and with reason. "The support of local visual artists, the Chinese community and volunteers with vision and energy, have made the concept a realization," says committee member and participating artist, Robert Amos.

He has high praise for Louis Ituarte. "His tasks as operations manager of Chinatown are gargantuan and he has come through on planning every detail in the preparation stages."

### Spectral Visions Sunlight Show

The Old Age Pensioners Hall, on Government is to be a hub of visual and aural activity. The Bardie Union of Victoria and the Spectral Visions Sunlight Show are co-producing a sound and light spectacle in the old building. The Eric Pittman Spectral Visions Show, Laser Light, Interpretive Dance by Zave Reinhart and Company, the Goddamatch Light Show, theatre and related performances will run continuously. A special "3-D" gigantic screen will be used in the hall.



Where it's all going to happen; the Gate of Harmonious Interest will frame an outdoor stage on Fisgard Street for the Chinatown Street Festival, August 1-5. (artwork by Robert Amos)

ours. These hues and tints are then projected onto Victoria's largest 3-D screen. Split images are then choreographed to music, interpreted with dance, and then a theatre component is added. All this unfolds spontaneously before the audiences. There will be a \$2.50 token admission to this spectacle. Laser Light by Ron and Don Muese, Zave Reinhart and Company, and Patrick Chu's Chinese Ribbon Dance, with and unprecedented four ribbons, enhance Pittman's all inclusive production at the O.A.P. Hall. Show times are available at the information booth at the gates.

### Artists to Benefit

Many of Victoria's visual artists, looking for recognition, will have their day in the sun. The "Chinatown" package is attractive enough to draw people from all walks of life. Informality allows a chance for communications with the creators as you journey through the studios and street.

An on-site visit to the festival's Fisgard setting gave me the chance to interview Luis Ituarte in his Chinatown hideaway behind Fan Tan Alley. Artists Robert Amos, Deborah Hazime and several of their colleagues, wandered by during the interview.

"We want to produce free-flowing art without fear of qualitative judgements," explained Ituarte. "Our works will bring the context alive as you watch."

"We are making a social statement beyond the painting you see on a gallery wall. It's arts alive," he said.

for new promotional ideas. Thus, in Eastern fashion, a marriage was arranged between the Victoria artists and the Chinese community. That was just four short months ago.

Reading through the weekend proposal, witnessing the enthusiasm and energy of the organization, and visiting the attractive set gives positive waves of a flowing project.

"Chinatown" is an alternative festival, one based on today's world rather than on Picasso, Beethoven, Radames or Bach. It shows what our artists with fresh thoughts can do in receptive Asian community.



### Special Events

Planned for the O.A.P. are an Art Party on Thursday evening (August 1), and a rock and roll dance on Saturday with Backstreet. The Bardie Union present a Poetry Cabaret on Sunday night, where poets of today read their gems of wisdom. The B.C. Holiday has a film and video celebration on the schedule.

The combination of lighting effects by Pittman and the performing arts is a stellar draw. The images are created by sunlight, split into its component col-

Deborah Hayzime agreed. "I have the chance to share my large installation art with the public. My art relates today."

Ituarte and his associates envision the rediscovered tenements as permanent artists' studios in the future.

David Lai, instrumental in procuring the magnificent gates and the street decor, that goes along with it, and artist Andy Sinats triggered the idea of a Chinatown festival in Ituarte's mind. As it turned out, both had called him, independently, on the same day, looking

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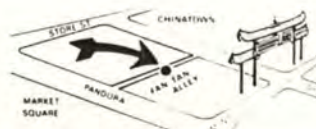
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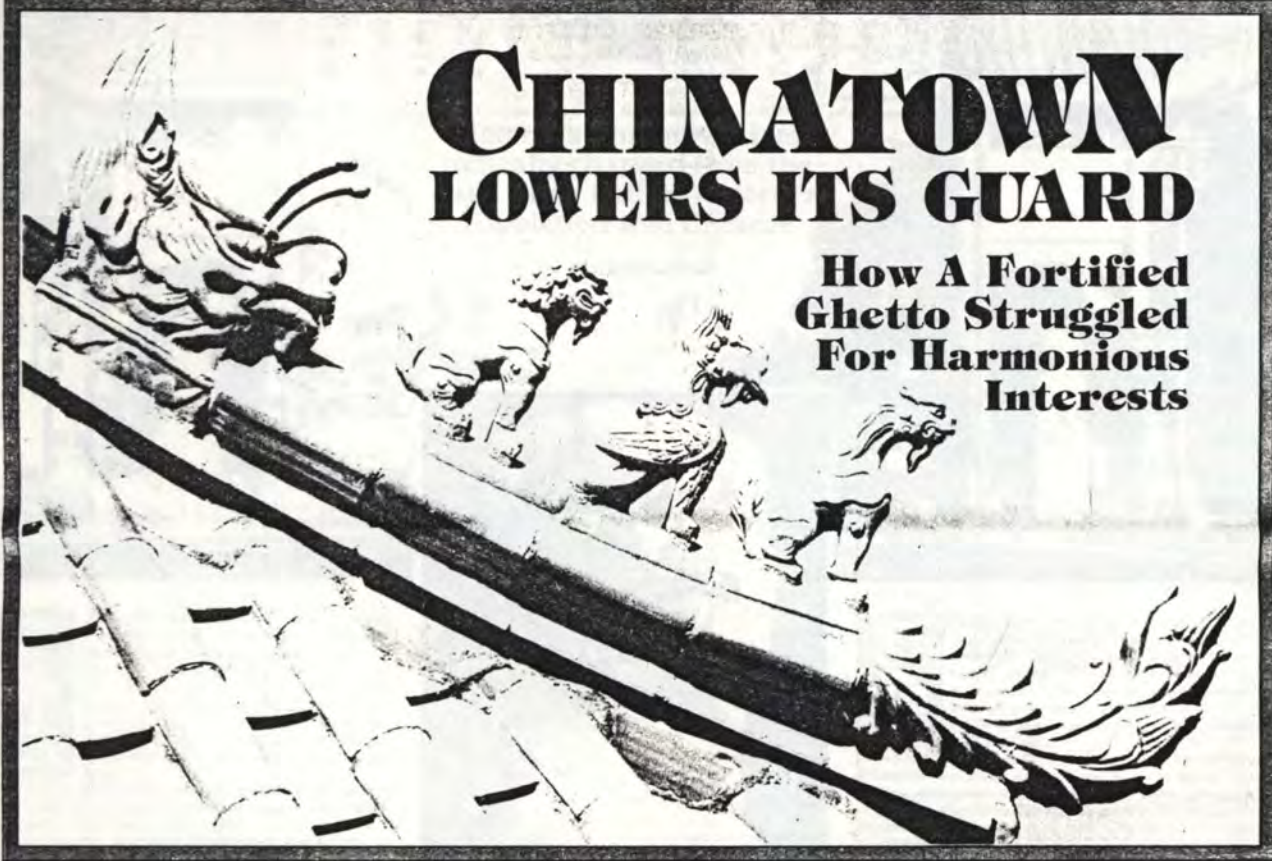
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# 10th Year Monday MAGAZINE



## CHINATOWN LOWERS ITS GUARD

### How A Fortified Ghetto Struggled For Harmonious Interests

Chinatown has come a long way since the early days of opium dens, crowded rooming houses and fortified gateways. Robert Amos traces the growth of tolerance between the Chinese community and the rest of Victoria. It hasn't always been easy.— 9

## How Keegstra courted conviction

Sid Tafler comments on the Eckville teacher's willingness to use the justice system to spread anti-semitic hatred.— 7



## Softcore improv, hardcore laughs

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## Dream castles

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## School for clients

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PLUS: CRIES AND WHISPERS: TAKE IT OFF, HARRY 2/ SEVEN DAYS: A NEW ARTISTS' COLONY? VICTORIA BY NUMBER: HOUSING STATS 5/ IN ONE EAR: THAT HEADLINE 5/ FOOTNOTES: TIMOTHY VERNON CATCHES ON 18/ DOONESBURY 19/ CALENDAR 20/ FARE COMMENT: DINING AT THE VGH 24/ LYNDA J. BARRY 24/ CLASSIFIED 25/ OVERSET 23/

# FROM GHETTO TO SHOWPIECE

Victoria's Chinatown has radically changed from the days when half of Victoria's population was Chinese

By ROBERT AMOS



The guardian lions on the Gate of Harmonious Interest were gifts from Suzhou, Victoria's sister city in China



THE RED paper lanterns hanging before many of the stores, and the brilliant signs with black Chinese characters... a slip of a girl in a tunic and trousers bending slantwise under the weight of a tiny, solemn-faced brother, the self-respecting 'washee man' going at his own peculiar jog trot, his two huge bundles of clothes swinging in perfect balance from either end of the six-foot pole across his shoulders.

A very aged Chinaman in a black padded silk blouse with brass clasps down the front, loose blue trousers, a high black cap and white-soled native shoes... oh, the Chinese smell—insistent, intangible, all pervading. It is not only to smoke and play chuck-luck or fan-tan that the Oriental cooks and housemaids hurry down to Chinatown in the evenings, but to drink in the invigorating draughts of their native atmosphere." (*Chambers Journal*, June 10, 1911)

This is how many journalists saw Chinatown—as an exotic terrain which could be easily sensationalized for their readers. This stereotypical view was attractive but not properly representative of Victoria's Chinatown, one of British Columbia's great early communities.

In the 19th century, many Chinese left China, bound for other ports on the Pacific. They intended to earn their fortunes on the "Golden Mountain" and return home to retire at ease with their families. However, in the foreign lands they were neither understood nor assimilated. Many never returned home. Those who stayed in Canada suffered and struggled and gave birth to further generations, now integral members of Canadian society.

Gold on the Fraser River brought an influx of newcomers to British Columbia. In 1858, Chinese workers came by ship from San Francisco, or overland from Portland and Seattle. They were heading for New Westminster to try their luck in the goldfields. By 1860 the *Victoria Daily Colonist* estimated that 4,000 Chinese had arrived in Victoria directly from Hong Kong. By 1860, 4,000 Chinese (about 10 per cent of the province's population) were toiling in British Columbia's boomtowns such as Barkerville and Yale. The Chinese took over the white miners' claims at bargain prices when the restless owners moved farther up river.

There was almost no labour force available for the huge projects which faced early British Columbians, so the Chinese were imported by contractors here in Canada, with a

clear purpose. Yet from the outset the Chinese were resented. Detractors expected they would "depreciate the value of labour, make a little money and return with their accumulated wealth to China." Few, if any, of the Chinese sojourners were allowed to realize this goal.

In 1880 Andrew Onderdonk contracted to build the Canadian Pacific railway through the Rocky Mountains. He was able to employ labourers from China who had been working on railroad construction in California and Oregon. He also chartered two ships, each to bring about 1,000 workers from Hong Kong. About 10 per cent of the Chinese labourers died of scurvy as a result of the 48-day ocean voyage. The work they came for—carrying gravel and blasting rock—was not the sort of work the colonists wanted to do. Legends say there is a Chinese labourer buried under every foot of railway track. It is currently estimated that 2,000 of the imported labourers died in the construction. And since this was contracted labour, about half of the Chinese workers' wages went to line the contractor's pockets.

By 1884 the railroad was complete and there were 17,000 Chinese in Victoria, half the city's population. Most had been "unceremoniously abandoned" when the railroad was completed. Many were stranded, with no means to return to China. This was the great population boom that created Victoria's Chinatown.

CHINATOWN AS we know it was a response to an alien and hostile environment. For the Chinese, Victoria was at once a mercantile and supply centre as well as administrative and recreational home base to which labourers from all over British Columbia could return, either to recuperate, retire, or await passage back to China.

Until 1884, any matter regarding the rights or status of the Chinese had to be addressed to the Canadian government through the Chinese consul-general in San Francisco. The consul-general encouraged the Victoria merchants to form the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), which they did in 1884, opening their headquarters building on Fisgard Street. The new association went into relief work with enthusiasm, initiating a drive for funds, and setting up a central food kitchen for the most needy. Over the next two years, 7,000 Chinese were repatriated. In Victoria, classes were given in tailoring, shoemaking, and farming. The "graduates" were sent to other communities all across Canada. Later projects undertaken by the CCBA included the Chinese hospital, the cemetery and a free school. The carved and gilded "joss house" or shrine was brought from China and set up on the top floor of the Association building.

The association was a *de facto* Chinese government in Canada. The CCBA was set up to eliminate oppression by westerners and abolish discriminatory laws. It acted, and continues to act, as arbitrator, protector and benefactor. As well, the CCBA provided a court of appeal for matters within the Chinese community and presented a united front to deal more effectively with the obstacles of the new world.

The Chinese hospital was given a permanent home in 1899. The funds to build it were provided by the CCBA and it was maintained by an extra-legal "tax". Each Chinese who could afford to return to his homeland was deemed wealthy enough to pay the \$2 hospital tax as an exit visa. An official of the CCBA checked the "visas" at the wharf.

On certain occasions the Chinese would step out. Funeral processions were the object of much interest in Victoria, when costumed musicians paraded by on their way to the distant cemetery. As the cortege moved slowly on its way, siderunners would trot along by the curbs scattering thousands of pieces of thin yellow paper, each pierced with many holes. (It was said that a pursuing devil would be slowed

down as he made his way through each hole.)

Fireworks and lion dances marked other occasions. It had been the custom of British Columbians to erect celebratory arches along the processional route of visiting dignitaries. The Chinese arches, with banners and carvings, lanterns and fireworks were easily the biggest crowd-pleasers. And the visiting statesmen often took this opportunity to publicly congratulate the Chinese on their sobriety, cleanliness and hard work.

Fine sentiments they were—but rather hypocritical. No Oriental could vote, go to school, or be employed on contracted work for the city or the province. Most were indentured labourers and could not raise the cost of a ticket to bring their wives to Canada, let alone the \$50 immigrant tax. In 1904, the government increased this "Alien Head Tax" from \$50 to \$500 on each immigrant. (In 1923 immigration from China was altogether stopped. This legislation was not repealed until 1947.)

And the Chinese in Canada were not allowed to attend schools. Lou Poy, a well-respected farmer and retail fruit and vegetable dealer, wanted to send his sons to school. But neither their claim as native born nor his claim as a landowning taxpayer would convince the board to let them attend.

In 1908, the Chinese community took the school board to court. The CCBA gathered a defence fund of several thousand dollars. When their lawyer lost the case, he charged only a nominal fee for his services so that the balance of the defence fund could be spent on a site for a new Chinese Public School. By the time the new school was opened, though, in August 1909, the school board had recanted and allowed the Chinese Canadians to attend regular schools.

Even so, the school continues to play a valuable role. In the beginning it was a centre for teaching English to the Chinese; now it teaches classes in Chinese language, literature, history, art and dance. It also houses the original CCBA shrine. And the distinctive architecture of its pagoda-style red tile roof at 636 Fisgard is a Victoria landmark.



IN THE memories of older Victorians, Chinatown is a picturesque place. Ainsley Helmcken, Victoria's former city archivist, recalls how he was taken to Chinatown as a child. The family's Chinese "houseboy" introduced the young Ainsley to all the shop-keepers in Chinatown. Perhaps he was put up on a table to be seen. This was fool-proof protection for a youngster who might get lost wandering at will through what was—in scale, purpose and character—an oriental bazaar.

The Caucasian world has built up a mythology around Chinatown which is coloured with a malevolent theme. An old sailor tells of young girls being bundled into laundry carts, whisked down mysterious corridors and never heard of again. These sensational memories are spiced with the reality of the cash and rowdiness of Klondike gold-seekers or of rum-running in the San Juan Islands in the "roaring twenties." One still hears of rich men undertaking midnight visits via secret tunnels linking the Empress, the Union Club, and the bordellos of Chinatown. This fantasy is as appealing as it is preposterous. No doubt there was legal opium and gambling, illegal booze and "sex for sale" in Chinatown.

Prostitution, gambling and drug addiction each became a

focus for public disapproval, although there is no proof that they were any less prevalent among non-Orientals. Opium was imported in raw form and manufactured in one of many factories in Victoria's Chinatown until 1907. Its use was almost entirely among the Chinese (to whom it had been introduced by the British). The drug trade among the whites

*The aura of the "secrets of Chinatown" was, perhaps, not a mysterious cover for a barbaric demi-monde, but rather a protection against the intrusion of "white devils" full of indignation against a people they did not understand*

was almost entirely built on eastern Canadian contacts who supplied laudanum, cocaine and morphine until the late '20s. The discriminatory laws against the Chinese were passed at the insistence of white druggists for their own profits. Opium was legally manufactured in Canada until 1911.

The aura of the "secrets of Chinatown" was, perhaps, not a mysterious cover for a barbaric demi-monde, but rather a protection against the intrusion of "white devils" full of indignation against a people they did not understand. Thus it was that the inner courtyards and passageways of Chinatown became fortresses enclosed with heavy gates and doors. The inward-looking tenements with their networks of alleys were a refuge from a very real threat. As late as 1907 the federal government paid \$100,000 indemnity to the Chinese as settlement for the actions of rioting vigilantes in Vancouver.

By 1947, the social inequalities which lingered on were finally erased. Chinese-Canadians were fully accepted as citizens. At last they had the right to vote, immigration restrictions were somewhat reduced, and the City of Victoria eliminated racial hiring prejudices. Canadians of Chinese parentage have taken positions as judges, members of parliament and in all the professions. In Victoria the city government has shown a complete change of attitude over the years and has chosen many Chinese-Canadians for Honourable Citizenship—among them Ed Lum, former mayor of Saanich; Augustine Lowe, champion of the Chinatown Intermediate Care Facility; and Dr. Chuen-Yan David Lai, professor of geography at the University of Victoria.



IN THE 1950s Chinatown was no longer the exciting place it had been. No one went there to "whoop it up." The old theatre down the alley had long ago ceased to attract touring opera companies from China. The glamour was faded, the tinsel tattered. Chinatown's population was dropping fast. Old unmarried men continued their quiet lives. They sat behind jade plants in downtown storefronts, reading the Chinese-Canadian newspapers in social clubs. Their past was perhaps a cruel hoax; the future, an urn of ashes shipped back to China.



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The distinctly Oriental apartments grew quiet. Housekeeping rooms along wide hallways echoed with footsteps of grandchildren visiting from the suburbs.

By the late 1970s there were fewer than 100 residents in Victoria's Chinatown. Indigenous remnants could still be found; the antiquated truck of the vegetable man, the bean sprout farm in the basement of Morley's, a few of the older generation gathering in the afternoon at Man Yuck Tong Herbalist.

As the old ways faded, the tenements were being cleared of a century's accumulation of partitions and debris by artists and craftsmen who slowly filled the available spaces. These young people were attracted by low rents and the picturesque surroundings. Woodworkers, painters, and screen printers brought their own spirit of community and a new cultural life. Chinatown more and more served a non-resident Chinese populace and non-Chinese residents.

It would have been easy to forget the character and traditions of this authentic and long-established community. It was dilapidated and misunderstood. But the special vision of Dr. Chuen-Yan David Lai saved this chapter of heritage from destruction. In 1979 he made a report on Chinatown to the City of Victoria Planning Commission. In it he catalogued the "heritage" buildings, the special functions and the character of this overlooked historic neighbourhood. Through his persuasive-

ness and persistence, a facelift began—facades were painted, overhead wires removed, distinctive sidewalks, lamps and trees installed.

The centrepiece of the project was the Gate of Harmonious Interest. Through an extraordinary conjunction of private gifts and government funds (amounting to \$246,000) a remarkable archway was commissioned. The colourful cladding, with dragons and phoenixes, and the glazed roof tiles were supplied from Taiwan. The erection of this decor, on a steel frame, was handled with enthusiasm by the Victoria City works crew. Two large stone guardian lions arrived as a gift from Victoria's sister city in China, Suzhou. In 1981 the gate was officially opened and immediately began to lure visitors to Victoria's north ward. The huge gate is 55 feet wide and 38 feet high, spanning Fisgard at Government Street, the focus of Chinatown.



Less dramatic, but in no way less significant, the Chinatown Care Centre was entirely rebuilt. In 1962, an unmarried labourer named Dong Gong had left \$25,000 to renovate the old hospital, but even so its days were numbered. It was demolished in 1979. The indefatigable Lai was not content to let this hospital pass away. He made an extensive survey to prove that a hospital for the elderly in

Chinatown was still valid to Victoria's Chinese. As a result of his efforts, and with the continued action of the CCBA and all levels of government, the new Chinatown Intermediate Care Centre was opened on the same site in 1982. It is a 35-bed unit, with Chinese-speaking staff and Chinese cuisine. In the spirit of harmonious interest, it is open to all Canadians. The Chinese and non-Chinese Canadians who live there seem particularly delighted with the arrangements.

Surely there is more to come. Chinatown is once again a colourful, intriguing and very different sort of place. Once it was a ghetto for newcomers, but now it is a heritage area. We must acknowledge that the Chinese have been here longer than most of us. Once it was a warren of mystery and rumoured danger, but now we prize its intricate intimacy, its human scale and its unflinching service as a commercial centre for a large community. Looking back on their history, the Chinese-Canadians have no reason to be especially thankful to the other Canadians for the treatment they received. Yet now they can be proud. Their perseverance was rewarded with success, honour and full participation in Canadian society—and the special neighbourhood that keeps their urban presence alive.



This design is the graphic representation of a sophisticated new chinook management plan developed for recreational fishing in the Strait of Georgia in 1985.

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# FOOTNOTES

 Fine line: "The Island is a great creative environment— that's why a lot of outstanding graphic artists and illustrators choose to

live here rather than in the metro markets you'd expect to see their work in." With those words, *Island Illustrators 1986*, a compendium work by 23 local graphic designers, comes hot off the press and into the hands of art directors far and wide.

It's a handsome book, a bit like the *Graphic Annual* in design, and contains excellent reproductions in colour and black and white by the likes of **Soren Henrich, Anna Mah, Ken Eisner, Kevin Ade, and Darlene Churcher**. If you want art "made to order" this is your catalogue of the talent available (\$10 from Island Illustrators, #202-1619 Store St., Victoria, V8W 3K3).

An even more extensive look at this most satisfying realm of commercial art is on show at North Park Gallery until September 26 (1619 Store St.). Original art work together with the published version is displayed by dozens of artists. Of particular note are the exceptionally precise renderings by **Ron Lightburn**, plenty of good airbrush stylings from **Steve Milroy**, and the gorgeous, happy mixed media paintings by **Grant Leier**.

The organizers deserve much praise for this very well produced show. Parents take note: it is a superb introduction to graphic arts for students. And it is an eye-opener for those people who prefer magazines to art galleries. —R. A.

## NEW BOOKS

**RUGS TO RICHES: An Insider's Guide to Buying Oriental Rugs.** Caroline Bosly. Pantheon Books, New York, 1980; distr. Random House of Canada. Softcover, 248 pages; \$18.75

Where, oh where was this book years ago when I was first taken by rugs? Things of beauty in themselves, rugs have served to enhance large and small spaces, and to cover doorways, floors, walls, cushions, furniture, and coffins. In the Middle East they have covered tent interiors or been used as harness, saddle bags, grain and salt containers, and to pray upon. Through the ages they have been prominently depicted in the paintings of Holbein, Vermeer, Burne-Jones and Miró. During the 1940s, North America moved away from "orientals" as floor coverings, for wall-to-wall broadloom better served the then fashionable monochromatic decor. Happily, today, there has been a move back.

Caroline Bosly's *Rugs to Riches* provides a succinct history of rugs and rug making, and tells what to look for when embarking upon buying or collecting. She teaches one how to 'read' rugs by geographic origin, design, shape, size, colour, and quality, and outlines for the layman the problems of what to look for and where to find it. The author deals only with hand-made rugs, and points out quite clearly that machine-made rugs are not to be considered "orientals."

Leading us through the labyrinth of rug lore, the book is often humorous, and always most readable. Illustrations are plentiful, and the colour plates of rug types

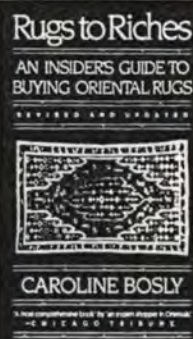
are informative, although one could wish for a few more. The drawings of motifs and designs will help identify your rug.

Chapter Five, *Windows to Walk On*, will be of special help to first-time buyers, those who are not yet confident that a rug will match the rest of a room. The author points out that most reputable dealers will probably let you "borrow" a rug for a few days to see if you can live with it.

Buying a rug can be a pleasurable experience; acquiring it for a good price can add a fillip of excitement. The author's lessons in shopping and bargaining help you make this come about. Remember, good rugs do not depreciate, so those of you buying for investment as well as for furnishings should take heed!

There is also a non-nonsense, thorough section on the care, cleaning and preservation of rugs, and a Glossary of rug terms. *Rugs to Riches* is a book worth reading whether or not you collect rugs, for thereafter you are bound to look at them with a new eye.

M.A.F. DunSeith



**TORONTO ARCHITECTURE: A CITY GUIDE.** Patricia McHugh. Mercury Books. Softcover, 264 pages, b & w photographs, \$14.95

A great way to discover (or rediscover) Toronto this fall is to browse through McHugh's guide or to take to the streets with it in hand. Maps are provided for 20 walks. An architectural journalist, McHugh has used a snappy writing style to describe and inform; the former William Foss house at 203 Carlton is "fat and sassy," the former Hugh Neilson house (1878) on the same street housed one of the first residence telephones in the city. A Glossary helps us define crockets, cupolas and curtain walls.

**"MY OWN FOUR WALLS: HERITAGE BUILDINGS IN BASTARD AND SOUTH BURGESS TOWNSHIP.** Diane Haskins; Pamela Fry, ed. Council of Bastard and South Burgess Township, 1985. Hardcover, 272 pages, illus.; \$20.00

This book tells the story of the eight small villages in the Township of Bastard and South Burgess, and of the people who first created them — from the 18th century onward. It is a personal account of the men and women who settled the wilderness in the Township which is a tiny part of Leeds and Grenville County: where they came from; how they coped with their personal triumphs and tragedies; and — above all — how they created their "own four walls." The quote, by the way, is the title of Thomas Carlyle's book which contains the love letters between Carlyle and his wife, Jane Welsh. There are many people involved with the produc-

tion of such a study, but thanks must go to Lady Tweedsmuir who between 1935 and 1940, when she was wife of the Governor General of Canada, took much interest in our country's local history, particularly that of Ontario. It was with her encouragement that the individual Women's Institutes of Ontario, including those of Bastard and South Burgess, began to collect information in a series of loose-leaf binders which became known as "The Lady Tweedsmuir Books." The Women's Institutes of Delta, Philippsville, Chantry, Forfar and Portland keep this information updated so that none of it is lost to posterity. In fact, the publisher has included blank pages so that owners of the volume can add their own Family Record to the back.

Two recent exhibition catalogues are still available. **FROM THE SHADOWS: A PORTRAYAL OF TORONTO IN THE '30s AND '40s** features black and white reproductions of some of the 75 oils, etchings, wood block prints and watercolours in the exhibit of the same name. Available from The Market Gallery located in the South St. Lawrence Market, Toronto; free of charge.

**FLOWER OF THE CHISEL: SOUL OF THE SAMURAI**, an exhibition at the Art Gallery of Windsor, was assembled and mounted by David Pepper. His exhibition catalogue is a well-illustrated little guide to metal work techniques, available from the Art Gallery of Windsor or for \$1.50 from Okamé Japanese Antiques & Crafts, 450 Parliament Street, Toronto.

M.A.W.

**GUM SAN/GOLD MOUNTAIN.** Vancouver Art Gallery, 1985. Softcover, 80 pages; \$18.00

*Gum San/Gold Mountain*, seen in May and June, 1985, at the Vancouver Art Gallery, was a landmark exhibition of photographs. Its intent was twofold — to examine how Chinese-Canadians (as opposed to white photographers) viewed themselves and to present images that would break down stereotype perceptions of Chinese-Canadians. *Gum San/Gold Mountain* is the first book to be published by the Gallery in Chinese and English. It presents with the intimacy of a photo album superb reproductions of sixty telling photos by and of Vancouver's Chinese-Canadians between 1886 and 1947. In addition, there is a brief history of the Chinese in Canada and a number of cogent essays on the function of photography in this community.

Chinese immigrants were on Canada's west coast from the beginning. Their grocery stores and laundries were established in Gastown along Burrard Inlet in the 1870s; it was Chinese labour which built the Canadian Pacific Railway and it was Chinese who then cleared the townsite of Vancouver in the 1880s. Yet lurid newspaper accounts and racist political propaganda have relentlessly coloured our perceptions. For a century we have nurtured notions of a "mysterious East" and the "inscrutable Oriental." The victims of this prejudice naturally defended themselves with apparent secrecy as protection from a society in which they were abused and, from 1923 to 1947, excluded.

The time has come to tell the story from the Chinese point of view. Two book-length treatments have recently appeared. *From China to Canada* (Edgar Wickberg, ed., Toronto: McClelland and



Stewart, 1982) covers the subject exhaustively in a rather dry manner and Anthony Chan's *Gold Mountain: The Chinese in the New World* (Vancouver: Newstar Books, 1983) blends a scholarly method with first-hand experience to make a highly readable account. Now the Vancouver Art Gallery adds *Gum San/Gold Mountain*, a welcome volume which takes us on a tour of Chinatown through its own photo albums.

Thousands of images were brought forward during six years of research among Vancouver's Chinese-Canadian community. The scenes of early Vancouver are wonderful to look at — Pender Street 1887, Chinatown shop owners, and interiors at the turn of the century. And a charming incongruity is recorded as Chinese ceremonial costume gives way to bowler hats and wing collars. But the curators have avoided picturesque Orientalism and the resulting book is more earnest than exotic.

As an exhibit *Gum San/Gold Mountain* has brought thousands of new visitors to the Vancouver Art Gallery, many of whom will go back to their elders and photo albums with renewed interest. And for those who didn't see the show, this very handsome catalogue will continue its work of healing and integration.

Robert Amos

**THE WHEAT PATTERN: AN ILLUSTRATED SURVEY.** Lynne Sussman. Parks Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, 1985. Softcover, 91 pages, b & w illus., \$5.50. R61-2/9-25E.

Ceramic tableware and toiletware decorated with the moulded *Wheat* pattern and its variations have been in continuous production from 1851 to today and are found on almost all North American archaeological sites occupied during the second half of the 19th century. This survey identifies and illustrates the wheat-inspired pattern produced on ironstone by 40 British manufacturers, one Canadian manufacturer, and one French manufacturer.

**THE SHAPING OF ONTARIO.** Compiled by Nick and Helma Mika. Mika Publishing Company, Belleville, Ontario, 1985. Hardcover, 280 pages, colour and b&w illus.; \$75

Hardly a coffee table book, this volume, measuring 12" x 15", would be more appropriate on a library table. A pictorial history of early Ontario interpreted by 30 of Canada's writers and historians, its contributors examine the French and Indian period; the contribution of the Loyalists; the Simcoe Years, the consequences of the War of 1812 and the Rebellion of 1837. Essays deal with education, religious life, the arts, sports, social life, architecture and politics.

M.A.W.

# Event!

The Gallery of the Arctic (611 Fort Street, 382-9012), an adjunct to the Quest for Handcrafts, has a long history as one of the premier outlets for Inuit stone and bone carvings, stone-cut and stencil prints. The knowledgeable staff present a wide selection of work imported directly from all of the most important

communities in Canada's far north.

Deep Space is the name of Open Space Gallery's new exhibition, on display at 510 Fort Street (383-8833). The opening party on September 27 at 8 pm will also serve as the launching of ProArt's week-long celebration, **Event!** The art show is a multi-media total environment, a vision of space travel, outer space, distant planets and the inner space of all of us as well. The whole gallery will be utilized by the creative powers of artists Paul Dishaw and Joan Wilkinson. This will be an opening party that people will talk about for a long time!

Leafhill Galleries (47 Bastion Square, 384-1311) has made a name for itself by presenting the best of British Columbia's landscape artists. If fishboats, headlands and wildlife studies are your cup of tea, you'll find lots to look at at Leafhill. Located in historic Bastion Square across from the Maritime Museum, it is the flagship gallery of some of our finest marine artists.

Myfanwy Pavelic is known worldwide for her vivacious portraits. Britain's National Portrait Gallery as well as the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria proudly hang her work, and it is with no small measure of pride that North Park Gallery (1619 Store

St., 381-3422) presents an exhibition called *Relationships*. This is a series of almost 100 paintings and drawings of well-known Victorian painters, potters and poets. In each case, they are portrayed in a special relationship, with husbands and wives, children, boyfriends and so on. It's a superb collection of art, and an intriguing "who's who" too.

Winchester Galleries (1545 Fort Street, 595-2777) represents dozens of Victoria's most creative artists. Abstractionists, surrealists and other artists of an interpretive temperament display their work here, and during the week-long **Event!** a representative selection will be on display.

Uptown Gallery (3400 Douglas St., 381-4341) is presenting a multi-media display of work by local artists. Included in this show are Less Finney, Will Gordon, Carol Graham, Tim Hume, Glenn Matthews, Sandra Ritter and Keith Taylor.

Fan Tan Gallery (541 Fisgard Street, 382-4424) is becoming more and more a folk art gallery, with an admixture of the best in contemporary work. Until October 19 they will be displaying Peruvian rugs of the type known as Ayacucho. Using needles and a shuttle on a small backstrap loom the Indians weave rugs with geometric, pre-Inca motifs of the Huari tribe. Soft and beautiful colours are the result of dyes made from herbs and cochineal.

### BUSINESSES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO EVENT!

- Rosemary & Wendy Antiques, 620 Broughton Street, 385-9816.
- William Dennis Gallery, 826 Fort Street, 382-2412.
- Waller Antiques, 828 Fort Street, 388-616.
- Vanhall Antiques, 1023 Fort Street, 382-7643.
- David Robinson & Michael Cotton, 1025 Fort Street, 384-6425.
- Sands of Time, 1031-1035 Fort Street, 384-2817.
- Butler Galleries, 1036 Fort Street, 382-3442.
- Domus Antica Galleries, 1040 Fort Street, 385-5443.
- Connoisseur Shop, 1156 Fort Street, 383-0121.
- British Importers Men's Wear, 1101 Government Street, 386-1496.
- Christian, West Coast Designer Fashions, 506 Fort Street, 381-5253.
- The Handloom, Fine Hand Crafts, 665 Fort Street, 384-1011.
- Kettle Creek Canvas Co., Men's & Ladies' Casual Wear, 625 Johnson Street, 384-2155.
- Montague Bridgeman, Fine China, 650 Fort Street, 383-0821.
- Morris Tobacconists, 1116 Government Street, 382-4811.
- Munro's Books, 1108 Government Street, 382-2464.
- Okanagan Estate Wine Cellar, #12, 624 Fort Street, 385-1100.
- Out of Hand, B.C. Hand Crafts, 1619 Store Street, 384-5221.
- The Panhandler, Gifts & Kitchen Ware, 910 Harbour Square Mall, 388-7133.
- Princess Gift Shops Limited, Empress Hotel, Main Lobby, 384-5634.
- The Quest, Fine Hand Crafts, 1023 Government Street, 382-1934.
- Roger's Chocolates, 93 Government Street, 384-7021.
- Dominion Hotel, 759 Yates Street, 384-4136.
- Huntingdon Manor Inn, 330 Quebec Street, 381-3456.
- Sportsman Motor Inn, 1850 Douglas Street, 388-4471.
- The Victoria Regent Hotel, 1234 Wharf Street, 386-2211.

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FAST PACE COMEDY BY ALAN AYKROYD  
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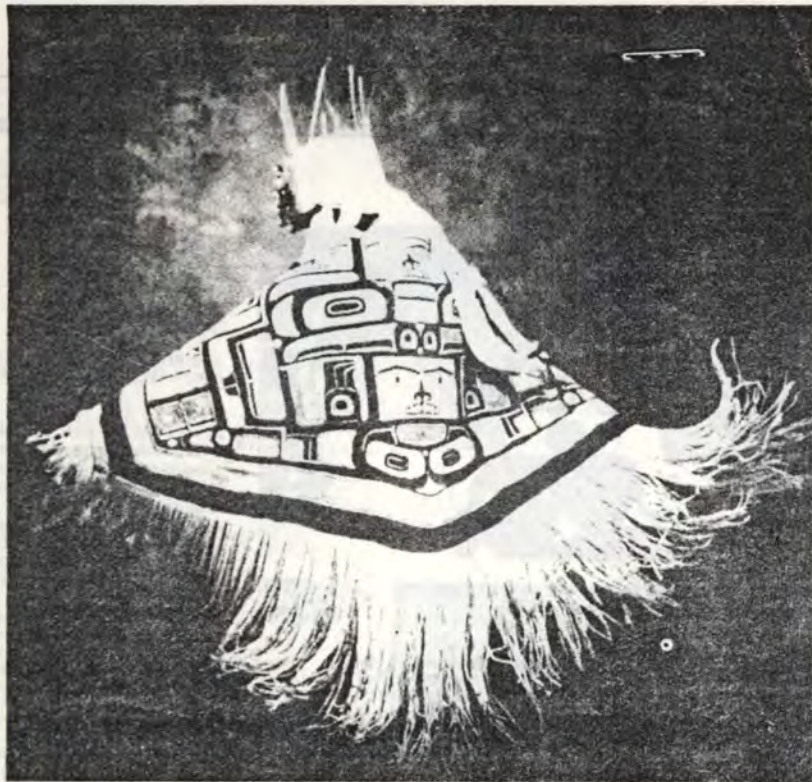
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**ART**

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## The mysteries of Chilkat weaving

Cheryl Samuel re-creates an art so complex that few know its secrets

**I**N FORMER times Indian women of the Tsimshian and Thlingit tribe wove gorgeous garments for chiefs of great wealth. When a chief, robed in woollen leggings and a dancing apron, wrapped a five-sided chilkat blanket shawl-wise around his shoulders the long soft fringe would follow his every move. Artist and historian Bill Holm has called this "the ultimate in regal apparel."

Though not a native Indian, Cheryl Samuel of Metchoin is a weaver of superb technique and an analytical disposition. For 15 years she has unravelled the mysteries of Chilkat weaving, an art so complex and time-consuming that its practice has all but disappeared. In 1980, sponsored by the National Museums of Canada, Samuel travelled the world to examine old weavings brought from the Pacific Northwest. In addition, she has earned her skill through practice, recreating the techniques outlined in her 1982 book, *The Chilkat Dancing Blanket* (Pacific Search Press, \$40).

When teaching in Alaska, Samuel met Delores Churchill of Ketchikan, her first ap-

prentice. Chilkat weaving has many unique features. The warp threads are mountain goat wool and yellow cedar bark, spun on the thigh with the palm of the hand. The warp hangs from a beam and the weft is worked into it with the fingers alone. To this technique, called twining, the Indians add braiding which makes it possible to form the typical curves of Northwest Indian design. Using these two methods a low relief similar to carving is built up.

Samuel's two apprentices are working from the same design, a Chilkat dancing apron in the collection of the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, England. Usually the designs come from patterns painted in black on smooth cedar planks. "If you get a pattern board, it demands weaving," say the weavers. This demand entails an uncommon amount of work.

When Samuel gives workshops her pupils might weave a "ghost pouch"—not much bigger than a mitten—in five long days. After five months of work, Delores Churchill has almost finished her first apron. Like Ulysses' Penelope, she unravelled quite a bit at first. "I was working for perfection, but there's no perfection in Chilkat. We're all human," she notes. This weaving isn't the rhythmic calming sort, throwing the shuttle back and forth. It's really a science, an incredible intellectual exercise.

The aprons in progress can look like a telephone repairman's nightmare. The technique itself is complex, but getting the designs to fall into place is much more difficult. Old bankets are studied minutely—in photographs and museums—to learn the secrets of Chilkat which Samuel calls "one of the most controlled, yet freest, forms of tapestry ever developed." The women who made the first blankets are their constant inspiration. As Edna Jackson explains, "You want to honour them by doing the best you possibly can."

## ART

### Art gets the death sentence

PAUL RODE'S CONDEMNED HOUSE, 3452 Blanshard, Aug. 31-Sept 20

**P**AUL RODE is one of Victoria's best underground artists. This doesn't refer to a penchant for painting down manholes, in subway stations, or in caves. "It means," says art critic Robert Amos, "that the artist works, not through the auspices of an established gallery, but prefers instead to show his work, to enlighten the public, in other ways."

Paul Rode does not show in galleries because, as he says, "I don't want to play the games you have to play to do that. I don't want to spend hundreds of dollars getting out invitations and buying wine for the opening." He smiles, shakes his head. "You know, people in this part of the world don't give a shit about art. Artists should have to bribe people with free booze to get them to come and see their stuff?"

Rode has shown his work at North Park Gallery, at Open Space, and at the exhibit of Christian art at Christ Church's Memorial Hall. And those who keep an eye on The Blue Fence (Fort and Vancouver) may have noticed and been shocked by his "Lamentation: Genocide in Lebanon" a few months ago. His most recent showing was at King Solomon's Gate, where he has exhibited twice.

On the last day of August, Rode opened a one-man show to beat all one-man shows. The exterior walls of his home at 3452 Blanshard Street, covered with weird, often Picasso-like figures, with realistic representations of soldiers and cities, with animals wistful, solid, and fierce, formed an exhibit which was billed as *Condemned Art on a Condemned House in a Condemned World*. The figures cavorted and writhed, flew, wept, and dreamed from up under the eaves right down to ground level. Stylized figures marched around door frames, covered under windows, and floated or leapt out from every inch of the plaster walls.

But they exist no more. Not that Rode was under any illusion that his paintings of Neurenberg, the portrait of Mozart, the Vietnamese soldier, or any of the dream-like and mythological images would be preserved for posterity. This was art made to be destroyed. Destruction of the medium is the message. "This house is the world" was lettered high on one wall. But the house and its evocative art were smashed down by a bulldozer, the architecture of one era making way for the next.

Rode's home was one of 22 in the block immediately north of the Town and Country Shopping Centre. They have all been razed to make room for—you guessed it—another shopping centre.

"Have you ever noticed," Rode asks, running long fingers through his dark hair, "how proud people are when they show you what they've bought? Proud! As if they've made the thing themselves!" One of the paintings showed two figures on a rooftop, with a many-windowed yellow building behind them. They held hands, their narrow angular bodies reaching out to one another wistfully. "They are the thin people. They come into my paintings a lot," Rode says. "They are the consumers the world is full of. They are the people who buy things and buy things, maybe to compensate for not creating them."

On the wall facing the street was a drawing that came after the death of Jean-Jacques Roussin, a Montreal artist and close friend



RAYMOND VICKERY PHOTO

RAYMOND VICKERY PHOTO

whose work Paul greatly admired. It showed a body, entombed in a square of red paint, a cut-away view, with two distraught figures at the surface. The entombed body was very far away, quite unreachable, totally apart. To see it was to experience the mourners' separateness, to feel their pain. The red square was both a physical space and an emotional distance.

The two artists Paul Rode admires most are Picasso and Mozart. "Picasso because he was beyond style," he explains, "and Mozart—he died with the music roaring through him, like he was a flute and the music was the breath. That's the way I want to live and paint."

"I would paint," he goes on, "even if no one ever saw what I did. I have to." Rode paints on other things beside houses and fences, though he prefers board to canvas, largely because "you can paint on it now, immediately; you don't have to buy canvas and then stretch it, and board is less fragile. You can't put your foot through it."

"I paint by osmosis," Rode says. "Ideas and feelings pour into me and out of me in one continuous flow. I try not to interpret too much, just let it come." Much of his work has a strangely primitive feel to it. He paints, not the way a dog looks, but the same way as a child paints; not by planning, not the shape of the eye, but the space the figure or object occupies.

Like Giotto, the famous Florentine fresco painter of the 13th century, Rode paints figures, whether abstract or realistic, that are simplified into comprehensible shapes, allowing us to feel the human drama in which they are involved.

There weren't many people at Rode's showing of condemned art. It wasn't an elegant affair. There was no free booze. The grass was long underfoot, the yard was full of objects used and objects finished with.

The tumble-down steps, for years in disrepair, had finally quit trying to be steps at

Realism and abstraction surround windows and doors of Paul Rode's condemned house: Picasso-like figures and the "thin people" (above); Paul Rode stands beneath the gaze of a favourite teacher (below)



ANNE SWANNELL PHOTO

all, and lay in splinters around the front doorway. The door itself was propped against the side of the house. A shovel leaned against a painting of a shovel.

Rode and his family have moved a few blocks away, and the condemned paintings, being exactly that, exist only for those lucky few who caught their brief existence and carry the images behind their eyes.

—Anne Swannell

### Intense colour, wry humour

MICHAEL MORRIS: Early Works 1965-1972 (Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1040 Moss Street, 384-4101 until Nov. 24)

**M**ICHAEL MORRIS is an artist who has long been "slightly ahead of his time," but by now Victoria should be ready for *Michael Morris: Early Works, 1965-1972*.

Morris, born in 1942, grew up in Victoria as an acknowledged child prodigy. In fact, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria preserves some of his schoolboy sketches in its permanent collection. Two years at UVic, three at the Vancouver School of Art and two more at the Slade School in London, England, brought his talents to a high level. The exhibit now on show picks out the best bits from his first seven years as a professional.

London was in fine form when Morris got there, alive with challenging and energetic creativity. Hard edge abstraction, pop art (well in advance of its American manifestation), op art and the shaped canvas were all finding form, and the conceptual arts (video, performance, installations) had not yet undermined the validity of painting.

For his paintings Morris began by inking geometric grids. He then brushed them in, colouring book style, with flat poster paints. Using colour schemes from candy wrappers and neon signs, he often divided his tones for graduated "colour bar" effects. Through the years, these small sketches were enlarged and his tentative painting took on a

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machine edge. In lesser hands this technique has been a recipe for tedium but, as curator David MacWilliam points out, Morris was able to express "wry humour, intense colour, aggressive composition and intellectual detachment."

There's a surprisingly pleasant hint of '60s nostalgia in this show. "It was a period when Vancouver blossomed full-blown into the art scene" notes MacWilliam, "aggressively cosmopolitan, without that lingering sense of provincial isolation, envied by the rest of the country and unrivaled in its energy, vitality and feeling of the times."

Morris, in those heady days, soon became involved in a lot more than painting. A seminal figure in the world of correspondence art, he was the man behind the Image Bank postcard show and, as Miss General Idea, graced the cover of *File Magazine*. He set the stage for Dr. Brute and Mr. Peanut, two eccentric Vancouver performance artists, and with his friends founded the Western Front, an artists' society in Vancouver. "At his frequent parties, he would produce and introduce artists or critics from Los Angeles, London, Paris or Milan," remembers David Silcox. "I knew that I had stumbled upon the artistic equivalent of a telephone switching centre."

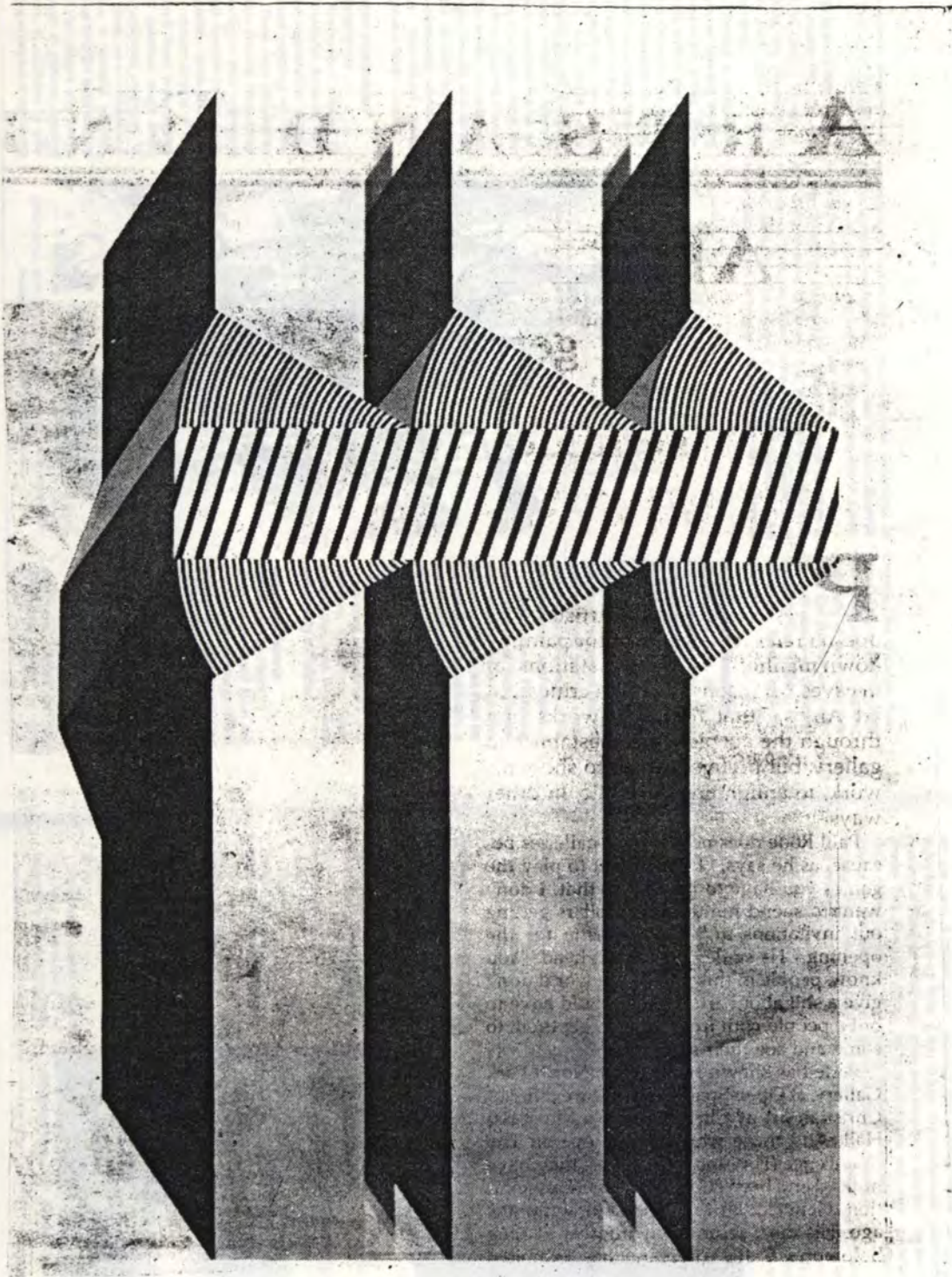
Though now a resident of Berlin, Morris often returns to Victoria to visit his mother. His 1983 show here at the Backroom Gallery gave evidence that he is back to painting; this time the subject was naked boys in a style reminiscent of Egon Schiele. Another exhibit is planned for North Park Gallery later this year, apparently a suite of early works that Karl Sprietz has been keeping in his garage for the past 25 years.

A lot of local people remember Morris and have followed his career keenly, but from a safe distance. Morris looked slightly ravaged among the healthy Victorians who came to honour the returning hero at last Thursday's opening. Shaking a bit, and with a hint of a giggle, he gave credit for the show to guest curator David MacWilliam and referred to the two rooms of bright and inventive paintings as "only the tip of the ice-

berg." More is eagerly awaited.

(Note: Morris is an artist of sufficient stature and tenacity to disobey the prophets of gloom and demand higher light levels than are normally permitted at the Gallery. It's worth the trip just to see how the new \$150,000 lighting system performs when someone has the courage to turn it up a bit.)

—Robert Amos



Untitled silkscreen: machine edge  
abstractions, '60s nostalgia

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

# NEWS AND VIEWS

## CANADA

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

#### Paintings by Au Ho-Nien

Until October 26, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria is exhibiting fifty paintings by Au Ho-nien, done in the Lingnan style.

Au Ho-nien is recognized by many as Taiwan's leading contemporary artist. Professor Au, who is now head of the Art Department at the Cultural University in Taipei, has been an academician at the Chinese Academy for twelve years and, for eleven years, has held the prestigious post of Hwakang Professor, which is Taiwan's foremost accolade for an artist. He is a highly respected artist throughout the world and his works, characterized by bright colours and an extremely delicate touch, have been extensively exhibited in Japan, Southeast Asia, Europe and North America.

#### Emily Carr: Field Sketches to Finished Works

The Newcombe Collection of the Provincial Archives contains a large number of sketches and paintings by Emily Carr. These were collected by William Arnold Newcombe primarily for their anthropological content rather than their artistic merit. The collection consists largely of unfinished items representing quick sketches, rough drafts or abandoned attempts. In this sense, as an archival collection, it provides information on how the artist worked and the stages she went through to produce finished works, in addition to providing examples of her rough

or preparatory works which are not generally available in other institutions oriented towards fine art.

Ten "pairs" of art works have been selected to illustrate items from the Newcombe Collection and show their association to works

found in other collections. In each case the pairs illustrate separate treatments of a similar theme.

The Provincial Archives of B.C. borrowed paintings from the National Gallery of Canada, the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of

Ontario, the Glenbow Museum, Calgary and the Hart House Permanent Collection, University of Toronto for this show. The sketches and paintings will remain on display at the Emily Carr Gallery, 1107 Wharf St., Victoria until October 31.



Quick sketch, watercolour, by Emily Carr. West Coast Totem figure. Provincial Archives of British Columbia

#### VAG Plans Pratt Retrospective

Christopher Pratt, 49, of St. John's, Newfoundland is one of Canada's senior artists and curator Scott Watson of the Vancouver Art Gallery is arranging his first retrospective. "Major loans have been negotiated and we expect that the exhibition will provide a rare insight into the breadth of the artist's oeuvre," says Watson.

Guest curator Professor Joyce Zemans of York University, Toronto, will be producing a major essay on Pratt for the catalogue. In addition, a poster will accompany this exhibition which opens in Vancouver November 23, 1985 and will travel to the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Memorial University Art Gallery, St. John's, Newfoundland; and Dalhousie Art Gallery in Halifax.

#### Grant Helps Preserve 60 Years of Ship Photos

A grant of \$3,600 from the Provincial Heritage Trust enabled a University of British Columbia student to work during the summer months on a collection of 10,000 negatives of ships, a gift three years ago to the Vancouver Maritime Museum from the World Ship Society, Vancouver Division.

The collection, which Len McCann, curator at the Museum, refers to as a

remarkable one for any port, represents negatives of photographs taken of almost every ship entering the Port of Vancouver from the early twenties to 1982. The photographs are the work of several photographers, who set up their cameras at Prospect Point in Stanley Park. Over the years, their collections were acquired by the World Ship Society, Vancouver Division and subsequently presented for safe-keeping to the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

A summer student was hired to go through approximately 150 negatives each day, carefully separating one from the other and placing them in acid-free envelopes, each with its own label. The chemical reaction of nitrate in the deteriorating negatives can be very destructive. This reaction can be slowed when old negatives are stored in acid-free envelopes.

"This is a major photographic holding of ships in B.C.," states McCann, "and it is essential the negatives be preserved for posterity."

Robert Amos

### SASKATCHEWAN

#### Regina Views

Gently easing Regina's Dunlop Art Gallery into the seriousness of September is *Great Shakes*, an exhibit of 240 pairs of salt and pepper shakers in the Central display cases.

That the most inventive designs are often applied to the most utilitarian objects is evidenced by works in this Dunlop exhibit: shakers vary from a pair of intricate pagodas to a pair of RCA Victor dogs, from two washing machines to matched covered wagons, and from a pair of chefs to the paired fruits and vegetables with which they work.

Plant and animal designs in glass and silver had become common in the 1880s,

and by the 1900s this fascination with mimetic shapes expanded to include shaker designs replicating any object, animate or inanimate. Novelty shakers became popular after the First World War when the traditional glass and silver were displaced by such cheaper and more easily available materials as plastic, wood and chinaware.

The salt and pepper shakers on display at the Dunlop until September 15 were selected from a local collection, begun 50 years ago, of over 1500 pairs.

Following *Great Shakes* in the Central display cases will be *Saskatchewan Illustrated*, an exhibition of Saskatchewan novels, histories, cookbooks, books of poetry and children's stories illustrated by Saskatchewan artists and organized by the Dunlop Art Gallery to coincide with Saskatchewan Library Week October 19 to 26.

From September 21 to October 26 at the Central Library Gallery of the Dunlop Art Gallery, is *Richard Gorenko: Paintings*. A survey of his recent work, this exhibition

reveals Gorenko's irreverent and sardonic view of the modern world. Gorenko works with a deliberately low-key palette, incorporating drawing and printmaking techniques in his painting, and keeping visual elements to a minimum.

At the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery in Regina from September 13 to October 27 is *The Second Generation: Fourteen Saskatchewan Painters*. This exhibition includes two to four works by each of the following artists: David Alexander, Garry Berteig, Norm Dallin, Ed Epp, Rich Gorenko, Marie Lannoo, and Alicia Popoff of Saskatoon; Bob Boyer, Jerry Didur, Donna Kriekle, Will Perreault and David Thauberger of Regina; Greg Hardy of Meacham and Tom O'Flanagan of Asquith.

The first generation of contemporary Saskatchewan painters has been dominated by such artists as Ken Lochhead, Art McKay, and Ted Godwin in Regina, and William Perehudoff, Otto Rogers and Dorothy Knowles in Saskatoon. They were among the first artists in this province to consciously address the issues of modernism in the 1950s and 1960s and they deliberately sought out international trends and incorporated them.

For the second generation of Saskatchewan artists, previous influences have been affected by new issues and attitudes of the 1970s and 1980s. The works in this exhibition, all executed over the past three years, indicate that some artists are directly addressing new artistic modes and styles, while others tend to be working within the more established traditions of Saskatchewan painting. Yet all acknowledge the importance of living and working in Saskatchewan; their work is solidly grounded in the Saskatchewan environment.

M.H.



Diefenbaker Homestead, Wascana Centre in Regina, Saskatchewan

## Make it new

PAINTINGS BY AU HO-NIEN, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1040 Moss Street, until October 6. 384-4101.

**T**HROUGH THE great peace of mountains the chopping of a solitary woodcutter rises in the air, underscored by the distant roar of a waterfall. This mood is conveyed by a huge scroll, painted by Taiwan's greatest living artist, Au Ho-nien.

To coincide with the opening of his one-man show at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Au was recently in Victoria. Born in 1935, he is director of the Taipei University of Chinese Culture and chairman of the Chinese Academy of Art there. A bright-eyed, vital man, he is dressed for the interview in a neat suit and grey silk shirt. Only the two long whiskers growing from a mole on his cheek correspond to one's notions of the Chinese scholar-painter; that, and the animation with which his hands punctuate his speech.

Au is the leader of the Lingnan "school of painting," a modern tradition which takes nature as its teacher and relies on the artist's own intelligence to supercede all that has come before. The colourful, dramatic paintings he produces are among the most accessible work in the whole panoply of Chinese painting. Victorians familiar with the late, well-beloved Stephen Lowe will recognize this style of painting. It is based on the traditional brush-modes of Chinese painting, yet revels in luscious, fluid colour, sweeping perspective, and a catholicity of subject matter, in sharp contrast to the cool, intellectual idealism of so much Chinese painting. Lingnan paintings are suffused with powerful emotional content.

Historically, Chinese artists of a thousand years ago imbued all the elements of nature with emotion. Later the Chinese artists of Southern and Northern Sung schools produced increasingly mild work, bound by tradition. Emotion was discredited as mere sentimentality. Japanese paintings, influenced by Chinese art through the Zen tradition, continued the "emotional" style. When, in the 19th century, Japanese artists added a scientific realism to their evocative paintings, some Chinese artists were quick to study with them, and re-introduced a florid and adventurous spirit to their own native traditions. Thus, between the two world wars, the Lingnan school and its many branches developed in the southern centre of Canton.

Though Au's paintings deal with a remarkable range of subjects—wild landscapes, vivid flowers, animals of all sorts, even pigs and tigers—he says he chooses these themes simply as vehicles to convey the moods of the artist. An orchid gives him

an opportunity to portray high spirits with his brushwork. The calligraphy which underpins a painting of bamboo is infused with the spirit of a gentleman.

Unlike painters of more traditional styles, Lingnan painters freely mix every available method. According to gallery curator Barry Till, Au's "masterly skill in the use of the traditional principles of 'broken ink' and 'dry brush' harmonize with the techniques of water and pigment infusion." Orthodox painters sneer at this eclecticism. "They claim that colours are cheap and seductive and ink alone is highbrow, scholarly or lofty," says Au. "I think this is wrong, and feel sorry for those who have so limited their own artistic potential . . . We (of the Lingnan School) are not afraid to use *anything*."

Even those unfamiliar with the discrete calm of traditional Chinese painting will be pleasantly surprised by Au's vast landscapes of the Grand Canyon of Arizona, and the Colosseum of Rome, included in this exhibition. Though not on show, Au's painting of Mt. Rushmore must surely have raised a few eyebrows back in Taiwan.

Solidly based in the calligraphic traditions, Au's paintings constantly strive to add a vivacious freshness in accord with Ezra Pound's dictum, "make it new." Au also revealed that he admires Rembrandt for his richly toned shadows, and the energetic line of Matisse. When asked what advice he would give young artists, he suggested that a painter should steep himself in literature and philosophy, and that it is good for an artist to write poetry. "Know more about the universe," is how he put it. In this exhibition, there is plenty of inspiration for artists of any school.

—Robert Amos

乙丑年秋  
和風  
李安  
畫



"Plum": a vivacious freedom beyond the limitations of scholarly technique

Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts

Douglas Cole. Douglas and McIntyre, Vancouver, 1985. \$24.95.

"The material culture of the north coast groups was at once attractive in nature and abundant in quantity. Nearly everything of ethnological interest on the coast, from large sculpture to small charms, from finely crafted masks to fishhooks and arrows, was ornamented in some way. This feature made Northwest Coast material showy and desirable."

The crews of the European ships of discovery were the first to gather "artificial curiosities" from the Indians of the Pacific Northwest. Collecting in a wholesale manner developed with the birth of ethnology and the scramble to fill the American museums in the 1880's. The poles, blankets and masks were later subjected to a complete reassessment of taste and are now everywhere treasured as "art".

Douglas Cole, the author of Captured Heritage, assumes in his readers some knowledge of the natives of the Northwest. He shines a light in passing on "post-contact" history in the area, in which Europeans debase native culture with a cash economy, missionaries and disease. His main theme is how, through theft and hard bargaining, traders and scientists strip-mined some of the last and most spectacular of the primitives of their prized possessions. Cole is an historian, and makes no judgments on the rapacity, but one waits in vain for an adequate justification of the greed of the collectors.

It is a sad story, but an irresistible one for anyone who has ever wondered where the museums got all those artifacts. When I was a lad I went to the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto where, between the suits

.... / 2

of armour and the mummies, a totem pole stood in the stair well. Honestly, I thought totems were meant to have stairs spiralling around them. Cole tells the true story of the collecting of that and many other poles.

He brings to life the collectors and their labours to fill the museums. Franz Poas, the seminal figure in American ethnology, was a dashing Prussian whose face was disfigured with duelling scars acquired at the University of Heidelberg. Among the carloads of goods he sent back from British Columbia to the American Museum of New York, and the Smithsonian in Washington were three hundred skulls with skeletons attached. These now belong to Chicago's Field Museum.

Lewis Shotridge was a Tlingit who first came south as part of the human display at the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in Portland, Oregon in 1904. Later he became the man on the spot among the Tlingit, enriching the museum of the University of Pennsylvania with his clan's treasures. Shotridge confessed "the modernized part of me rejoiced over my success in obtaining this important ethnographic specimen for the museum, but, as one who had been trained to be a true Kaguanton, in my heart I cannot help but have the feeling of a traitor who has betrayed a confidence."

Marius Barbeau, the best known Canadian ethnologist, collected for and advised Canada's National Museum in Ottawa. From 1925 he was responsible for a revolutionary program of preserving totem poles. But only the ones visible to tourists on the Canadian National Railway line were conserved, "re-erected in rather unimaginative straight lines and were so brightly painted that W.A. Newcombe lamented that they were hardly recognizable", says Cole.

At the time, one native asked why "they sold whiskey in the Government liquor stores and put Indians in jail when they drank it. A few years ago they prohibited the erection of totem poles; why do they now wish to preserve them?". Cole presents their reasons, in their own words. But they are not convincing.

The longest treatment is given to the most famous collectors - Swan, Emmons, Newcombe and Boas. Yet current events continue the same themes. In 1976 "an American commercial gallery's attempt to remove the Whale House treasures (from Klukwan) resulted in a roadblock, the demolition of the offending truck, and the hospitalization of two residents" reports Cole.

In general, things were fairly purchased according to the rules of commerce. And considering the deprivations that the natives suffered, the objects are better preserved in museums. There, indeed, they have served as stimulus to a new generation of artists and artworks. Yet one can't help regret the sacrifice of the old religion on the altars of commerce, science and art.

The book is well written, abundant with footnotes and sprinkled with well-chosen illustrations. Anyone with an interest in the art of the north west coast will return to the museums with a new comprehension of the provenance of the objects. Cole's book blows the mists away from a subject which is sadly but truly fascinating.

Robert Amos



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Available  
among

TRAVEL

THE GLOBE AND MAIL, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1985 E13

# Mail exhibit tracks down the second-to-last spike

BY ROBERT AMOS  
Special to The Globe and Mail

VICTORIA, British Columbia

**T**HIS YEAR marks the centennial of the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway across Canada. To commemorate the event, the British Columbia Provincial Museum is presenting a major exhibit entitled *The New Highways to the Orient: The Canadian Pacific Railway in British Columbia 1885-1985*.

A two-metre model of the Royal Hudson locomotive and a 3.6-metre model of the transpacific liner *Empress of Asia* are just two of the features of this surprisingly varied exhibit which re-creates the sights — and sounds — of the CPR. Surveys, trestle construction and the Chinese contribution are each the subject of special displays while along the walls are the period posters and brochures which lured tourists to travel by train. More than just a railway, the Canadian Pacific began as a transportation link to the Orient

for the mail and commerce of the British Empire.

Branch lines, interior lakes steamers, and even airliners are part of the story. China table settings from club cars and steamships, furniture and fashions of the period give a touch of elegance and add relevance for the visitors to the exhibit. Of particular interest are a number of paintings by Canadian artists sponsored by the CPR in its early years which depict the splendors of British Columbia.

Out in front of Victoria's harbourside Museum stands British Columbia's oldest steam locomotive, nicknamed "Old Curly." Built in 1869 in the United States, it was brought to British Columbia by Andrew Onderdonk, construction contractor for the CPR. The 35-ton saddle-tank locomotive is on loan from Burnaby Heritage Village.

Since the opening of the exhibition another highly symbolic artifact has been added. It is a railway spike driven at Craigellachie,

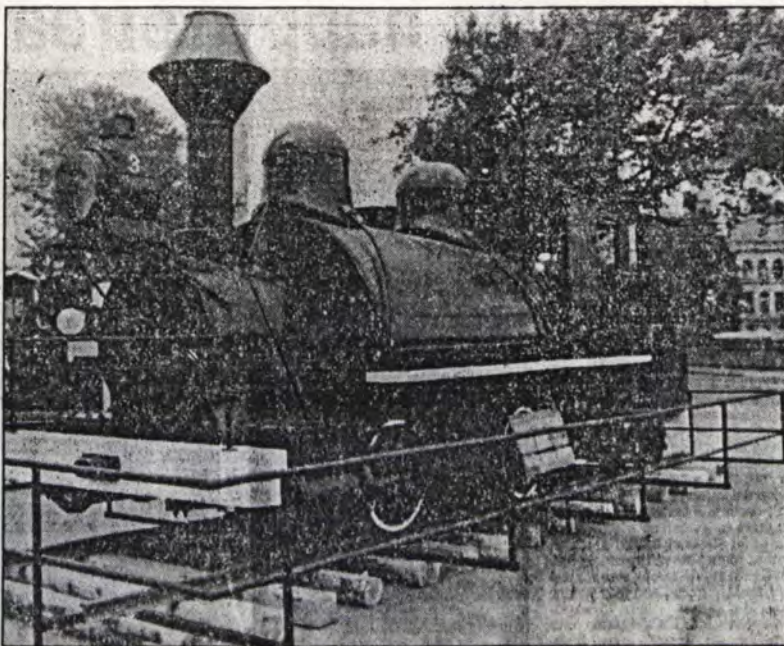
near Revelstoke, to complete the trans-Canada line.

This "last" spike, like millions of others used in the construction, was made of iron. When Donald A. Smith, later Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal, attempted to drive the symbolic spike, he bent it with the first blows of his sledge hammer. Although a few spikes have been said to be the "last" spike, it is impossible to prove if any is the actual one driven on Nov. 7, 1885.

Fortunately, the bent spike, the second-to-last spike, was given to Donald A. Smith and has remained with the family ever since. It is this spike that is displayed, through the courtesy of the present Lord Strathcona, great-grandson of Donald A. Smith.

The spike has some small pieces cut out of it. Lord Strathcona had jewelled pins made from these pieces for presentation to dignitaries and their wives.

The New Highway to the Orient will be open to the public until the end of 1985.



The 1869 steam locomotive Old Curly in front of Victoria's Provincial Museum.



# Triumph in the Forbidden City

STEPHEN LOWE TOUR, China

**R**EPORTS ARE beginning to come in from the Stephen

Lowe Tour of four cities of China. One observer has called it "a triumph, momentous."

Before the opening in Beijing (Peking) a press conference was held within the walls of the Forbidden City. This was only the second press conference ever held by the Peking Artists Academy, and 28 media representatives attended. National coverage on Chinese television's news hour and on radio resulted.

Because the invitation went out under the calligraphy and signature of Wu Zuoren, President of the Peking Artists Academy, and the senior artist in the country, the opening of the show was like a command performance. Fifteen hundred people attended this event and, though it was held at 10 am, it was the largest ever held by the academy.

Among the guests were the Chinese Foreign Minister for Culture; the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Beijing; the daughter of Deng Xiao Ping, China's premier; Mrs. Gorham, wife of the Canadian Ambassador; and Madame Lau She (who is a film producer and the widow of China's most famous novelist). The exhibition was hosted by Mrs. Eunice Lowe, widow of Stephen Lowe, the Canadian artist. The Chinese sponsors were Professor Wu Zuoren, President of the Peking Artists Academy; Professor Hua Ju Wu, Vice President of the academy; and Madame Hsu Bei-Hung, widow of a revered Chinese artist.

David Lowe, son of Stephen Lowe, was in attendance and reported that the large exhibit hall has been thronged continually. "Of greatest interest," he noted, "is that the old artists are coming, couples who can hardly totter along, showing by their funny smiles that they haven't been out to this sort of event in a long time." Mrs. Lowe can usually be found very slowly turning the pages of the full colour book, *The Art of Stephen Lowe*, surrounded by 40 or 50 on-lookers.

Because photography is not permitted, artists are always there sketching the paintings and studying them one by one. A number of paintings "in the style of" Stephen Lowe have been presented to Mrs. Lowe as a mark of respect.

The second stop on the tour, Nanjing, saw audiences possibly even more eager. Some people have returned every day despite the admission fee and the fact that the major exhibition hall is up three long flights of stairs.

Visitors are keenly aware of Lowe's paintings, "amazed at the blend of their traditional style and the lush western influences," says David Lowe. "The expressions on their faces are priceless," he says, recalling in particular one old gentleman who stood

on tip toe, leaning over the protective cord, to study the works with a magnifying glass.

"We did not anticipate what is happening with this show in China," says Ellenor Neumann, who attended the Beijing showing. Though the exhibition was produced entirely by the Lowe family in Canada it has been eagerly taken up by the Chinese, who are assisting the tour with high honour and utmost generosity.

The showing in Shanghai concluded early in January and will be seen in Guangzhou, its final stop, until the end of January. Mrs. Lowe will then return to her home, Victoria, with the paintings she borrowed from local collections for the exhibition.

Robert Amos

MONDAY MAGAZINE—JANUARY 9-15, 1986

# ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## ART

### This grand slam seems flat

BANK ART, Royal Bank Building, Government Street, between Fort and View, until June 16, 11 am—5 pm

A LARGE cross-section of Victoria artists was invited to show work in the second annual artist-run Bank Art show. And this year, for the first time, the entries were juried. Most of the big names of Victoria's art elite stayed home; also absent were the realists, the sketch clubs and the Federation of Canadian Artists members. That still left over 120 artists to represent the current concerns of our colonial culture.

The artists, led by a driving body of four (John Russell, Phyllis Serota, Luis Ituarte, and Betty Warnock) once again turned the former Royal Bank, a vast and musty hall of commerce, into an art gallery. The effect of all this art in one room is a bit like listening to 120 radios each tuned to a different station.

With the notable exception of paintings by Helen Rogak, Betty Warnock and Doris Hryciuk, virtually no landscapes were included. The jurors hung paintings which were predominantly figurative or abstract. The hard-edge abstractionists— Allen Patten, Bill Porteous, and Joseph Kyle —

made a particularly fine showing with large works from an area of art history generally thought to be *passé*. Thus the Victoria College of Art makes its contribution to the local scene.

More painterly abstractions, rarely offered in local galleries, were among the strongest work in the show. In particular, Helene Parr, Sydney Condrashoff and B. Szekely made bold statements, perhaps attributable to Don Harvey's teaching at UVic.

And the controlled chaos of abstract expressionism is alive and kicking, as exemplified by John Brigdale's *Untitled* enormity, and the hugely vile *Cocaine* by the irrepressible Jerome Zachary. Will Julsing's offering of flayed meat and the elegant piece by J.P. Costaz show abstraction just beyond realistic figurative painting, still conveying the tensions of romanticism.



Those figurative paintings which showed real feeling involved a social message. In particular, Phyllis Serota's *Chicago Aug. 26, 1968*, represented rioting police as they



Helen Rogak's *Four Victoria Policemen*, left, was among the art works displayed by over 120 artists at the 2nd annual Bankart Show at the Royal Bank (above).

clubbed a reporter on the hood of her car. Michael Lewis' expressionist *Crapshoot in Paradise* raises moral issues in a Government Street setting. Two strong items first seen in Open Space's Anti-Nuclear show made a useful reappearance. These were Stephen Clarke's burnt bomber and shadow, and David A Young's haunting *No Fish Today*.

Artists who paint dreams in a realist fashion might be called surrealist. Outstanding among our local breed is Martin Honisch, recently seen at the UVic library gallery. He paints like a master and devises a gentle, potent and slightly exotic imagery— he's magic! Yumie Kono Day makes smooth, simple pencil drawings which are silent and mysterious and would be very pleasant to live with. And Wendy Skog, though she attempts very clear realism, produces oddly naive work, without shadows or motion. Her *Conversation* marks a new height of elegance in her work, articulating a lovely confident space between women.

Installations, a sort of slide show approach to art where the artists set up constructions or scenarios to make their points, were the most vital part of last year's *October Show* in Vancouver— a similar survey of artist-chosen works in that city. But this Victoria show is curiously flat, featuring decorative "wall art" in the main. Wayne Ryzak is a fine local exponent of installation art but, on display without their larger context, her enigmatic glass objects seemed a bit naked. Last year's surprise hit, the Spectral Visions boys, didn't participate— they're busy in their Beacon Hill headquarters this summer.

There was sculpture on show— Jack Kidder's very dated *Spaceman*, Eliza Mayhew's weighty and silent *Prisoners* and a Bob di Castro carving mounted so high as to be unapproachable. Where were Nick Brdar and the UVic sculpture department?

Of the very few ceramic works exhibited, notable were Sue Hopper's remarkably delicate porcelains, Walter Dexter's coarse and scribbly wares, and Sandra Merino's robust, handbuilt vases, full of gorgeous flowers.

# MONDAY VISITS

## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF WHEELS

**R**EMEMBER CUSTOM car shows? You entered a motorized wonderland of auto-erotic fantasies, cars flung open for all to see. Handbuilt automobiles on turntables surrounded by mirrors dripped angel hair from chrome tail pipes. Guys and girls in matching club jackets gazed at chopped and channelled '49 Mercs with 40 coats of candy-apple lacquer and upholstered engine compartments. The World of Wheels, like the "Detroit iron" on which it is based, came again and vestiges of the burger cruising ethic were once more on display at the Memorial Arena last weekend.

As local show chairman, Al Clark selected the 56 cars which filled the arena. He is youthful and soft-spoken behind his big moustache, and brings years of experience to the job. "In 1956 I answered an ad in the newspaper. A couple of guys wanted to get an organized dragstrip for Victoria. Over 100 people turned up for the meeting." The Quarter Milers car club was formed then and there. Their first car show was a fundraising event at the curling rink in 1958, and Clark was the show chairman. The Quarter Milers never did get their dragstrip but when they disbanded in 1972 they left a long legacy of custom car shows in Victoria.

The International Show Car Association (ISCA) has promoted the Victoria show since 1974, with Clark as the local chairman. Two hundred events a year are staged by this group, across the continent. For their part, the ISCA puts up the prize money, brings in a feature car (this year it was the *Knight Rider* car of TV fame), pays travel expenses to out-of-town entrants and administers the season's competition towards the Grand Finale, this year in New Orleans. The organization is the backbone of the World of Wheels, but local restylers and car clubs are its meat and potatoes.

Victoria's Classic Chevy Club, Corvette Club, Early Ford V-8's, Vancouver Island Street Rods, Oval Track Racers and the Straight Liners (a drag racing group) got together at the World of Wheels to display the objects of their obsession. It was an opportunity to show some club spirit and attract new members too. Motorcycle gangs are not encouraged, and the van contingent is kept to a minimum. "Vans are all pretty much the same," admits Clark, "and they block the view."

Once again the echoing arena was redolent with hotdogs and hucksterism. Concessionaires sold engraved licence plate frames and spare parts for Mustangs. The bleachers were empty but the rink itself was crammed with gleaming metal and lights, row upon row of show cars, racers and wild street machines.

This year John Clapp of Sooke is showing his '56 Ford, one of the few "full customs" in the area. This car is a labour of love, and three years of creative body work lurk beneath the flame paint job of the heavy cruiser. Clapp, an autobody man by trade, formed his dreamboat entirely of metal. "People always tap it to see if it's fibreglass," he commented. "But it's built to last. And it sure gets the looks. I drive it every day. It's a '56, so it rides nice and corners well." The styling is a conscious throwback to custom car aesthetics of the 1950s—"pancaked" hood, huge tail fins and a '55 Desoto grille. It's low, throbbing and goes like a bomb.

Tastes in automotive restyling have changed over the years. The '60s brought us "muscle cars," with the ass in the air and tinted windows. In the '70s "pony cars" were the ideal—sexy highway riders like the Pontiac Firebird or the Chevy Camaro. But the '80s seem unlikely to produce a new fashion among the customizers. No breed of transformed Datsuns has yet emerged and bolt-on accessories have replaced junkyard ingenuity. The sport/art is in its demise and



Clapp's '56 Ford: low, throbbing and goes like a bomb

the best we can expect is another round of the '50s revival. It's no coincidence that Duke and the Ducktails were booked to play at the World of Wheels.

Built for speed rather than fashion, racing cars have continued to evolve. Out of Vancouver, Murray Chambers' "Black Gold" is the latest in handbuilt competition stock cars, almost unrecognizable as the '78 Plymouth Arrow it claims to be. In fact, only a gutted Plymouth body remains, snapped onto this pack of mechanical dynamite. Also on display are antique restorations, but these don't take top prizes at a custom show—they just don't have the unique and original designs of a show car. Some, like the 1938 Auburn boat-tailed speedster, are fibreglass replicas built from parts and kits, rather like 1:1 scale models.

As the years go by there are fewer and fewer real show cars. "The guys just aren't building them," Clark acknowledges. He himself gave up drag racing 10 years ago, having shut down everyone on Vancouver Island. His B-gas dragster did 160 mph in 8.5 seconds for the quarter mile. But this year conspicuous consumption just ain't what it used to be.

Yet the World of Wheels rolls on. What makes the contestants travel the distances and pay the entry fees to let the public gawk? Hardly the \$30 best-in-class prize. Nor the added attractions of all seven CKDA calendar girls, continuous screenings of *Stroker Ace*, and Tim Reid of television's *WKRP in Cincinnati*. "Self-satisfaction is the reason," says Clark. "The guys have been working on their cars, some of them for years, and this is their chance." If that's what they like, well, more power to them.

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# A R T

## Notes from around town

VARIOUS ARTISTS, Various Galleries

Uvic **R**ebecca Ross,  
most talented art graduate of

1982, has made waves at X-Changes (851 North Park) for the past year. Now she has received a complete scholarship for the winter term at the Banff School of Fine Arts. This young painter is reaching for the stars.

The Federation of Canadian Artists, Vancouver Island Chapter, has installed their juried show at the Leafhill Gallery (47 Bastion Square). Curious to note, the jurors hung their own work, too. And pretty tame stuff it is. Carl Coger's portrait of a lady in a sari stands head and shoulders above the rest. Coger is the best portraitist in town, bar none.

Jack Wise was here recently with his new woodblock print. It was produced to his design by Atelier Sadao of Vancouver in the best Japanese technique. Rich, deep colours are set into dampened handmade paper producing a product much more sophisticated than the usual four-colour offset or screenprint.

Among the recent works in the *Artists at City Hall* project, there is a painting causing some stir in the aldermen's lounge. Eliza Hawkins made the huge oil, showing three stallions rampant over a reclining nude. And the title? "The Death of Sophie Pemberton". Sophie Pemberton

was raised in Rockland and became B.C.'s first professionally-trained artist. Her biography didn't mention three horses.

Robert Genn does a very graphic update on the Group of Seven at the Marshall Gallery (1636 Cedar Hill X Road). Remember, the Group were largely commercial artists applying their skills to the landscape. Genn is, too. He employs all their tricks—flat patterning, unpeopled nature, oil sketches on panel with a bit of wood showing through—and adds his own bold colour schemes. It's a formula for success and this Victoria native, now a resident in White Rock, has success aplenty. Also, a large selection of his screenprints are on show and he, more than most, knows how to design for the print medium. Good show.

UVic's Maltwood Museum has added two collections to its holdings of decorative arts. Van Dam's Antique Shop (Fort and Quadra) supplied 24 pieces of antique Wedgewood, mostly creamware. And Bessie Fitzgerald, founder of The Quest for Handcrafts, sold the museum *The A.H. and E. Collection of Good Design*. The group of more than 124 items documents a local "cottage industry" in handcrafts. Included are Wayne Ngan pots, native masks, and a dining room suite made by a company Pe-

ter Cotton started during his school days. It's good to see an art gallery take some interest in the local talent.

Sandy Clark's show at Canada Arts (across from the Bay on Douglas) is well worth a look. It is obvious at a glance that Clark is a professional artist and can accomplish whatever she puts her brush to. The watercolours are handled with ease, some of the portraits are memorable, but her large marine oils have the atmosphere and solidity to win over people who don't normally like art. Watch this gallery for more good shows.

Rough stones become polished crystal. This writer called the work of Lance Olsen "badass" and David Toresdahl "too weird" when they showed at Stones Gallery. And two weeks later they're moving a new show into the Crystal Gardens Gallery. Somebody's image is going to have to change...

When the *Ninstints* film by Vicky Husband and Karl Spreitz made its debut at the Newcombe Auditorium, hundreds were turned away at the door, though there were 600 already inside. Local talent can command an audience! Bravo. Now, when can the rest of us see this film?

—Robert Amos

roughs and electro-shock therapy. Real life— isn't it awful!

—Robert Amos

## BOOKS

### Love and anger for the Chinese

GOLD MOUNTAIN

Anthony B. Chan, New Star Books, Vancouver, 1983. \$7.95

FROM CHINA TO CANADA

Edgar Wickberg ed., McClelland and Stewart in association with the Multiculturalism Directorate, Dept. of Secretary of State, Toronto, 1982. \$9.95

“He was uneasy and restless in the houses of Europeans, never natural, anxious not to draw their so ready violence, verbal or physical, so that he became almost obsequious with them, and when they spoke of China he fell silent. Like many of his generation, he always had the feeling that they tried to pry into him, to “open a hole into his soul,” because of their avidity for “understanding the Oriental,” which he considered an insolence.”

Han Suyin,  
*China: Autobiography, History*

If the “mysterious east” was not such a mystery, our Canadian community would be richer. Ignoring Chinese origins and intentions has yielded exploitation, racism and paternalism.

Two new books about the Chinese in Canada dismantle the absurd notion of the yellow peril and free us from the myths, the secrets of Chinatown, and the “campus giveaway.” The effect is chastening for white liberals, inspiring for Canadians of Chinese parents, and makes utterly stimulating reading for anyone with a curiosity about our history.

Anthony Chan is the author of *Gold Mountain*. Born in Victoria, he is the grandson of Chan Dun, who came to Victoria in 1887. Chan Dun was a pillar of the community, owning many businesses including the Panama Cafe (now Edna Brown's Little Dinner Theatre) on Government Street. “In 1917 he translated his republican leanings into support for the Guomintang by setting up aviation schools in the Willows Beach area in Victoria and Esquimalt to train Sun Yat-Sen's revolutionary pilots,” says Chan. History, from the Chinese point of view, is full of revelation. Chan is an ethnologist, and writes with commitment and conviction, “a loving and angry look at his own community.”

Of course he gives new information about the legends of Chinatown: “Gambling parlours owned and operated by Chinese merchants were open night and day to bachelor workers with time to kill after a shift cleaning house in a white minister's home... the first organized betting activity started in Victoria's Fantan Alley, famous in the Chinese communities throughout North America as ‘Bank Street.’ At its peak, after the completion of the CPR in 1884, Fantan Alley had 12 houses of chance as well as several restaurants catering to hungry gamblers.”

But, more important, he lets us in on Chinese-Canadian life during the recent periods, for example the era of the Exclusion Act which was endured from 1923 until 1947. In some communities Dominion Day was called Humiliation Day



was treated as a day of mourning. And, though Chan's treatment of the reaction to “Campus Giveaway,” an insulting program on CTV in 1979, seems disproportionate, it points to an outspokenness for Chinese Canadians only now beginning.

*From China to Canada*, edited by Edgar Wickberg, is a much longer and more scholarly book. Yet, while it gives more data and footnotes, it lacks the conviction and personality behind every page of Chan's book. *From China to Canada* is a history of the communities, their organizations and associations. The Chinese are demographically traced throughout Canada, with special attention to the recent years. And for the reader who will stick with it, there is a lot to learn. “In the period before 1947, a large number of organizations reflected the social needs of a partly isolated “bachelor” phase. In the period since, the much more numerous... organizations that have appeared reflect the great diversity

#### Symbols of Chinatown: the Dart Coon Freemasons' Club on Fisgard St.

now present. Despite this extensive organizational apparatus, however, the Chinese “organizational genius” has never produced in Canada a single body that could unite all Chinese Canadians.”

Here is a good education for a future in which the East will increasingly meet the West in Canada. These two books completely supercede James Morton's *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains*, which Chan rightly calls “paternalistic and racist in tone.” And they provide the local context for reading *Woman Warrior* and *China Man* by Maxine Hong Kingston, extraordinary stories of the Chinese in America. *Gold Mountain* is very readable; *From China to Canada* provides a wealth of information. These are two books which could save us from repeating the errors of the past.

—Robert Amos

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chance. Whatever you do, don't be guided by merit or good taste: these qualities are entirely incidental to the academy awards. In fact, when I've been at parties running sweeps on the results, film critics have usually done a lot worse than people who never see a movie from one year's end to the next. But I'll have a go anyway.

*Gandhi* will clearly be the big winner. If there's anything the academy loves, it's a big, worthy, eminently respectable film on an approved social topic, so long as it's politically safe. That way the voters can show that they're superior to crass considerations of money. On the other hand, in the case of *E.T.*, these crass considerations are so huge that they're going to have to do something. My guess is *Gandhi* for Best Picture and Steven Spielberg for Best Director— not a bad compromise.

Ben Kingsley ought to take Best Actor, though there's always the chance of a resurgence from the Paul Newman fan club— or even, God help us, from Peter O'Toole. No one will vote for Dustin Hoffman, because they all want to be able to make the joke that he should have run for Best Actress. That position, alas, is reserved for the shallow histrionics of Meryl Streep, and everyone will feel so sorry for Jessica Lange that she'll win Best Supporting Actress. Best Supporting Actor will probably go to Lou Gosset, whose loud, flashy, derivative performance in *An Officer and a Gentleman* is just the kind of junk the Academy goes for. As for Best Foreign Film, don't even ask: that's got even less to do with cinema, that's some arcane branch of international diplomacy.

Turning to more serious matters, look



**Peter O'Toole: a chance, God help us, of a resurgence for an Oscar?**

out for next Thursday's showing (8 pm at the Newcombe Auditorium, free) of the locally made documentary *Ninstints*, which delivers some ravishing pictures of totem poles in the Queen Charlotte Is-

lands. The village of Ninstints has recently been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Site, and this film, produced by Vicky Husband and shot by Karl Spreitz, does full justice to the natural beauty of the setting and to the grave, mysterious presences of the totems. The commentary is clumsy at times, but the photography is superb. *Ninstints* probably won't win any Academy Awards, but it's a better film than some that will.

—Stephen Scobie

## A R T

### Definitely not nice

LANCE OLSEN and DAVID TORESDAHL  
Stones Gallery, 1715 Government St.  
Until April 13, 383-4610

**O**n the first run of CN's super-fast Turbo train some years ago, the locomotive, going full speed, ran into a meat truck at a level crossing. Hamburger all over the highway! Now that's action. We're always looking for maximum thrills... Mt. St. Helen's, genocide and war are on the news every hour on the hour. Rarely does art even approximate the demolition derby of life.

In New York, current *enfant terrible* of the

art world Julian Schnauble can make paintings so big and so nasty (hung babies in oil paint on steer hide with antlers) that the world screeches to a halt in front of them. In Toronto, Mark Prent dwells on themes so awful (rotting corpses with flies) that they send for the police. Now, in Victoria, Lance Olsen makes paintings so *bad* you can hardly focus your eyes, and you'd better not say "that's nice" or "I like it."

Not that Olsen isn't a superb paint technician and a good colourist. His drawings are cartoons, but he paints with great skill. He makes huge canvasses and lays it on thick. But he's a *badass* painter, full of scorn and disgust for a world gone crazy (and it has gone crazy, hasn't it?). He looks life in the eye and finds us engaged in terminal delusion. Picasso painted *Guernica* from a similar point of view. Olsen presents the new *Dance of Death* which he titles "go-go dancing in the morgue." He paints the local burghers as "Art Gallery (sycophants)." Fear and loathing act as extraordinary stimulæ. Olsen paints from his heart, his vision untempered with market appeal. The results are so overstimulating as to render this critic numb.

I wouldn't want to own one but I can't forget the full tilt shock. These paintings make the rest of Victoria's art world look like a bunch of pansies.

And what about Torresdahl's ceramic items? Craftsmanship so good as to be invisible, subjects too weird to contemplate. Bludgeons and burnt-out tailpipes— too weird. Better say nothing.

So, thrill seekers, hurry on down. There's a kick, like bad drugs, William Bur-

Victoria Savoyard Society presents

**TRIAL BY JURY**

by  
Gilbert & Sullivan

FOR

**SYNTONIC EXERCISE**

*The Bertherat method*

umbers.

the Crystal Palace, Great Exhibition of 1851 is recycled from old buildings. The other is by top local joiners. It is assembled with a proportion which is a charming essay in. Of course, the studio and sun-son says, "chiefly it's

reflections. The extra light, views and solar heat collecting are added treats. The fantasy evident in her whimsy is an important part of all Davidson's designs, expanding the actual size of a space by inviting the imagination to wander.

Davidson can treat architecture as a plaything because she is not an architect. Like many Victorians, she is "an amateur everything." A former student of St. Margaret's and Norfolk House, she later worked as a computer consultant, then ran

### at the Skatorium

**G**AINING SPEED fast on a step-over turn, around the far end and into a pack of people who melt out of the way like Mexican traffic. One foot forward, one foot back, into the splits, carving up the next turn on the hum of rubber wheels; past the strobe lights, the DJ, the column speakers and off into the dim echoing vastness of the Oak Bay Curling Rink. The ice is out, the Skatorium is open again for a new season.

By opening time the line-up stretched way out of sight, kids buzzing with after dinner energy and waiting to lay down 75¢ (\$1.60 adults) to join the fray. Through the glass they could see the whole teenage cosmos orbiting on well-oiled wheels. Guys with beer shirts and first moustaches. Girls with nail polish and stretch jeans. "Hey, how'd you get your skin so clear?" "See that chick in blue— she's a real floozy!" "Donny Osmond? I hope nobody saw you. How gross!"

On the floor everyone is socializing at speed, dodging and dipping and never tripping. The music becomes cacophony in the echo and shrieks of the adolescent melee. Hunky guys, "couples-only" numbers, little brothers, chips and a pop machine— it's all here.


The activity is healthy, cheap, and overwhelmingly popular— there must have been 300 rollerskaters there. And the same is true of all the activities at the Oak Bay Rec Centre (385-SWIM). The joint is jumping, a three-ring circus for the "me" generation. Do it in the water, do it on the ice, or roll around with the teenagers. At the Skatorium there are skate rentals (60¢), roller skating lessons, exercises on wheels and age-group sessions.

In other parts of the region, the Juan de Fuca Rec Centre (478-8384) starts rolling April 12, the Panorama Leisure Centre (656-7271) on May 1, and possibly the G.H. Parkes Arena as well (388-6664), though

they haven't yet decided whether or not to offer roller skating. Tie on some skates, and launch yourself into the swarm. No experience necessary.

— Robert Amos

**IN ONE EAR...**



Anyone filling out an income tax form and wishing to include the on-and-off Renters' Tax Credit or Personal Income Tax Credit can pick up the necessary forms from either the Esquimalt (2776 Millstream Rd., 474-1833) or Victoria (1020 Blanshard, 387-3079 before noon, 382-9898 after noon) NDP constituency offices. Each allows a rebate of up to \$150, either for renters or people with little or no taxable income, usually senior citizens. Finance Minister Hugh Curtis announced in November that both have been cancelled and income tax forms have been changed accordingly, but the necessary amendments to the B.C. Income Tax Act haven't been passed, so the NDP is encouraging people to apply for the credits assuming they're still in effect. They've mailed out 3,500 forms to date. Applicants remain eligible

for four years even if completed the forms by the tax deadline.

Victoria city council the heritage compensation second attempt to come law this year—is up for mark Society's general 12. The public is invited which starts at 7:30 pm New Horizons Hall, 2 Lupien, 388-9677, information.

Gardening fever—but Dick Keepence, of horticulture, wishes people his office about plots. The numbers to those of site committee Kathreen Fischer for Garden (477-5381), Bar Kent Road Garden (388-9920), and Alice Bryan Road Garden (383-5063).

No news is good news phony treasurer Jim there would be as much phony finances this year April, when the symphony starting at a \$200,000 pile. The reason for the money is now much news with only \$35,000 ne

891



607  
sessed by the memory of a body falling from a church tower, a memory dramatically replayed in the final scene... sound familiar? The script is meticulous in laying out its ironies and interconnections, but the (rather obvious and predictable) conclusion doesn't have the moral resonance one would expect from Hitchcock himself.

*Still of the Night* is expert, impeccable movie-making. Nestor Almendros provides lovely low-key photography, Roy Scheider nicely underplays the mildly obsessive hero, and Meryl Streep gives her usual mannered, irritating performance. Halfway through, the parting in her hair shifts from left to right: in such a meticulous movie, this *must* be symbolic.

—Stephen Scobie

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## A R T

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### The world of imagination

FIFTY PAINTINGS  
Stephen Lowe Gallery  
(637 Humboldt St., at the Empress)  
Until January 31, 384-3912

I've always had a bit of a chip on my shoulder about the Stephen Lowe Gallery. Stephen Lowe arrived from Kwang Tung and Hong Kong and painted in Victoria from 1956 until his untimely death in 1976. His many students and admirers in Victoria held him in reverence and his



wife has kept his memory bright at the Stephen Lowe Gallery. Perhaps its unqualified success was what brought out my antagonism.

Stephen Lowe painted in the style of the Lingham School. That is a Hong Kong style of painting mixing florid colours, virtuoso brushwork, and sentimental subject matter into an almost irresistible potpourri. These paintings show little of the quiet reserve of the venerable and ancient works of Chinese painting now on show at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Those older works are filled with a quiet profundity noticeable only to the connoisseur. On the contrary, Lowe's paintings are instantly accessible— to tourists and shoppers and interior decorators, to all sorts of peo-

ple. Perhaps that's why I haven't allowed myself unqualified admiration.

Though Lowe's misty mountain views gained my admiration right away, some of his subjects seemed a bit much— a one metre high eagle coming down like a B-52; an almost life size albino tiger; a white peacock in a flowering plum tree.

Yet these are strange reasons for dismissing an artist— he's loved by students and admirers, the public at all levels appreciate his work, and the subjects are sensational. In fact, I've gone back again and again. There are attractive features in this work which are unequalled in Victoria's art history. I've come to admire Lowe's work.

In the first place, some of these ink and colour paintings on paper are huge. The

#### **Snow Tiger by Stephen Lowe: conviction and something like genius**

azalea bush on show is fully two metres across, an extensive area to fill with banks of delicate, brush-drawn blossom.

Secondly, Lowe's paintings show a novel and sophisticated use of colour beyond the shades of ink. He sometimes soaked the paper with a transparent ground of unexpected hue— orange sky, green sky, pink sky. On top are glowing wet-on-wet flowers, their brightest points picked out in brilliant jabs of opaque colour. This is an unrivalled range of technique.

Finally, there is Lowe's calligraphic brush drawing. Bamboo, branch stems, and trailing vines are traditional motifs which Lowe excelled at. His technique is

110



Baiitsu's Hawk in Snow is one of the most prized works.

C. 1060 + 1110  
23/1/84 Japanese exhibit latest gem at Victoria gallery Mc...  
**A treasury of Oriental art**

BY ROBERT AMOS

VICTORIA — The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria has been assiduous in cultivating its collection of Asian Art. Beginning in 1951, treasures from the East poured in to this gallery. Old colonials who had settled on Vancouver Island brought carvings which left Tibet with the Youngusband Expedition, and art taken from China during the Second Opium War and the Boxer Rebellion. Paintings, pots and costumes were brought in the luggage of missionaries and businessmen, and all have found their way into the storerooms. For years the extensive Fred and Isabel Pollard Collection of Japanese Art has been built up at the gallery, and continues to grow. All of this attracts more gifts, scholars of renown and, increasingly, the public.

The ferry trip to Victoria is not everyone's cup of tea, but curator Barry Till has repeatedly made it worthwhile. Last year, Till gathered what he considered "all the good Chinese paintings in Canada" for a show in Victoria, borrowing from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum (where he had worked previously), Ottawa's National Gallery and the few good private collections in this country.

For that show, Till was able to borrow the oldest paintings in Canada for their first public viewing. Painted in about 670, these had been sealed in China's celebrated Dun Huang Caves on the Silk Road for 800 years until they were brought to Sir Aurel Stein early in this century. The paintings later came to Canada with the missionary James Menzies and were lent to the Victoria exhibit by his son, Arthur, a former ambassador to China. Arthur Menzies has since donated these and other works to the Victoria Gallery.

This year Till has produced exhibitions devoted to cloisonné, Chinese porcelain of the High Qing

period and Japanese ceramics, to name just a few. But the big event is Japanese Paintings in Canadian Collections, on show until Feb. 12. There are almost 100 paintings, including the huge thirteenth-century Amida Buddha in the Western Paradise on loan from ROM, and Victoria's own A-ji-kan, a work from the fourteenth century which Till says is one of the best Japanese paintings in North America. It is a meditational painting of the Sanskrit letter "A", exquisitely done in soft colors and cut gold. If it were in Japan, it would be considered a national treasure.

Ink paintings in scroll format predominate. These are not the austere and mysterious Chinese landscapes, but something more dazzling. "Ink painting started with the Chinese," Till explains, "but I think the Japanese took it to a higher level."

But didn't the Chinese reach the pinnacle of ink painting? "They had it for a while in the Sung period, but then you look at some of these *sumi* (ink) pieces by the Japanese, and they're fantastic. I think in some ways, by the Muromachi period (c. 1400), the Japanese had surpassed the Chinese. Muromachi is a period in which the Japanese devoted their art almost exclusively to ink painting."

And how about those Japanese screens teeming with life and color on gold leaf backgrounds? "The Chinese never had anything as beautiful as that. Apparently, in big palaces and villas, gold panels and screens would reflect the light, and brighten up the dark halls. You could silhouette a tree or a figure on this glowing background. It was totally a Japanese innovation and the screens are magnificent."

Best represented in the Victoria collection of Japanese paintings is the style called *nanga*, work of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Japanese who were aficionados of the Chinese taste. "The Japanese have borrowed things from the



Gibbons, attributed to Shugetsu, done in ink on paper.

Chinese and Koreans," says Till, "but they have a habit of changing them into something totally Japanese." The fourteenth-century Chinese master Huang Gongwang painted in the old Chinese tradition, one of squared-off boulders drawn with the understated dynamism of great but withheld energy. A work by nineteenth-century Japanese artist Nakabayashi Chikuto is inscribed as "in the manner of Huang Gongwang." But the Japanese artist has transformed the restrained lines into scintillating brushstrokes. The quiet and contemplative tradition of the Chinese scholar has become a lyrical, emotive communication in virile and flamboyant Japan.

One of the most prized paintings in Victoria's collection is Hawk in Snow, by Yamamoto Baiitsu, painted in 1846 when the artist was 63. A hawk in search of prey perches on a snow-laden branch, poised for instant flight. The stark diagonal of the branch is traced with a wet brush, punctuated by energetic daubs like ink explosions. Dwarf bamboo hangs out from the cliff face, cold and still and charged

with spatial tension. The background of the scroll, bathed in light ink, creates the effect of a snow-grey sky, the snow itself cleverly reserved on the blank white silk.

Two paintings are on loan from Banff's Peter Whyte Gallery. These came to Banff years ago, brought by Whyte's wife from Boston, an important part in the clipper trade with Japan. They were part of a flood of material which arrived shortly after Japan was opened to the West. Also included in the show are treasures from the Finlayson Collection. The Finlayson family donated their choice group of Chinese paintings to the National Gallery of Canada in the 1960s, and Victoria has been chosen as the repository for the Japanese scrolls.

Two years ago, Britain's prestigious Apollo Magazine published two articles about the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria's Oriental collections. The Japanese collection was said to be "the most important in Canada." Since that time, gifts and scholarship have continued to arrive. The addition of precious loans from other galleries makes this exhibition a wonder to behold.

# Exclusive, outstanding Japanese art

MAJOR JAPANESE PAINTINGS IN CANADIAN COLLECTIONS  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria  
1040 Moss St., 384-4101  
Dec. 9-Feb. 12, 1984

**T**HE ART Gallery of Greater Victoria has been assiduous in cultivating its collection of Asian Art. Beginning in 1951, treasures from the East poured in to this gallery.

Old colonials who had settled on the balmy shores of southern Vancouver Island brought carvings which left Tibet with the Poughusband Expedition, and art taken from China during the second Opium War and the Boxer Rebellion. Paintings and pots

and costumes were brought back in the luggage of missionaries or businessmen and have all eventually found their way into the storerooms. For years the extensive Fred and Isabel Pollard Collection of Japanese Art has been built up at the gallery and continues to grow. All this has formed a centre of gravity which attracts more gifts, scholars of renown, and increasingly, the public.

An afternoon in Rockland is not everyone's cup of tea, but gallery curator Barry Till has repeatedly made it worthwhile. Last year Till gathered up what he considered "all the good Chinese paintings in Canada" for a show in Victoria, borrowing from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum (where he worked previously), Ottawa's National Gallery and the few good private collections in this country. Scholars from around the world took notice.

For that show, Till was able to borrow the oldest paintings in Canada for their first public viewing. Painted in about 670 A.D., these had been sealed in China's celebrated Dun Huang Caves on the Silk Road for 800 years until they were brought to Sir Aurel Stein early in this century. The paintings were later brought to Canada by the missionary James Menzies and loaned to the Victoria exhibit by his son, Arthur, a former Ambassador to China. Arthur Menzies has since donated these and other works to the gallery in Victoria.

This year Till has produced exhibitions devoted to cloisonné, Chinese porcelain of the High Qing period and Japanese ceramics, to name just a few. But the big event is *Major Japanese Paintings in Canadian Collections*, on show only in Victoria, from December 8 until February 12, 1984. Almost 100 paintings will delight the viewer, including the huge 13th century *Amida Buddha in the Western Paradise* on loan from The Royal Ontario Museum, and Victoria's own *A-ji-kan*, a work from the 14th century which Till says is one of the best Japanese paintings in North America. It is a meditational painting of the Sanskrit letter "A", exquisitely done in soft colours and cut

gold. If it was in Japan it would be considered a national treasure.

Ink paintings in scroll format predominate. The brush traces of a supple pointed brush that can ripple and fly, sing and whisper and shock. These are not the austere and mysterious Chinese landscapes, but something much more dazzling. "Ink painting started with the Chinese" Till explains, "but I think the Japanese took it to a higher level." Didn't the Chinese reach the very pinnacle of ink painting? "They had it for a while in the Sung period, but then you look at some of these *sumi* (ink) pieces by the Japanese, and they're fantastic. I think in some ways by the Muromachi period (ca. 1400) the Japanese had surpassed the Chinese. Muromachi is a period in which the Japanese devoted their art almost exclusively to ink painting."



The Japanese collection at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria is "the most important in Canada"

And how about those Japanese screens teeming with life and colour on gold leaf

*A meditational painting of the Sanskrit letter 'A' is done in soft colours and cut gold. If it was in Japan it would be considered a national treasure.*

backgrounds? "The Chinese never had anything as beautiful as that. Apparently, in big palaces and villas gold panels and screens would reflect the light, and brighten up the dark halls. You could silhouette a tree or a figure on this glowing background. It was totally a Japanese innovation and the screens are magnificent," says Till.

Best represented in Victoria's collection of Japanese paintings is the style called *nanpa*, work of the 18th and 19th century Japanese who were aficionados of the Chinese taste. "The Japanese have borrowed things from the Chinese and Koreans," admits Till, "but they have a habit of changing them into something totally Japanese." The 14th century Chinese master Huang Gongwang painted in the old Chinese tradition, one of squared-off boulders painted with the understated dynamism of great but withheld energy. In the Victoria show, a work by 19th century Japanese artist, Nakabayashi Chikuto, is inscribed "in the manner of Huang Gongwang." But the Japanese artist has transformed the restrained lines into scintillating brushstrokes. The quietist and contemplative tradition of the Chinese scholar has become a lyrical, emotive communication in virile and flamboyant Japan.

One of the most prized paintings in Victoria's collection is *Hawk in Snow* by Yamamoto Baiitsu, painted in 1846 when the artist was 63 years old. A hawk in search of prey perches on a snow-laden branch, poised for instant flight. The stark diagonal of the branch is traced with a wet brush, punctuated by energetic daubs like ink explosions. Dwarf bamboo hangs out from the cliff face, cold and still and charged with spatial tension. The background of the scroll, bathed in light ink, creates the effect of a snow-grey sky, the snow itself cleverly reserved on the blank white silk. Paintings like this are a joy for the casual viewer as well as the scholar.

Two paintings are on loan from Banff's Peter Whyte Gallery. These came to Banff years ago, brought by Peter Whyte's wife from Boston, an important port in the clipper trade with Japan. They were part of a flood of material which arrived shortly after Japan was opened to the West. Also included in the show are treasures from the Finlayson Collection. The Finlaysons donated their very choice group of Chinese paintings to the National Gallery of Canada in the 1960s and Victoria has been chosen as the repository for their Japanese scrolls. There is a collection of particularly high quality.

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Now that Till has surveyed the nation's resources, his biggest problem is to hang the work in a way that's not too crowded. Japanese aesthetics might allow only one picture room, but that's not practical. Given the chance to see such a wealth of beauty, view-



**Japanese art: transforming restrained lines into scintillating brushstrokes**

ers will certainly forgive the gallery staff for hanging it all rather close together. Part of the approach will be to place fathers and sons, teachers and pupils side by side.

Two years ago Britain's prestigious *Apollo Magazine* published two articles about the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria's oriental collections, giving just a hint of the riches. The Japanese collection was said to be "the most important in Canada." Since that time gifts and scholarships have continued to arrive. The addition of precious loans from other galleries makes this exhibition of major Japanese paintings a wonder to behold.

—Robert Amos



## THE ARTS/TRAVEL & LEISURE

### IMAGES OF THE LAND CANADIAN BLOCK PRINTS 1919-1945

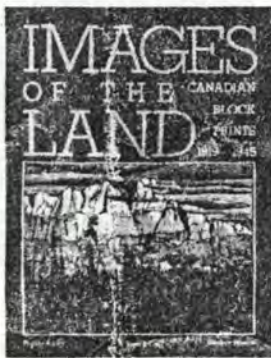
By Patricia Ainslie, Glenbow Museum of Calgary, 168 pages, \$18.95

Original oil paintings by famous Canadian artists are not going for a song any more, but the Canadian block print is a field in which discoveries are yet to be made.

The term "block print" encompasses prints on paper from hand-carved wooden blocks, linoleum blocks, and wood engravings. After World War I, photoengraving had made hand-cut blocks obsolete from a commercial point of view. But obsolescence released the form to artists, who adapted it as a serious means of expression.

In Canada, between 1919 and 1945, a great many artists tried their hands at this "democratic" art form to make inexpensive limited editions, greeting cards, or book illustrations. *Canadian Block Prints*, a fully illustrated catalogue from Calgary's Glenbow Museum, is an eye opener to this little-known art.

The most famous practitioner of the block print is Winnipeg's W.J. Phillips (1884-1963). Phillips created 156 colored prints — mostly Canadian scenes — and 70 wood engravings, which owe their inspiration to art nouveau, British watercolors, and the Japanese woodblock print. A few years back, his prints could be had for less than \$50 at swap meets and auction sales, but with the recognition retrospective



shows and catalogues have brought him, the price has increased tremendously, now ranging from \$500 to \$5,000.

Phillips is one of a very few Canadians who dedicated themselves to print-making, yet most artists have produced the occasional print. The Glenbow catalogue lists 63 of these, from the well-known (A.J. Casson, LeMoine FitzGerald, Jack Shadbolt) to the more obscure (Cliff Robinson, Leonard Hutchinson, Viola Depew). Samples of their work are included, as well as biographies, expositions on technique, and an overview of Canadian art from this unique standpoint.

These prints lend themselves to perfect reproduction, and this handsome picture book contains hundreds of illustrations, many in color. Patricia Ainslie's text is clearly written and includes much original research. For those who haunt old bookshops or the auction-hunting art collector, *Canadian Block Prints* is required reading.

The book accompanies an exhibition, which will be on display at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto (April 13-May 19, 1985) and then travels to Winnipeg (June 8-July 21) and Victoria (Aug. 8-Sept. 15).

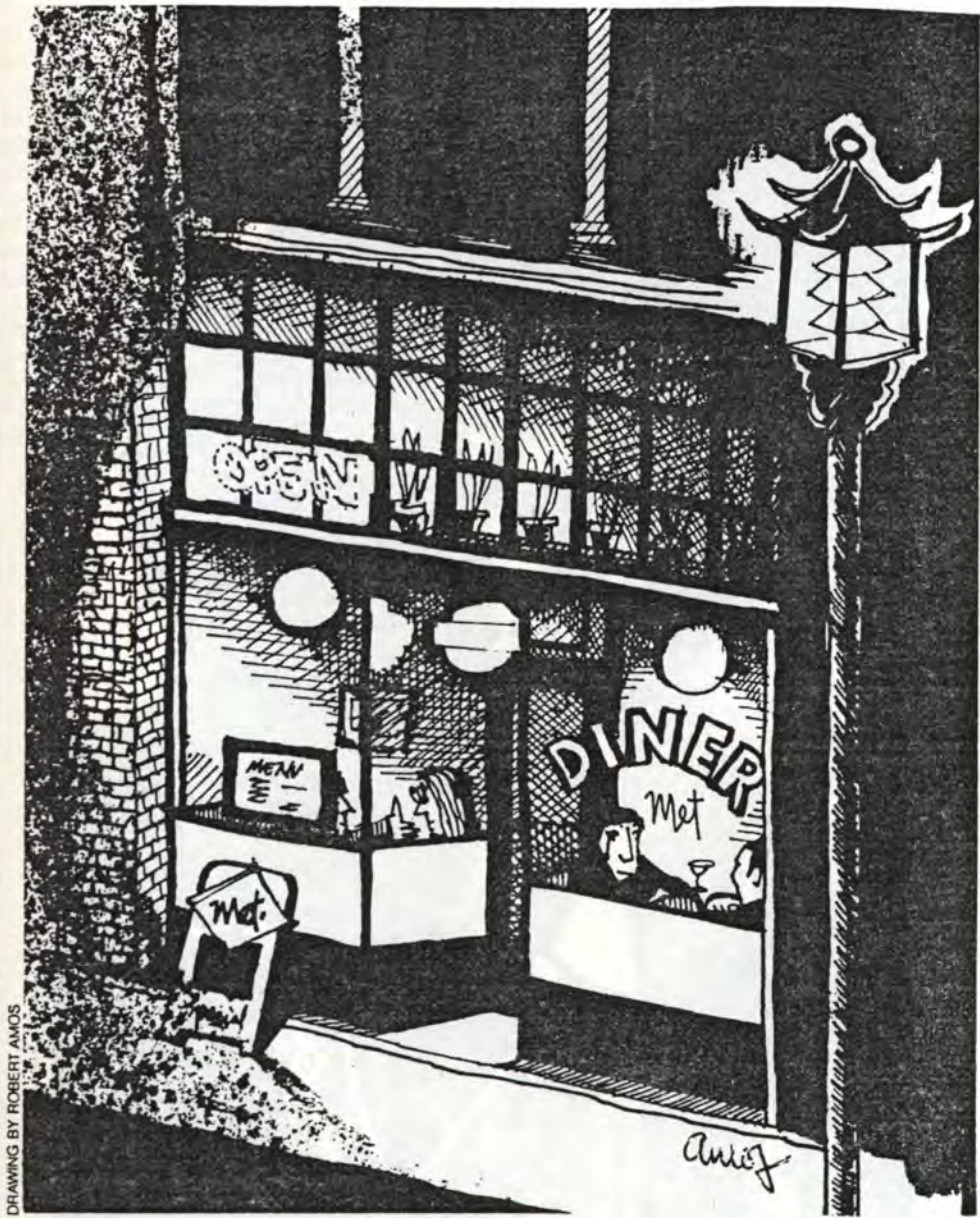
— Robert Amos

*Robert Amos is an art writer living in Victoria.*

Watt's black and glows? Vancouver's John Clair Watt (Open Space, 510 Fort St. 383-8833 until July 18) brings an unemotional yet deeply committed sensibility to his glow-in-the-dark sculptures. Watt has blacked out Open Space and installed more than a dozen engaging constructions. A suspended slab of etched glass glows under the illumination of a tiny red laser. On the wall a shining star is caught in a chromed net of chains, craft and thought joined in poetry. "Borderline" is the name of an installation, a transparent picket fence glowing with rim-light and a vinyl seagull rising above it. Engaging, thought provoking—a good show. (R.A.)

and jencno beach.  
 Skywalk tulips: Eaton's downtown skywalk is once again the scene of the Stained Glass Exhibition (until August 25) and while the work is hardly adventurous this year, perhaps that's how this decorative art should be. Flowers in glass predominate. Paul Wullum's tulip is a lovely design, and well made, as are all the pieces. Imke Pearson's abstracts would complement a stylish decor—strong yet not too outspoken. The most imaginative is the work of Markian Olynyk. Not only does Olynyk solder together colours and plain glass, but sand-blasted grids are called into play to make inventive, mysterious windows. (R.A.)

Metropolitan Diner, 1715 Government

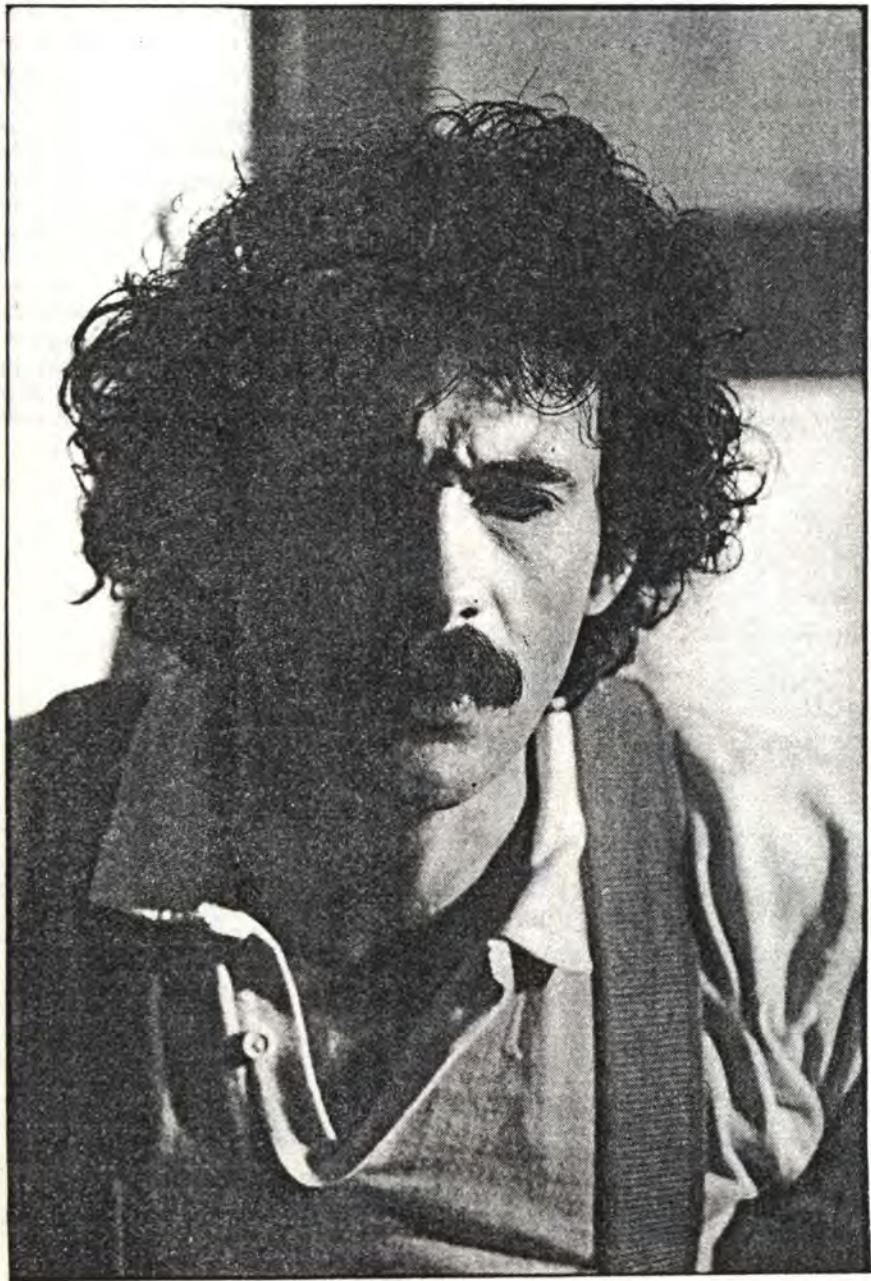
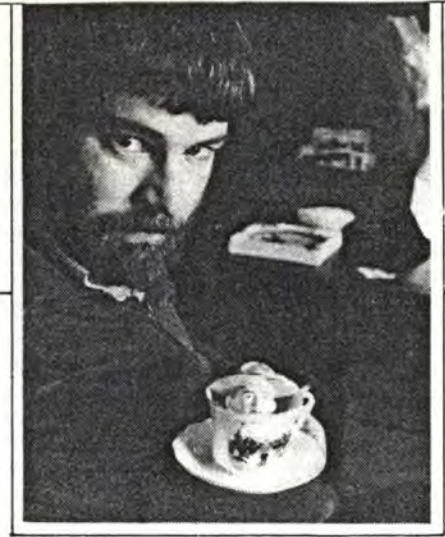


DRAWING BY ROBERT AMOS

# Arts

## The Spirit of Luis Ituarte

A. Markworthy



LUIS ITUARTE

In the summer of 1982 Luis Ituarte was working on a mural on the causeway in the harbour. He titled his abstract "The Spirit of Helen Anderson." I asked him why. "Her paintings don't appeal to me, but her spirit is fantastic — she's always there, promoting and encouraging the artistic culture of Victoria," he said. And he's the sort of artist who would notice.

Up in his spectacular roof-top studio at 17½ Fan Tan Alley, there is a scrap book which traces Ituarte's early history. He's forty years old now but it seems he was a law student in Mexico whose political fervour wouldn't let him take it easy. As an artist, a maker and doer, he had to express himself. On coming to Canada this expression took the form of highly successful landscapes reproduced by screen printing, but Luis had the good sense to let someone else print his original paper-cut designs. He was busy with more creative endeavours.

Just a glance at the output from his skylit, cactus-filled studio will give you some idea that we are dealing with a man of breadth, scope and vision. I first noticed the decor of La Hacienda Restaurant in Market Square — his design. Following this, his studio show of 1982 included work in many media, but all were executed in red, blue and green. These "tv" colours were the hallmark of this daring colour experiment, one which he made use of in the sculptures which soon followed.

Ituarte's wire sculptures, hatrack-sized, first appeared like shimmering I.U.D.'s at the third annual Erotic Art Show in Chinatown. Then a giant version of these springly steel "drawings in space" was created as the centrepiece of the original AlleyArt project, which transformed Waddington Alley (behind the Salvation Army Building between Yates and Johnson Streets) and led to the Blue Fence Painting project (Fort and Quadra) and the Causeway Paint-In, all of which were graced by the Ituarte touch.

"In Mexico you die every day when you go to sleep," Ituarte says, "the next day when you awake, it's a whole different thing."

Each day is new. Each day must count. This man is a proponent of the transforming power of art on a city, a legacy which Victoria owes to his Mexican heritage. Not only has Luis provided a visual oasis for the casual passer-by, but he has sought to bring artists together to support one another and cooperate in big projects. His studio has been a meeting place and workshop for many. Norval Morrisseau made his first lino-cuts there, and Ituarte's efforts on behalf of that singular and powerful artist were extensive.

Last October Ituarte planned a project vast in scale, involving a suite of outdoor sculptures, a gallery full of wall pieces, large installations, dances and costumes; he even covered Fan Tan Alley with a roof. Originally scheduled as a Hallowe'en party at the Crystal Gardens, the entire opus moved to Chinatown when the Crystal Garden Gallery folded in August. His huge triangular sculptures were for three weeks a striking addition to Fisgard Street, notable even to drivers going by. And the transformation of Fan Tan Alley into a

playful and intriguing environment was an adventurous (though non-commercial) success. Luis used huge coloured canvasses, garnished with string, tinsel and tiddlywinks to add a festive touch to a grimy urban space. At the time the success of his work seemed to stand or fall with the street party he

*"... I think the public really understands my work ..."*

added to the plans. But it sticks in the memory as a high point of recent urban art.

Ituarte's work is not obscure. "I think the public really understands my work, in a tacit way. They know I'm doing something positive," he says.

He continues to produce large and

innovative projects using the entire city as a canvas. This year he created a banner which unified the Peace March. And for the Harbour Festival he created and presented a "kite tail" 1000 yards long, enough to circle the inner harbour when passed through the hands of thousands of marchers. Yet his work can be as intimate as the greeting cards he manufactures, and as discrete as the sand garden which he designed for the current window display at Fan Tan Gallery (541 Fisgard St.).

The spirit of Luis Ituarte enriches our city. He gives his visual grace notes as a gift — to the City Hall exhibits, The Bank Art Show, to streets, alleys and fences. If anyone wants to give a prize to an artist who has enriched the cultural life of Victoria, I suggest Ituarte. His wide range of activities and high public profile ensures that he offends quite a few narrow-minded types. But his work will always address itself to society.

"Society is a huge animal, an organism of many cells. Art becomes relevant only when it is part of this animal. The function of art relates to society. Without society it has no meaning." So says this man who singlehandedly is changing the culture of our society here in Victoria.

# ART

## Those profane expressionists

JIM SWAIN, X-Changes Gallery, 981 North Park St., until April 30

MICHAEL LEWIS, Ideas— Sacred and Profane, 1310 Government St., indefinitely

HERBERT SIEBNER, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1040 Moss St., 384-4101, until June 17

**I**N THE art gallery auction last February, there was a painting hanging in a corner, low down and out of the way, entitled "Alcohol Can Take Me There." It was painted in a very "brute" style— childish, and without the usual niceties of technique. It showed a person at a table, drunk. There, at the gallery, amid all the pretty paintings, it was as if some paint-smearing artist had run in and yelled "yer all a bunch of well-heeled winos!" In place of a signature, in the lower right was written "WORDS".

WORDS is the signature of artist Jim Swain, and not long ago X-Changes Gallery (981 North Park Street) was jumping with his *Recent Words*. In his statement, Swain explained how modern art occurred when art and beauty were separated. He speaks without the usual false sentiment of prettiness. Even so, his viewers weren't offended by the messages of absurdity and inter-human affairs. He sold 18 paintings.

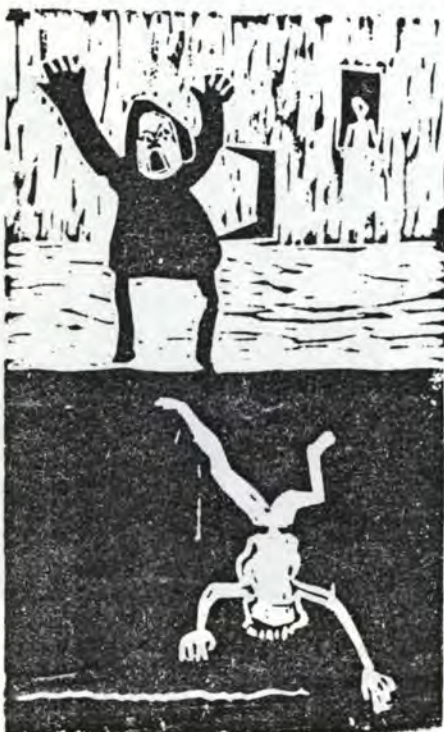
Former X-Changes members and others have opened a new gallery with the rather daunting title *Ideas: Sacred and Profane* (1310 Government Street). Michael Lewis' work was on show there recently. Lewis is a totally bald young man with a ring in his ear. His oil paintings are cut up like comic books, loaded with words, characters and settings in cubist perspective. Sex, potential violence and murder movies are all mixed up with Victoria scenes— Little Sammy's Restaurant is the centrepiece of one expressionist drama of hookers on Government between Yates and Johnson, near the loca-

tion of the gallery. The debt to the German expressionism of George Grosz is obvious. Here is a startlingly different view of our town.

Unlike the received visual impressions which are the substance of impressionism, expressionism is concerned with the inner workings of man, what is felt rather than seen. "The expressionist is also an exhibitionist," says Herbert Siebner, who is, by nature, both.

Growing up in wartime Germany and moving to straight-laced Victoria in 1953 provided him with a foil of repression from which his irrepressible spirit breaks free. Centaurs and nudes gambolling in a vacant landscape, images of lust, licence, and revelry are a big part of his very consistent *oeuvre*. Yet, more relevant to 1984 are his angst-ridden scenes— suicide in the canal, premature burial, or the giant head of Mussolini.

Siebner's blue and orange colour schemes, his mix of organic texture and hard edge, and his passion for colossal shapes give a certain sameness to his work. But make no mistake— he is a giant among Victoria artists. Not for him the discrete calligraphic fields of Jack Wise or Mary Ar-





KARL SPREITZ PHOTO

Herbert Siebner (above) and angst-ridden "Suicide" (right): "The expressionist is also an exhibitionist"



Any Siebner show is bound to be full of powerful paintings in which the primitive spirit is expressed in accomplished technique. Since "retrospectives" of his work have occurred regularly in Victoria since 1955, one always hopes for a critical selection of his work which will reveal him as a vital contemporary rather than an historical figure suitable for psychoanalysis.

—Robert Amos

nold. This man's symbols— belle bella, the flying man —are, literally, made concrete in his magnificent *sgraffito*, incised cement paintings.

Siebner is quite candid about the anecdotal details of each work, and his own comments are vastly more illuminating than the diffuse para-psychology, "the antithesis of I and Not-I," which curator Nicholas Tuele propounds. Some stern, strong paintings are included in this show,

**Siebner's "The Meeting": symbols literally made concrete**

but these are swamped by dozens of images of nudes on the beach, apparently chosen because they depict two figures— to go with the Duality theme of the show.

And though the catalogue promises to tell us how Siebner translates expressionism to Victoria, it does no such thing.



Serota: scenes from a family album

## The joy of being human

PHYLLIS SEROTA: A YEAR'S WORK  
Winchester Galleries, 1545 Fort,  
until June 16 (595-2777)

**P**HYLLIS SEROTA'S show is a great favourite with the public. The comments in the visitors' book are effusive, speaking of love and thanks. And rightly so, for this artist paints love and trust, the pain of growing and the joy of being human. She does this in a way which raises the particulars of her life to a universal level. These paintings, like a deck of tarot cards, present the big symbols: mother and father, religion, dreams and death. Yet they are presented in a way which is friendly

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and familiar. By this means she helps us add meaning to our own lives.

People in relation to one another is her constant theme. These are not life-like portraits, but arrangements of people interacting. This year's show is a family album. One painting portrays her mother and father. Like characters out of a John Steinbeck novel, with the stalwart love of young parents, they face the future. In *The Golden Dream*, a young man throws his arms heavenward, caught in rapture in a hillside. Through three paintings, Aunt Molly dances in ecstasy at a bar mitzvah. The family circle claps and laughs and cheers us on. Finally, Serota has painted young and old people walking forward together, inexorably proceeding through life. This painting is entitled "We go on."

"I want to paint love and trust, youth and age," says Serota. "I feel obliged to speak not only of the joys, but also of the sorrows; how difficult and heroic our lives really are, and to celebrate that bravery."

It has been a long road which brought the artist to this apparently simple purpose. In Chicago, as a wife and mother in her 20s, she says "we painted still life— plastic fruit arranged on a cloth. I painted hundreds." Later, she studied painting at Malaspina College and at UVic. But it was an afternoon she spent with Max Bates that set her on her path: "He was so positive," she says, not at all the cynic one might expect.

Beyond the formal training, she underwent art therapy for four years. Though the thousands of paintings she made were not beautiful, she became a better painter. Moreover, she learned to "go inside herself" for the subjects, to her dreams and memories and strong inner visions.

It's not just her subjects that elicit the response, for everyone remarks on the colours, bold and sensual. Theatre lighting gave her the idea, and Serota studied colour schemes freed from "realism". She attributes her success to a subsequent year's work with the colour wheel. Thus the richly graduated purples of Aunt Molly's dress are set against a turquoise ground and her outstretched hand in front of a golden table strikes the eye like a gong.

These facts are enough to explain Serota's appeal, but there is more. Figures float in tilted, curving compositions reminiscent of Chagall. With the confidence of a consummate artist she can directly create a face or form without laboured detail. Phyllis Serota has something to say and the means to say it. That combination is rare, and very satisfying.

—Robert Amos

# ART

## The gold rush is on again

**W**HEN THE B.C. Provincial Museum was built in 1967 the building code allowed asbestos to be bonded to structural steel as a fire retardant. In time this material breaks up, and by the mid 1970s the curatorial staff began to notice its dangerous presence in the form of a white dust building up on their desks.

These sensitive curators soon became well-read in the literature on the health hazards presented by the tiny, carcinogenic fibres. By 1976 a workers' safety committee had been formed and called a walkout to force the issue. Management then took steps to rid the curatorial tower, floor by floor, of the deadly dust.

The danger to the public has always been slight, but for the staff working behind the scenes in the exhibitions building the risk was present and cumulative. A couple of years ago the building's owner, British Columbia Building Corporation, closed the second floor natural history displays and got rid of the asbestos. This past year, the third floor has been closed since October. By night, eight men have entered an air lock into the attic, donned "space suits" and spent the hours of darkness chiselling and scraping the noxious stuff off every strut and girder, under the roof and behind the displays. Every morning, for two hours, the air in the museum was monitored before being pronounced safe for the public to breathe. Now the project is complete, right on schedule at a cost of \$1.6 million. (Just as this one is finished, the Gorge Road Hospital embarks on a \$200,000 project to replace its asbestos-sprayed ceilings.)

While the third floor was closed, a sprinkler system was discreetly hidden throughout—inside Captain Vancouver's ship *Dis-*

*covery*, among the rocks in the mine shaft, and between the planks of the Indian longhouse. A few new exhibits were added, in particular in the Gold Rush area, and a thorough cleaning was undertaken, not only of the asbestos but of the general grime. After all, the museum has had more than a million visitors every year since 1972, and in the summer 20,000 people a day file past the masks and the mammoth.

Even jaded locals are pleasantly surprised to rediscover the charm and illusion of the half-scale turn-of-the-century cobblestone street. The new collection of argillite is in a jewel-like setting and well worth prolonged study. And the renowned Legacy show, an exhibit of contemporary Northwest Coast Art in the continuing tradition, will be on display throughout the summer.

It's going to be a while before we see Jean Andre's Undersea World show there—it seems the submersible section is causing traffic problems. But the museum has no lack of visitors. You can breathe freely now. Come again, come often—it's open every day, and it's free.

—Robert Amos

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**Kerry Joe Kelly's back!** Here's an artist who turned aside the cheap wine and old culture of Portugal to come back to the Pacific Southwest. Kelly's hair is a bit greyer, his beard and ponytail are gone, but he's the same fellow. A native of Victoria, Kelly made a solid reputation in the early 1970s with his stained-glass, most notably at Stewart's Restaurant (now Rick's Cafe) and the Department of Tourism Offices on Wharf Street.

Of course he's known for more than "window-dressing." The original artist's studio in Chinatown was his, and conceptual art, ceramics, silk screen editions and erotic drawings poured forth from it up to the time of his marriage and departure for Europe with his wife Diane.

Kelly says in Portugal the artists were well supported by "old money" before the communist revolution of 1974. But when he and Diane set up there in 1980, the glass factories which he had gone to visit were mostly in the hands of the workers. With the engineers and directors long gone, they were going out of business fast. So Kelly concentrated on printmaking and a few domestic glass commissions. And Diane showed a natural talent for operating well-attended contemporary art galleries for the four years of their stay.

Now that he's back, Kelly is at work on etched and laminated glass pieces, working out his new techniques with Seattle's Fremont Glass Co. We're glad to have him back.

**Those who dally on Dallas Road** have perhaps seen an artist at his easel, silhouetted on a headland against the Olympics. It's Carl Coger in that classic pose, preparing pictures for what should be a very appealing show entitled "Trees of Dallas Road."

These days cafes are a very popular venue for art and Coger's "Pastels and Pastries" have been seen at Black Forest Pastries for some time. "Trees" is an all new show at the same location, leading the viewer along

**Black and white and light all-over:** In the newly-lit galleries of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (1040 Moss St., 384-4101), viewers can still catch Mary Arnold's photograms—photographs made without a camera—until May 13.

They don't look much like photographs. Large sheets of light-sensitive paper are her canvases, and light is her paint. The papers are exposed, bit by bit, to all kinds of light—daylight, burning matches, sparklers and even a little night light. All manner of transparent films interfere to alter the light impressions—sheets of textured glass, water, cellophane and so on. Scratches and scribbles, cut-outs and collage are called into play to create big and surprisingly luminous images in black and white. These photograms don't represent anything; they don't illustrate or mean anything. Yet there they are, confident in scale, joyous in execution and full of invention. This is engaging modern work by one of our best young artists, art that would make the grade anywhere.

-R.A.



DRAWING BY ROBERT AMOS

The Oak Bay Cinema on Oak Bay Avenue

Ian's Cafe: great burgers, across from the Royal Jubilee Hospital



# ART

## Some parting thoughts

GRAVITY WINS AGAIN, by Mary Lynn Ogilvie, X-Changes Gallery, 981 North Park Street, to Mar. 11.

THE FIRST EXHIBITION OF THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF MARINE ARTISTS, Maritime Museum, Bastion Square, to Mar. 13.

RECONSTITUTED ELEMENTS, Open Space, 510 Fort Street, 383-8833, until Mar. 24.

**X**-CHANGES IS an artists' cooperative studio located above the Canadian Linen Service on North Park Street. Small studios around the perimeter of the building enclose an L-shaped gallery in the middle. Work by the 12 X-Changes members and others is shown here, and none has been more striking, thought-provoking or more suited to the space than Mary Lynn Ogilvie's *Gravity Wins Again*.

The exhibition featured three of Ogilvie's paintings-become-sculpture. Each work took an elemental theme—gravity, wind, rain—and explored it in a generous and playful way. These new works were spacious, engaging and seemed to emerge naturally from the experience of life here in Victoria.

The marine artists' show was poorly hung, with paintings over windows and hot radiators, but the Maritime Museum is to be commended for going out of its way to house this first exhibition of the Canadian Society of Marine Artists (CSMA).

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The paintings were entirely by west coast artists, but that will surely change with time. Modelled on England's Royal Society of Marine Artists, the CSMA is an idea whose time has come and it should develop into a national institution over the next few years. It is guided by a group of thoroughly professional and well-connected artists here and in Vancouver.

For purists there were pictures of tall ships under full sail on the open sea, enshrined in heavy gold frames with engraved name plaques—Robert Macvittie's work for example. Minutely detailed photo-realism by Edward Spears deserved attention and will surely please the seaside set, whose taste for detail is well known. Victoria's own breed of top flight watercolourists were well represented—Harry Heine, Brian Travers-Smith and the remarkable Brian Johnston. Johnston can take the very essence of watercolour, that balance between accident and accuracy, and handle it with a virtuosity bordering on magic.

Over one hundred works in all were shown, and the next exhibit, scheduled for the fall of 1984, will be one to watch for. Doubtless a better location will be found.

Currently at Open Space is an exhibition of what might be called west coast funk art by four tremendously talented artists. Visting curator Daina Augaitis has gathered in the ingenious talents of four men who are inventors, not imitators.

George Sawchuck was a practising non-artist whose work was discovered by curators from all across the country who came to visit his home in Fanny Bay. Tom Nickson, a newcomer to Victoria, presents a 12-foot-high mask slathered with dark green engine grease. Buster Simpson of Seattle is a wicked and witty eco-active assembler whose crows, perched on crow-bars, are full of puns and imagination. And, at last, Jerry Pethick's sculptures have arrived locally for our enlightenment.

These works will be sent in June to the Mercer Union, Toronto's trendsetting artists' gallery. This simple fact is remarkable in that it is just about the first time Toronto has taken note of west coast culture. These are the finest exponents of an indigenous art form.

—Robert Amos

## For king and Quadra

ON SATURDAY March 17, as part of a cross-Canada tour, King Juan Carlos of Spain and his Greek wife Queen Sofia will visit Vancouver Island— Comox, Lester Pearson College and Victoria. The trip will culminate with the unveiling of a monument to Admiral Juan Francisco de la Bodega Y Quadra (identified more succinctly in government press releases as "Cuadra") in the parkette on the harbour at Belleville and Oswego Streets. The monument, a bronze bust of the 18th-century navigator, will be presented to the city by the Spanish government, and henceforth the parkette will be known as Quadra Park.

In 1775 a tiny, 36-foot ship named *Sonora* became separated from its escort on a trip up the west coast. Captain Quadra, its commander, sighted the mountains of Vancouver Island and pushed on all the way to Alaska. He claimed rights to the area for Spain but these were later usurped by British and American traders.

After years of exploration and adventure, Quadra and Capt. George Vancouver met in 1792. Together they negotiated the opening of the region. To indicate his high personal regard for Quadra, Vancouver named the site of their meeting "Quadra and Vancouver's Island."

Now, little more than place names remain to indicate the Spanish presence which opened up the Pacific Northwest. And, as J.S. Kendricks informs us, "most of the Spanish place names which appear on our maps were given later by an Hispanophile Royal Navy Captain named Richards when he was surveying the coast in HMS *Plumper*."

Kendricks is a member of the Galiano Historical and Cultural Society, a group which will be taking this opportunity to make a presentation to the King and Queen. This will take the form of a new print by Galiano Island artist Renaldo Norden, depicting the Spanish ship *Sutil* arriving at Friendly Cove in 1792. The *Sutil*, the last Spanish vessel to explore the coast, is the subject of much interest on Galiano Island, which was named after the *Sutil's* captain, Dionisio Alcala Galiano. At the moment, the islanders are preparing to build a replica of that ship as a floating museum and training vessel.

The bust of Quadra will be unveiled at Quadra Park at 3 pm, Saturday, March 17 by the King and Queen. Monarchists please take note.

—Robert Amos

# ART

## A delightful alchemy of light

TRACES OF DISCOVERY by Jerry Pethick.  
Vancouver Art Gallery (682-5621) until  
Mar. 25

THE NEW home of the Vancouver Art Gallery is at heart a rotunda, a luminous space with a heavenly classical dome high above. Visitors rise beyond Emily Carr's forest undergrowth on curving staircases and on open escalators—one is drawn up and up. This month, works by Andy Warhol and David Hockney greet viewers on the ascent, and giant striped items by Molinari and Tounsiant come to life in the wide well-lit spaces (as they never do on the pages of art magazines). The escalators carry one yet higher, to arrive with vertiginous pleasure at the top level, up near the cool splendour of the skylit dome, the source of light and very symbol of intelligence.

Here a true gallery encircles the rotunda, a final floor pushed up to the ceiling of the generous space. Ornaments and capitals of ancient architectural orders are seen close-up, out of scale in the new low rooms. But the effect lends the prestige of the ages to the most modern art. Into this hybrid atmosphere of history and light comes Jerry Pethick's exhibit *Traces of Discovery: Seurat/Lippmann and the 1909 Air Show*.

A Pethick sculpture does more than sit forlornly in a gallery. His assemblages of unlikely materials send out rainbow outriders of reflected and refracted light. Portrait busts made of light bulbs and curious lenses instantly engage the viewer, and the pure pleasure of deciphering these "traces of discovery" begins effortlessly.

This show was first seen last fall at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris. Scott Watson, curator at the Vancouver Art Gallery, described Pethick's sources and intentions for the Parisiens: "The ferment of activity in Paris at the end of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th was a moment of imaginative freedom where science was still practised by individuals and the

commerce of ideas between scientists, artists and engineers produced a vision of reality we still have not come to terms with." Somehow, with bits of shiny plastic and bathtub-caulking calligraphy, Pethick reveals the significance of the meeting of Duchamp, Léger and Brancusi at the 1909 Paris Air Show. "The moment of truth, as Pethick imagines it, was to see the propeller dematerialize into a translucent disc," explains Watson.



Pethick's sculpture "The Dynamics of Power": challenging and satisfying

In fact, Pethick's assemblages dematerialize under the gallery lights. Projected by illumination, the images rise up from the mundane materials and dance in the spaces of illusion. With him we go through the looking glass into a wonderland where his images and our memories vividly connect; the sculptures unfold their magic as each viewer sees his own shadow and reflection and movement in all those mirrors. The colours are not pigment but broken light, emerging pure and intense from prisms and glass beads, living only in our perceptions.

Pethick is 49 years old, a gap-toothed inventor most at home in the Teredo Room at the Hornby Island Pub. Though the esoteric blarney of Hegel and Wittgenstein figures in the explanation of his intentions, a Ph.D. is not essential. Even babies coo and chuckle the moment his work comes in sight. Pethick does just what interests him, in his own way, and the results are so pure and complete that the world seems to resound in sympathy.

On the cover of the splendid colour catalogue is a photo of a typical piece. A snow tire acts as a base for an enamelled washing-machine tub which in turn supports an aluminum pot studded with stone spectrafoil strips are stuck on a plate glass disc, a light bulb and shards of glass form the Eiffel tower and an umbrella. This is titled "The Dynamics of Power." It is hard to believe that these relics from the Hornby Island dump, deconstructed by ambient light, can yield an experience both challenging and satisfying. Yet hundreds who flocked to the opening found this to be so.

This is alchemy.

—Robert Amos

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### EXTREME BIAS

Why do major art exhibitions by local artists in Victoria galleries go unnoticed? For example, why has the recent one-woman exhibition by Millicent Shapiro at the Backroom Gallery gone unreviewed?

I would think that one of *Monday's* mandates would be to foster and encourage public interest in the arts of this city by reviewing all such events. A professional art critic has been long overdue and should be hired on a full

time basis by *Monday*. It is not good enough to allow just anyone to fill this important position by merely "reporting" on certain events considered worthy, reflecting either the extreme bias of the editor or the reporter, or doing so in order to fill up an empty space in the paper.

Without media coverage, art galleries will close and our artists will leave for other centres where art exhibitions are considered a valuable asset to the cultural growth and heritage of the city.

**Sandra Merino**  
182 Joseph St.

*Ed. note: Millicent Shapiro's show was reviewed in our last issue. See also James Roy's comments in the story about Miles Potter in this issue.*

### ENTHUSIASTIC AWARENESS

Robert Amos has done it again! He has thrown away all the parochialism often displayed in Victoria and has taken us to the Vancouver Art Gallery ("A delightful alchemy of light," *Art*, Feb. 24-Mar. 1).

By his "word picture," he has glided us up those open escalators to Jerry Pethick's visions of sculptured light. I get "goose bumps" with anticipation at, again, seeing those Molinari and Tousignant works and finally, to arrive, "upwardly mobile" at the level of a real high, with Pethick's work.

We have to thank Robert for his enthusiastic awareness of oriental art in the past, here in Victoria. Now, we are made aware of our good fortune in having him write as art critic for *Monday*.

Do let's hang onto him! So often our artists and writers drift away to other centres where there is more appreciation and awareness of excellence.

**Helen Andersen**  
2481 Mt. St. Michael Rd.

# ART

## We made it, George

KENT TATE and JOE AVERAGE at Open Space, 510 Fort. St., 388-8833, until Feb. 10

**T**O ITS credit, Open Space is always tossing out something unexpected these days. The effect of the Tate/Average display is very tonic. One is not daunted, and there is no need to gush—it is bracing, like vodka or some new-age after-shave.

Every window and skylight has been covered over, and all the lights replaced with blue bulbs, an effect which makes the colours of the installation jump. In the centre of the floor, a cardboard Stuka fighter plane has crash landed, nose-dived deep into the floor. A heap of white gravel spills out of the cockpit, from which a meandering path leads into a little black house—a dog house, a death house, a spirit house of a bleak modern sort. Inside, more white gravel and the vacant hum of a black and white TV turned on and covered with some sort of white scum. Nothing doing. The mood is empty—The Day After. Japanese koto music drifts through the air, the sublime ordi-

nariness of plucked strings bringing us back to the surface, like waking up out of an anaesthetic. Welcome to 1984.

The effect is art. Not commercialism, with 20 little etchings hanging in a row waiting to be purchased. Not the -isms of academe or



Work that seems without precedent: playful, pretty and dumb at once

statements of polemics. When the Reagonaut crashes and the TV set goes blank, what then? 1984.

Joe Average's oil pastel drawings are pinned to the wall to greet us when we awake after the crash. And in a marvellous, dumb way, they welcome us to 1984. Bright scribbled colours and flashcard format restrain our blanked-out brains. Joe doesn't mess around. Each picture is obvious, and labelled as well. Cat. Dogfish. Actor. In addition the name "Joe Average" and the date "1984" are written large, right on the front. No shadings or obscurity—no time for that now. Remarkably, this work seems without precedent, without sophistication, almost without ego. This simplicity is compelling and at the same time playful, pretty, dumb. This show will be remembered later as an authentic expression of the times, more than anything else we've seen. If there's anyone around to remember, that is.

—Robert Amos



# ART

Karen Harris and her mural at Sooke Harbour House: beautiful design

## Mosaic passion

KAREN HARRIS at the Sooke Harbour House, 1528 Whiffin Spit, 642-3421

“ON EVERY beach there are special different kinds of stones. Up at Sombrio are stones that are rust coloured, a bright, bright orange. On Whiffin Spit there are some lovely purple stones, very vivid. Botanical Beach has a lot of tiny red ones and clear white transparent stones; greens, blues, every colour you can imagine.” Karen Harris is reporting on her search for materials for her latest project.

She has spent the past six months making a 12-metre-long mosaic pavement by the water's edge on Whiffin Spit. It's so close to the sea that the waves sometimes washed up and splashed Harris and her helper Francis Louvat as they poured concrete and laid in stones and tiles. “We poured concrete in all kinds of weather but it was wonderful working outside,” she reported. This pavement will be the centrepiece of a seaside terrace to be constructed for the Sooke Harbour House Restaurant.

Last year Harris laid a mermaid mosaic into the sidewalk in front of this popular restaurant. The 5,000 tiles were hand-cut using materials from Bob's Tile Hut and Tile Town in Victoria. This year instead of cutting the tiles, she broke them into pieces and added stones gathered during a month on the local beaches. Then came another month of excavation and site preparation and a month constructing the plywood forms for the concrete. This was a bit complex, because there's not a straight line in the whole thing. Finally, the workers spent two months laying the mosaic in shapes of abalone, mussel, tiriton, starfish and moon-snail.

The inspiration for the design came from the adjacent waters. Not surprisingly, Har-

ris is a recent convert to the sport of snorkelling. “I don't know why everybody doesn't snorkel. This coast is one of the best places in the world for diving. No matter what the weather is like, just pop on a wetsuit— it's so calm underwater. It's just like breathing exercises only you're seeing beautiful things at the same time.”

Harris is a self-taught artist. She has always had a passion for making things and, though a high school dropout, she was accepted at the Vancouver College of Art. Unfortunately because she was not a mature student she couldn't get a student loan. “So I thought I'd teach myself,” she remembers. At 20 she suddenly became famous as the illustrator of Hyemeyohsts Storm's book *Seven Arrows*. Researching and doing the paintings for the book was an inspiration— “it really shook some things loose in my head.” But what of the commercialism that came with success? “People were phoning me from New York, wanting me to design wallpaper. The inappropriateness really turned me off.”

She found herself at Brandon University in Manitoba taking native studies and religion while she studied the Sioux language on the side. Since returning to the west coast she has had two projects in Sooke, working under the enlightened patronage of Sooke Harbour House restaurateur Sinclair Philip. She is now on her way to explore Montana with her husband, but she'll be back before long.

What will her next project be like? “There are so many beautiful spots in the wilderness where it would be nice to leave the mark of people, in the way that the petroglyphs are left. These would be ‘ceramoglyphs’, in carefully chosen spots that no one knows about— pack in a jug of water and some tile grout and go do something appropriate.”

Appropriate is a good word for her project at Sooke Harbour House— a splendid site, a worthwhile function and a beautiful design.

—Robert Amos



## Profoundly playful

WILLIAM S. BROWN at Open Space  
Gallery, 510 Fort St., 383-8333,  
until Dec. 17.

**H**AVE YOU ever thought of attaching big springs to your shoes, the better to jump to conclusions? How about a propeller on your head, to help you rise above it all? Here comes a man with a question mark instead of a head— he's overwhelmed by questions. It's got to be somewhere he has to give them away on the street. He gave me one: "who is

ideas which are photographed and then printed up big, about four by five feet. To him they are "poetic cartoons, poetic in that you can get the sense of them by trying to put yourself in the picture."

The pictures have a consistent theme. "It's the little man up against the big world, trying to come to terms with what he sees around him." Brown is seen carrying a brick wall strapped to his back. In the next scene he is flattened on the sidewalk, crushed by the weight of the wall. "These things happen all the time," says Brown, "but without the costume."

The artist loves making the costumes, for instance the big headpiece that turns him into a human claw-hammer. He further absorbs the image during performance and re-evaluates it again while staging the photographs. The end result is an image of an idea which engages the viewer with remarkable efficiency— we get the message.

These pictures of Brown, almost life-size, are profound yet playful. Humour and joy pull us into a dialogue on those questions which the world poses to every Walter Gropius. What would it be like to "carry the world on your shoulders?" He shows us. Yet the ideas are never treated in a heavy-handed or dramatic way, for without the humour how could we face images like his "carrot-chaser" (a man whose head-dress dangles a carrot just out of reach)?

Buster Keaton is acknowledged by Brown as his biggest inspiration. He noted that, while Charlie Chaplin used his hands and feet, "Keaton is a physical comic— he uses his whole body. He's an everyday man but he has his heroic moments. Our dreams are embodiments of these kind of things." Indeed, the man on the street instantly recognizes his own dreams and half-formed ideas in Brown's images.

An historical relationship between this art work and the costume dramas of Vancouver's Dr. Brute and Mr. Peanut exists, but William Brown feels he is dealing with different issues. While those others elaborated single intense characterizations, Brown changes and changes. His work is cool, light, almost free of ego. Eadweard Muybridge, the pioneer of photography, is closer to Brown's aesthetic. Muybridge took sequential photographs of models executing handstands or climbing stairs. Brown's model goes two ways at once, or leaps right out of the picture.

The effect of art is often felt later, when the gallery experience is left behind. Let these big, easy-to-enjoy ideas take their place in your memory and later they will return, rhymed in the mind. Have you ever thought of yourself as a hammer, poised to smash the state? Or seen yourself flat on your back like a bug, flailing your limbs in the breeze? The images of William S. Brown come back like echoes of a dream.

—Robert Amos

He's William S. Brown of Toronto, making his west coast debut at Open Space. Dressed in a plain backdrop, Brown wears handmade costumes and represents



Crowd at the Fan Tan Alley Hallowe'en party: a great spot but it didn't attract the crazies

# VILLAGE LIFE

## Party cruising

**T**HE redhead wore a fluorescent orange plastic mini-skirt belted with orange plastic triangles, like pentons at a construction site— turned-up nose and turned up toes. Is this a cos-

tume or just what one wears to go and hear the Day-Glo Abortions?

At 541 Johnson the Day-Glos were laying down a heavy version of Jimi Hendrix' "Purple Haze" and a small crowd had gathered to peer in through the windows. Formerly a used clothing store, the Metropole was a dance hall Saturday night. The entrance was like a scene from the bombing of Dresden— round the corner, over bricks and rubble, to the end of a dark alley: pretty spooky. The doorman drew a skull on our hands and let us in to the one big room. Rockin' leather, skinheads, studs and mohawks milled about inside; everyday is Hallowe'en for this crowd. The ghouls and the grim reaper give it a nice homey feeling. A Hallowe'en farewell party is an appropriate and spirited way to allay the ghosts of a used clothing store.

Outside, a tubular caterpillar approaches, dragging its tail. Two cabaret stars dart around the corner in a flash of top hats and net stockings. Penis-nose is drinking from a brown paper bag.

Up the street and over two blocks we meet the Fan Tan Alley Hallowe'en party, a tradition now in its fourth year. This time Luis Ituarte hi-jacked it as his art project. Brilliant poster designs were part of the campaign, and he added painted backdrops to the action and called it a "social sculpture." Ticket prices (\$25 a couple) and three security guards kept out unexpected guests, which was a pity. It's important that a Hallowe'en party be full of tricks and treats.

Of course the alley is a great spot for a party. The crowd inside strutted and gawked, and wandered up the back steps to

the old fan tan club, now called the New Era. Safe and warm and close together, they paraded past Bill Mulley's Band and chattered. Down in the alley the crowd was too thin to keep away the evening's chill. The ticket buyers were not the sort of crazies who make a party go.

The costumes are the best part of the show. Behind a mask a special protection fosters boldness; those who didn't dress up are a bit naked and uneasy. But it's alright to stare, and not necessary to reveal anything. Leaning in the alley, voyeurs can observe with impunity as the monk and the garter-belt girl grope in the half-light.

We walked over to a party in one of the super new suites above the Herald Street Caffe. This was not a real Hallowe'en party. Quiet couples faced one another over a black marble table with a huge glass beaker filled with dozens of white gladioli. Not having entered the spirit of the thing, these people scarcely knew what to make of two ravenous leopards who fell on the very ripe gouda and dipped their cardboard noses in the wine.

Later, in a storefront next to the former Stones Gallery, artists were flocking to the other Chinatown party, a celebration for those who balked at the entrance fee to Fan Tan Alley. The host, in underclothing, a see-through raincoat and a stocking pulled over his head, laid out splendid eats at the back of his studio. Out front, in his "after-hours ping-pong club", the music was lethal, and a space cadet boogied intently with a cat woman.

We left well past the witching hour, but in time to watch a midget carrying a giant on his back. Together, they climbed into a waiting cab. Is it a trick? To be out late and incognito is definitely a treat.

—Robert Amos



## AUCTION FEVER

**T**HE crowd paid \$3 to get in to Lund's Fine Art and Antique Auction. But they're spilling out onto Fort Street. In the midst of the turmoil a voice from the sidewalk pipes up. "What lot are we at?" "Eighty-three," says the auctioneer, "a carriage clock." "Sixteen hundred" kids the voice from outside.

Lund's saves the best items from their weekly sales of furniture and so on, and holds a sale "of interest to collectors" now and then. Prices in the art market are low this year, a factor which has slowed the former flood-tide of treasures to auction, but the audience was studded with some of Victoria's choicest relics. Emaciated aesthetes of advanced age took supper early and made the trip in from Oak Bay; bulky old ladies with the poise of Queen Victoria were ensconced on cushions, ready to bid thousands with a slight inclination of their spectacles; every dealer in town was there, one teaching his young sons the trade. And the man from the archives stood very cool, off to the side, like an undercover RCMP agent on a stake-out.

"Let's open with 500. Five hundred. Do I have 500?" Auctioneer John Boyle goes into his pitch. The gravity of his position, behind a carved lectern, is impressive. He is wearing a neat dark suit, with half-lens reading glasses, and gold cuff links flashing as he acknowledges bids to the left and right. "And 600, do I hear 50? Six-fifty, do I hear seven? ~~Seven hundred and 750?~~ At other times he's a genial joker.

"It's only money," he quips, enjoying familiarity with our hopes and dreams. "Lovely big carpet here, good strong colours, a nice rug for the dining room." Does he mean it won't show the squashed peas?

"One of the nicest polar rugs we've had here," Boyle recommends. A sword cane, a tantalus, a commode chair—the parade of obsolete, antique and just plain old items continues. "From an estate," he tells us. The vision of a widow comes to mind, pruning "four sterling place card holders in the shape of wishbones" from the silver cabinet. A lute table, a salver, a vinaigrette. Lot number 140: "bronze head of a viking with antlers," is withdrawn. Didn't he say the police took it away?

Staff boys in red jackets hoist antique dressers up onto the block and sweep them down again. In their rude fists pairs of sugar tongs or Crown Derby tea sets look dangerously fragile. Seventy-five lots an hour are knocked down by the auctioneer.

The feature of tonight's sale is an Emily Carr oil on paper, *Sea and Sky*. The bidding starts at \$10,000 and it's unsold though the kids reach \$11,000. A lot of paraphernalia from her House of All Sorts comes up next—Klee Wyck pottery she made to sell, squat and lumpy like Emily herself; post-cards, her easel, a scrapbook. It's only valuable by association. Why else pay \$110 for a painted tree fungus?

A rather awful painting of two clowns by Max Bates comes up. The audience is equally divided between those who think that, for \$900, it's a splendid bargain or a tremendous waste. A 7x5-ft. oriental rug for \$450, a mantle clock which begins chiming as the price hits \$625, a Victorian button-backed settee for \$350—"my mother had one just like that," says the lady in the next seat. There is a warm fellow-feeling in the room. A beaming grandmother clutching a small painting makes her way out through the crowd. The man who buys number 247, "carved wooden Blackamoore floorlamp," smiles sheepishly on the sidewalk beside it.

The big turnout of patrons is taken as a good sign—confidence is returning to the art market. "Eight fifty, do I hear nine, nine, nine hundred? I have nine hundred, any advance on nine hundred? Going once . . ." Some buyers will send their purchases to shops and sales in other cities. "Going twice." The new mah jongg set (\$110) or the pair of Capo di Monti figurines (\$450) will enter personal collections. "Sold to the man on the left. Your initials please. D.T. I'll drink to that." Entertainment, action, and the real life thrill that you might buy the "18th century child's rocking chair from Woburn Abbey."

Walken plays the ideal scientist, dedicated to discovery, driven by curiosity and creativity—and uncompromising. He gives a compelling performance. The late Natalie Wood plays his wife who is about to leave him, which prompts her husband, in a moving, charming scene, to replay his videorecorded memories of their romance.

Louise Fletcher, best known for her Oscar-winning portrayal as Nurse Ratched in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, gives a stellar performance as the creative colleague of Walken. Obsessed with her work, she is struck with a fatal heart attack while at the lab, but is able to record her dying moments on videotape, moments which Walken later vicariously experiences.

Her death is a scene of controlled underplaying, and her transcendence from her physical pains to spiritual consciousness is marvellously sublime. If there is a fault with the film, it's here. Trumbull pulls out all the stops, and gives us a dazzling light show, but the special effects seem inadequate. Perhaps we are jaded by the sophisticated special effects we have already seen, but it's more likely that the task is impossible—to record the ultimate experience, and put into visual images what is indescribable. Even so, the attempt is still daring.

In *Brainstorm*, Trumbull re-introduces the 70mm format, in hiding since 2001, to reveal the point of view of people using the brainscan device; it's a bit like seeing the world through a wide-angle lens, and quite three-dimensional. He switches from 70mm to the standard 35mm format unobtrusively and effectively.

Instead of sensationalizing or playing down to its audience, *Brainstorm* is a serious attempt to break new ground, to use special effects as more than frills, and to examine the deeper aspects of life and death. That it succeeds is remarkable. See it before the lineups get too long.

—Bill Boychuk

him "about his hope to create a downtown cultural centre, which he proposed to call Open Space." Sam's reaction was generally doubting. He more or less said: "I've met a lot of people who want to do something of that sort. They talk about it for six months, then they disappear. It can't be done, it's not going to happen. And, by the way, there's an unused warehouse on Fort Street."

Miller moved in with his sleeping bag and started rounding up support and talent. The plans called for a theatre in what is now the gallery space. Downstairs was a craft market mall, open from Fort Street through to Bastion Square.

The idea took off like a shot. "The Open Space was exciting, dangerous. Victorians,



Open Space director Michael Harding: "You've got to give people what they want"

used to polite environments... were suddenly being challenged to witness the less controlled, often excessive outputs of energy by artists and performers in the grotto-like setting of Open Space", said Miller at the time. "It's really an attitude more than anything else." This place, before the Association of Non-Profit Artist Run Centres, or Bente Rehm's Craft Fairs, gripped the locals in a creative outpouring of theatre groups and workshops, chamber music, gigantic art shows, and even a 25-day festival of the arts.

Sustained, organized activity among artists is a rare thing. Politics and funding have a way of derailing pure creativity. After four years of riding the wild wind at Open Space, Miller left to start *Monday Magazine*. Later, Bill Bartlett took over Open Space as artistic director, administrator, and jack-of-all-trades, the only paid staff member. The space had become less of an extension of the street, less a mall for craftspeople, and more of an art gallery. In 1976 Open Space received a precedent-setting grant from the National Museums of Canada in the form of \$75,300 with which to purchase the building at 510 Fort Street. The artist-run society now had a stable base, an almost unique situation. The ground floor was leased to provide revenue and Open Space retired upstairs.

With this new stability came a widening definition of the functions of Open Space. It was now perceived to be an art gallery and, answering a need, became a venue for performers and art shows travelling under the sponsorship of the Canada Council. By this time management of finances was almost a full-time job, but of course there was no one but Bartlett and his army of volunteers to do the job. In 1978, when he packed it in to pursue research into slow-scan video on Pender Island, Open Space was going through a bad patch economically. Jeanne Celona, the new administrator, admits "we had horrible financial problems." Extensive renovations, bad debts and a not very remunerative lease arrangement with the Legal Aid Society downstairs were sapping its vitality. Open Space was no longer a three-ring circus of freedom and fun.

During the next few years Open Space seemed boring—it was holding tight. Effort

## ART

### OPEN SPACE OPENS UP

Victoria's hidden public downtown gallery is suddenly very different. It's starting to sound like the good old days all over again.

**W**ORD is getting around.

"Have you been up to Open Space?" The ivory tower is opening up to street life again. The chill is off, the thaw is here, there is real open space again. They've even had two rockabilly dances within a month on the shiny new floor, and film nights are running every other Wednesday. And, most surprising, an exhibition of 15 downtown artists from Fan Tan Alley in the gallery.

The committee that hired Michael Harding as the new curator of visual arts, experimental film and all-round energetic housekeeping has certainly picked a winner. Harding is a hustler who seems to understand that "a hermetic monument to the arts is not a cultural centre. The city itself is a cultural centre." Those words, from the first Open Space prospectus in 1971, have been brought back to 510 Fort Street by Harding.

He likes the high profile—visiting artists in their studios, appearing on TV and radio, and constantly in attendance at Open Space, welcoming the many artists of Victoria who, for reasons economic or xenophobic, have been battered down in their studios.

Of course, it was always intended that way. In 1971 Gene Miller, 28 years old and "just off the boat," met Sam Bawlf and told

and money were put into invisible things— negotiating the lease with the new tenant, Koto Restaurant; balancing the budget; paying old debts. Soon the grant money began to flow again, but it went to the artists rather than to publicity and administration. "The last sort of thing we want to do is to support ourselves on the people that we're meant to support," says Jeanne Celona. Couldn't she have had artists perform for free, just to liven up the place? "To allow them to perform for free is politically incorrect," she feels. Open Space pays at least the minimum fees to artists as stipulated by Canadian Artists Representatives. "As a percentage of our overall budget we pay better than most anybody." This is a laudable position, but nobody seemed to know what was going on at Open Space.

they are therefore not perceived as "local." Joan Wilkinson's *Funeral for Sadat*, Jessica Stockholder's paintings on the wall, and Vilio Celli's constructed paintings didn't get the attention they so justly deserved. And yet that's just what Open Space is for—the unknown, the untried.

The *realpolitik* of the situation is that grants are given by national juries to whom the niceties of locality count for little. Made up of artists from across the country, they recognize talent from whatever quarter.

Artists in other disciplines don't have this xenophobic problem. Virtually every writer in the country has been here, and it's all free. Jill Swartz held a Festival of Women writers last year— 15 women writers from across Canada headlined by Phyllis Webb —attended by about 450 people. The Sound Poetry Festival brought in a good crowd to see The Four Horsemen and the festival format gave less well-known performers exposure to the same audience.

Tom Gore, who called himself a "grand old man of Open Space," has been plotting the strategy of the photographic programs there for eight years. His projects, under the title Secession Gallery, were "not a camera club sort of thing." Yet, in his opinion, the photo displays "were not as avant garde as the rest of the visual program." Over the years so many artists have incorporated photography into their works that "pure photography" has been subsumed by the visual program in general. This year other curators are creating exhibits on *Cinema in Photography* (including work by Marion Penner Bancroft and Fred Douglas, among others). And Gore will bring us new work by photographers of the Los Angeles area.

The music program at Open Space has made Victoria a nodal point on the map in the world of computer music. Certainly it is the home of the most extreme forms of new music in Victoria, more so even than UVic's Sonic Lab. Under the leadership of internationally-renowned composer/performer John Celona, Open Space has concentrated on a mix of real time electroacoustic performance and computer-generated sounds.

Monday's music writer, James Kennedy, reports that the audiences are small and loyal: "You don't see that audience anywhere else." They are appreciative of these programs which Kennedy says are "literally at the cutting edge of new music." That's a long way from the days when Kennedy played first cucumber with Charles Cartwright's Vegetable Orchestra in Open Space's boisterous first year.

The video program at Open Space has been on hold for a couple of years now while coordinator Chris Creighton-Kelly has been in Vancouver studying. From there he has arranged cablecasts of Canadian artists in Victoria and all across the country in a project called *Coasting the Cable*. Chris took on the video work at Open Space from Bill Bartlett, who had introduced loads of new energy to the space with his Collaboratories projects. Now the video hardware is used occasionally to document local events, awaiting Creighton-Kelly's return.

It's Open Space's visual arts program that most people ponder. Is somebody putting us on? Is this what they teach at art school? Who's paying for this? Viewers arrive at the door with questions like these clouding



From Fan Tan Alley artists' exhibition: a commitment to local artists

IT WASN'T only lack of publicity that made Open Space seem boring to the man on the street during the last few years— if he ever came in off the street and climbed the long stairway up to the gallery. Greg Snider and his successor Barbara Fischer were two curators of visual arts with a similar aesthetic. Academic, formal and international in their references, they presented exhibits which challenged the viewer but often offered little immediate gratification for the untrained. It is traditional to be puzzled by modern art and these two brought in plenty to puzzle over.

Guest curators were engaged during this period to keep fresh ideas before the public, but this was often perceived as a way of dropping in out-of-town friends by "parachute", an insult to the local talent who responded with a cold shoulder.

Probably the most oft-heard grumble about Open Space is "why don't they show more local artists?" Oddly enough, though lots of locals have shown there, they tend to be ones who are not well-known— neither vocal, old guard, nor commercial —and

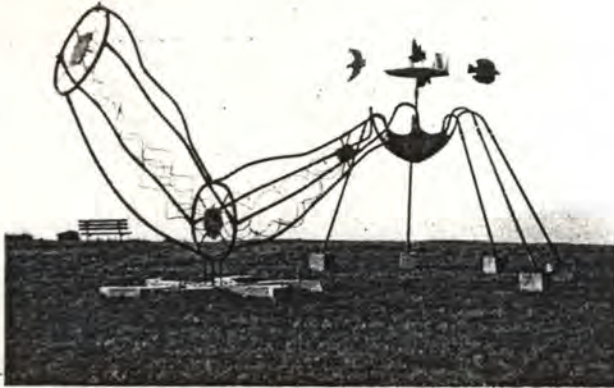


## JASON'S of VICTORIA

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Part of Open Space's visual arts program: public appreciation is clouded

their appreciation. Nick Brdar, a Masters in Art student at University of Victoria, built the 10 metre welded steel sculpture call *Test Pattern*. It was installed on the Dallas Road foreshore this August and achieved notoriety on the front page of the *Times-Colonist*. "Some local people were pretty angry about it," he ventured. "It was unbolted and pulled down with a truck." Perhaps someone didn't know that it was only temporary.

The shape of the work "is based on the gesture you make when you go outside, and put your arm out to test if it's going to rain, a gesture that links you with the environment rather than with another person." The arm reaches out and results in an umbrella: he replaced the hand by the object it reaches for. Clouds and bird shapes surmount the umbrella. Brdar spent quite a bit more money making the piece than he received for the project. The sculpture is now in storage and he has no further plans to exhibit it.

**O**PEN SPACE is putting a lot of effort into opening up the channels of communication these days. The Outdoor Projects of last summer were part of the attempt, though many failed—the works were poorly sited and showed little sensitivity for local concerns. They were generally discrete and entirely ephemeral, with no lasting effect. More successful in bringing an audience to art has been the double-decker bus tours initiated by Open Space. Low prices, "in-flight" commentary by artists, and plenty of stop-overs at various galleries are only part of the attraction and more trips are planned. But there is little doubt the best thing they've done along these lines is to hire Michael Harding.

When the subject of local art comes up, Harding's position is clear: "I'll show it if it's good. It's immaterial where it comes from. In fact, I'd like to get the local artists shown not only here, but in other cities, other countries. That would help the artist. If you have the opportunity for expansion your

work will improve. A lot of people these days are subject to self-imposed 'victim-thinking,' feeling very isolated. We have to keep our supporters and mechanisms for support accessible so that we don't end up becoming really introverted, in which case the art becomes really esoteric. If somebody encourages you, you do really well."

One of the first things Harding did was to invite the artists of Fan Tan Alley to show at Open Space. Here was a signal rapprochement—almost a town and gown situation, resolved. "I am aware that this gallery has a certain amount of prestige and it's really nice to be able to offer it to people. That's what you're meant to do with prestige—give it away." The artists were delighted with the prestige—and even more pleased to be paid an artist's fee. (The show continues until October 29.)

"You've got to give people what they want. Then you can add a few little benders. In fact, if you give people what they want, they will think of their own little benders."

Harding's "little benders" are messages about harmony, world peace and disarmament. He's on the board of the United Nations Association and his main interest is linking art to other aspects of life. He's already hard at work on the Disarmament Show, set to open on Good Friday next year, the anniversary of the peace marches which mobilized tens of thousands in 1983. The visual section of the show will include local material and items solicited from around the globe. "The peace movement is still using images from the 1960s. If we can put together some very hot promotional images about disarmament, they will be of real use to the movement." Doubtless it will be more than a picture show.

"I want to have a religious service held in the gallery," he ventures, remembering the ecumenical service which was part of the Human Rights Day he coordinated at Vancouver's Unit Pitt Gallery last year.

His enthusiasm is focused, well-aimed, and infectious. We haven't even mentioned his Western Canadian experimental filmmakers series, or *Totalitarian Visions*, a photo show to celebrate (?) Orwell's 1984. Open Space is wide open and welcoming, and just might be the place that can bring together the collective dreams of this town's many artists.

—Robert Amos

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# ART

## Ituarte's parties

LUIS ITUARTE, Fan Tan Alley, to Nov. 5

**F**OUR sculptures eight feet tall at the entrance to Fan Tan Alley on Fisgard Street will mark the entrance to a very ambitious project by Victoria artist Luis Ituarte. Over the next two weeks he'll be installing and completing 28 canvasses to create part of a multi-media show cum civic ritual.

On October 22 the Chinese orchestra of the Dart Coon Club will make music in the alley, from 7:30-9:30 pm; everyone is welcome. The big finale will be a Hallowe'en



**Halloween extravaganza: a party that "incorporates social phenomena"**

party, by invitation only, on October 29. Five hundred "free" invitations are available for a "contribution" of \$15, couples \$25, by calling 383-2361. Any surplus funds go to the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association.

Fan Tan Alley has hosted some extraordinary Hallowe'en events in the past and this year's, while a lot more expensive, may outdo them all. Ituarte has planned everything. In various alley studios three bands will be on hand— Hoi Polloi, Blues Contraband, and Bill Mulley's Jazz Ensemble. Adult re-

freshments, security attendants, and first aid will be provided.

The old world charm of Fan Tan Alley, its history and significance to the Chinese community, mixed with the magic of Hallowe'en are sure to bring out a rich play of creativity. That must be what Ituarte has in mind when he says he wants to "incorporate the social phenomena to an art event as an element of a total concept" —his painting, your costume, everybody's good time in Fan Tan Alley. A social sculpture, he calls it.

—Robert Amos

# A R T

## Fresh and friendly

VARIOUS ARTISTS, Winchester Gallery, 1545 Fort St., 595-2777

It's hard to get past the strong sense of *déjà vu* at 1545 Fort Street, once Kyle's, with paintings by Toni Onley and Max Maynard in the window. But the sign now says Winchester Gallery, and owners Marilyn Cunningham and Bernard Raffo have brought a fresh and friendly presence to the place.

Raffo and Cunningham were formerly the proprietors of Kyle's Framing, a well-managed business which earned the respect of the dozens of artists they dealt with.

When Paul Kyle finally bit the financial bullet, the framers decided to set up their own gallery. After all, they were in touch with plenty of good artists, a very supportive public and a super sky-lit three-level gallery was up for grabs next door.

Thrills and novelty are what art lovers love. And though both were in short supply at Sunday's opening, the abundant browsers could see a fine selection of small safe items by artists long familiar in that space. Well-chosen items by Jack Wise, Colin Graham, and Jack Wilkinson joined those of newcomers Milli Shapiro and Nina Cape. Strong and serious artists Phyllis Serota and Susan King will be part of the new stable, but their thematic depth could only be hinted at in a show as eclectic as this opener. Buyers seemed to be taking a "wait-and-see" attitude but the calm demeanour and solid reputation of the owners should breed confidence.

And the new season will hold some pleasant surprises. Yumie Kono Day's etchings are calm, mysterious and understated and deserve our full attention. And Radisha

Light in October: when Jerry Pethick was written up in *Monday* (June 18, 1982) the story was titled "From Holograms to the Hornby Island Dump." Now Pethick has turned that proverbial sow's ear into a silk purse, making the jump from the dump to Paris, France. The Canadian Cultural Centre is currently presenting Pethick's dazzling light sculptures to the discerning French until October 23.

"more gossip, scandal and secrets about this little bit of Olde England" says the book's cover. Here's a random sample from inside:

"It seems a lovely but slim-chested maiden was lamenting the size of her bust when she was confronted by a kind fairy. 'You may have any wish you desire,' the fairy said. 'I want two big boobs!' the maiden cried. 'You shall have them!' the fairy said, waving her hand. Lightning cracked and smoke rose. As it cleared, there stood Vic Stephens and Davie Barrett."

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# ART

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## Dick Geisreiter and his forever flowers

**W**HEN Dick Geisreiter stands working at his bench, he knows just what he is doing. In our age, when the romantic image of the sculp-

tor is some moody soul communing with the material ("I just chip away and reveal what's in the stone"), Geisreiter's sureness is refreshing—he makes metal flowers.

"Metal flowers? Isn't that just a bit of kitsch?" Indeed it can be. But Geisreiter is a man with the skill and imagination to elevate craftshop bric-a-brac to the realms of art.

To start with, this man knows his flowers. His grandfather started the family florist business in California years ago, and when Geisreiter was a lad his father had "a city block under glass". He grew up growing and arranging, and operated the business himself for years. In addition, the refinements of *ikebana* (Japanese flower arranging) and *bonsai* (miniature trees) became second nature to him through years of study. He had 1500 bonsai trees and used to be a statewide judge of bonsai in California. Geisreiter's irrepressible talent led him from floral work to metal sculpture and his own gallery in Mendocino, California. Then, in 1970, with his wife and three boys, he packed it all up and moved to the remote island of Sointula, near the north end of Vancouver Island. Though he is a grandfa-

**Richard Geisreiter fuses bonsai and sculpture into art at the Quest Gallery.**





none ★ newspaper  
wel service ★ juice  
tries ★ as well as

HIP  
\$120  
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rs ♥



ther, the secret of his youthful good looks is the 11 years he spent there, clearing the land and looking after 80 acres. "Nothing like it for keeping you fit and young," he says. From that remote base he was able to continue producing. His already-perfected techniques found a ready market and his sculpture sold well in Vancouver.

Nôw he makes his home (and his sculptures) in East Sooke. Working with an oxy-acetylene torch and the calm of a master he cuts and assembles a low, moon-shaped dish from steel. Sheets of copper are snipped, scored and lightly folded into long iris-like leaves. Imaginary flower shapes spring from his fertile brain and are rapidly translated into metal, glowing with oxidized colour and perhaps garnished with transparent beads. As he arranges the components, the graceful assembly is welded into harmonious balance. In lesser hands

the lightness, the compositional rightness, might never appear.

As well as floral arrangements, Geisreiter makes tiny welding-rod bonsai trees which grip convoluted Chinese-y rocks. Tray-garden scenes, table fountains and extensive outdoor works find their place in his repertoire. In the studio storeroom the multiplicity of his forms is overwhelming. No shortcuts, no easy routes; but myriad essential forms derived from a lifetime of nature study and a wealth of colour teased out of the metal itself.

Geisreiter's work may never arrive at the mythical Museum of High Art. But his productions are loved and coveted. He's never had to take a piece home after an exhibition, and likely this will be the case with his new show at the Quest for Handcrafts (1023 Government, 382-1934) until October 8.

—Robert Amos



## FILM

### The remarkable Mr. Bowie

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MR. LAWRENCE,  
Halda, 382-4278  
EDDIE AND THE CRUISERS, Odeon,  
383-0513

**D**AVID Bowie is a better actor than he is a singer. Indeed, it is largely the force of his charismatic presence that keeps *Merru Christmas, Mr.*

ond world war, and it sets out a schematic opposition between two points of view: an obsessive absolutism, and pragmatic compromise. Interestingly, this dichotomy crosses racial barriers: for each point of view, there is one Japanese and one English representative.

The pragmatists are the Mr. Lawrence of the title, an English officer with some knowledge, understanding, and even sympathy for the Japanese way of life; played with weary, not-quite-disillusioned liberalism by Tom Conti. His counterpart is an easy-going, sensualist Japanese sergeant, Hara, played by an actor called Takeshi, whose face breaks into a thousand smiles as he delivers the title line. While these two pursue the "correct" line of rapprochement, the real intensity of the film is in the conflict

# Bucolic pleasures

PAINTINGS BY COLIN GRAHAM.  
Backroom Gallery, 2070 Oak Bay Ave.,  
598-4212, until October 21.

**I**T COULDN'T have been a nicer opening. Colin Graham is surely one of the best-loved figures in Victoria's art world, both as administrator and, now, as an artist. And the Backroom Gallery retains a warm familiarity under its new director Heather Hestler. Sunday afternoon seems like the perfect time for gallery going, a time when a jovial group of makers and doers, teachers and communicators meet to peer over one another's shoulders at

Graham's new work, and to raise a toast to a man whose efforts never fail to please.

Colin Graham was his usual self-effacing self. "I call these my 'Thurber Wine' paintings" he quipped. "As James Thurber has one of his characters say, 'It's just a naive little wine but I think you'll be amused by its presumption.'" In fact, Graham's paintings are anything but presumptuous—you could call them mellow, matured, with a splendid bouquet. Using gouache (an opaque watercolour), casein (a tempera with milk solids as its binder) and oil paint, he creates paintings of gentle blended colours, rich in harmonious middle tones. His subjects, gathered under the title *Bucolic Pleasures*, bespeak rural retirement: barns and sheds, sheep and woodlots. Mix in the wooden walls of the Backroom Gallery, a touch of Oak Bay tweed, the chill in the air and Graham's earthy colours, and you have a fruity punch somehow appropriate to the onset of autumn.

Colin was born in Vancouver in 1915 and attended Shawnigan Lake School. He took a degree in history at Cambridge University and then a Masters in Art at Berkeley. As an art educator he stayed on in California until invited to become the first director of the Victoria Art Gallery, a position he held from 1951 until 1974. The reduced responsibilities of director emeritus still kept him busy until 1980 when, like a Chinese scholar painter, he allowed himself the pleasure of full time painting.

Freedom of spirit informs his paintings, nourished by the deep roots of a lifetime of study. We may sometimes glimpse the looseness of Dufy or the incipient cubism of Cezanne in Graham's paintings. Perhaps due to his contact with Chinese art, clouds and trees are rendered in a shorthand that speaks of experience distilled, rather than nature rendered in the raw. Written symbols—a house, a cart—are arranged on the paper in a way that implies space with deceptive simplicity. Not for him the strictures



Detail of 1982 Colin Graham oil:  
*Sheepscape*

of linear or atmospheric perspective. Sky, sea and mist retain a mystery which energizes the objects placed within them.

In the current exhibit Graham's work occasionally abandons the landscape reference almost entirely, as the artist surrounds us with leaf patterns or lets houses float

freely, obedient only to the law of universal gravitation. Perhaps the vestiges of representation will drop away leaving us with abstract paintings. Is he interested in the power of emptiness? Graham says he has developed "a feeling of the transparency of matter as it is revealed by modern particle physics," a subject whose development he has watched with fascination over a period of 50 years. "At the sub-atomic level matter now seems to be more a question of energies and wave movements than solid substance."

Of course, fortified with a glass of wine and immersed in bubbling conversation, those at the opening perhaps admired the superficial aspects rather than the sub-atomic physics of Graham's work—clouds running in wet skies of deep purple while sheep pursue a lifetime of munching.

—Robert Amos

se's technique eats up time by the hour. "I'm bull-headed. I just keep doing it." But her ceaseless effort gives results. "Keep waving the brush and you've got to get better, unless you get lazy and slick. But as long as you keep the brush moving, something happens. You've gotta have faith that it will happen. It was excruciating this far." Excruciating for the artist, maybe, but not for the viewer. Gloria Massé's paintings are a hit of this year's Vancouver Island Invitational. And her herd of painted beasts will be finished soon.

## Midwives of art

VICTORIA'S ART CURATORS

**A**RTISTS come and artists go. And gallery backers like to keep well out of the limelight. But consider the tastemakers, those curators who choose and present the shows: the midwives of art.

Paul Kyle, for instance, was an obvious tastemaker in Victoria. He may have infuriated artists, bankrupted his business and disaffected his patrons. But he had "taste". He knew what he liked and his personal choice was stamped on every work that went through his gallery. He liked landscape abstractions— not too realistic, not too unrealistic. Consider Toni Onley, Max Maynard, Colin Graham, Anne Popperwell, all purveyors of abbreviated scenery. Even artists without much interest in landscape— Jack Wise, Neil Dalrymple, Lin Chin-Shek—gave it a try, inspired by Kyle's clear and consistent judgements.

These days, Victoria is short on curatorial direction. North Park Studio and Gallerie Untitled seem to be willing to educate and cultivate an audience. They have decided what they are about and are willing to stand by it. But a lot of new galleries, financially anxious, cram the walls with a miscellaneous (and unpaid-for) inventory. Without curatorial direction, a pot-pourri can become a hodge-podge, a mish-mash. Indigestion sets in, leaving viewers without guidance or confidence. The scatter-gun approach to curatorship does not make its mark.

Institutional galleries, underwritten by the government, feed back to the source of their grants. Open Space has formerly been able to pursue academic elitism and arcane experimentation to the point of mind-

numbing boredom. In September, a new curator for visual art takes over. He's Michael Harding, formerly of Vancouver's street-wise Unit Pitt Gallery. Let's hope he can breathe some life into Open Space, if it's not a dead issue.

Up at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria,



Paul Kyle: an obvious tastemaker

curator Greg Bellerby has a new directive from the Canada Council. Only contemporary art shows will be funded by them. He's bringing in David McWilliams and Arnold Shives from Vancouver and Pat Martin Bates of Victoria. Local Jack Kidder was refused a show in Victoria's art gallery, then accepted by former AGGV director Roger Boulet in Burnaby. And sent on tour—back to Victoria.

The top curatorial talent in town is Barry Till, hard-working curator of Asian art at the AGGV. Last year he brought us Canada's best Chinese paintings, a fine cloisonné show, and the splendid porcelains of the high Qing Dynasty. This year we will see the best Japanese paintings in the country, many of which belong to the AGGV. And Till is seeking gifts far and wide, "raiding the turf" of less active curators in other cities. He's educating our taste without sacrificing his own standards. That's what a curator is supposed to do.

Victoria has an audience eager for art and there are plenty of good artists. It's up to the curators to deliver the goods.

—Robert Amos

## INAPPROPRIATE STEW

Robert Amos' "Calligraphic Stew" contribution (*Art*, Monday, Sept. 9-15) has completely missed the point of the five-artist presentation by the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

By offering no further insight than "formal variations" (Grison), "crisp brilliance" (Thompson), "ardently modern scrawls" (Condrashoff) and dismissing Roberta Sutherland's convincing collage paintings as "messy", he manages to offend participating artists, the Art Gallery and members of the supportive public who seek guidance and enlightenment from an art review.

To treat the occasion as an opportunity to devote detailed consideration to a single artist's work was inappropriate, to say the least.

As a perceptive appraisal of an interesting and varied selection of current art work the Robert Amos review failed miserably.

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children gain some awareness; yet it doesn't do that either. Through negligence or design, it is not only possible, but probable, that a child will go through the entire B.C. public school system without taking a single course in how the government of this province works. I'd be willing to wager that not one graduating student in a thousand could explain what a regional district is, let alone what it does. For that reason alone, *The Reins of Power* is an important book for British Columbians, and long overdue.

Make no mistake about it though; despite the gripping title, this is a textbook, not a treatise. So if you are expecting the exciting thrust and subjective intrigue generated in other books on B.C. politics, (*The Company Province*, by Martin Robin, and *1200 Days: A Shattered Dream*, by Lorne Kavic and Garry Nixon spring to mind) or the sycophantic air of political biographies like *Bennett*, by Ron Worley, then I definitely recommend you not read *The Reins of Power* lying down—unless you plan to cover your eyes with it.

If, on the other hand, you want to get behind the headlines being generated by the current debate on the government restraint program, then I highly recommend you pick up a copy and read chapters five and six, on managing the public service in B.C. You'll be glad you did.

Other interesting chapters, given the current mood here, are *The Premier and the Cabinet* (by Walter Young and Terry Morley) and *The Provincial-Municipal Relationship* (by Oak Bay alderman and UVic prof Neil Swainson).

Some knowledgeable readers will no doubt want to argue with a few of the assumptions and observations made by the five authors. For example, Young and Morley are way off base in crediting the rebuilding of the Social Credit party between 1972 and 1975 to Bill Bennett alone. How could they ignore the work of Grace McCarthy and Dan Campbell in that period? I also think the authors could have made wider use of tables and flow charts to guide the reader through the various bureaucracies under examination.

On the whole, however, this is a fine text and ought to be read by any serious student of B.C.'s political scene; or indeed, by anyone who professes to have an opinion about how the province is being run. I guess that takes in just about everyone, doesn't it?

—Derry McDonell

## ART

### Calligraphic stew

THE VANCOUVER ISLAND INVITATIONAL, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (384-4101) until Oct. 2.

**T**HIS year's Vancouver Island Invitational at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria features five painters. In a show of more than usual interest, artists with very different approaches included. Roberta Sutherland's col-

lages form a "messy" counterpoint to Brian Grison's formal variations. A stunning three-panel painting by Carole Thompson evokes swirling tropical fish with a crisp brilliance. Just around the corner are Sydney Condrashoff's ardently modern scrawls.

But Gloria Massé's bales and shades come first. These big oils depict coils of fence wire, baled hay, leafy nooks and two remarkable monsoon river gods. The two stand like tar-baby scarecrows, planted knee-deep in the shallow water under a huge Calcutta umbrella.

At first glance these paintings depict a frozen photographic moment, each blade of grass captured in time. But their sensual texture, built of a thousand little strokes, draws one in. Come closer to the painting. Realism dissolves into a colourful calligra-



"River Gods": one of Gloria Massé's remarkable oils

phic stew. Drips and washes and controlled accidents take on a life of their own. Realism, under a higher magnification, has become abstraction.

A native of Windsor, Massé graduated from UBC, having studied painting with Cathie Falk. Two long trips to India provided her with the inspiration for her current series of paintings of bullocks, decorated by their Hindu owners. More and more, Massé's painting focus on a part rather than the whole— from the whole cow, to the texture of skin as landscape, to the way each hair grows out of the skin.

The herd is painted life-size and close up. "I like to work in the same proportions as the thing really is— real size or bigger. I hang the painting on the real proportions of the beast. That freckle was here and that hair there— these are my landmarks. They give me a certain security and from there I can do my paintings. Once the boundaries are there you can let go."

To her, "letting go" means painting the myriad broken, flickering brush strokes which make up the rich surface pattern. "It's done pretty unconsciously," she says. Mas-

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## ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## ART

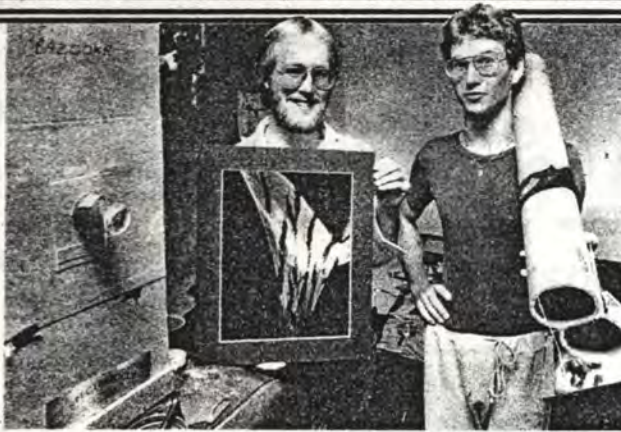
## Let there be light

**O**OH, those spectral visions! "For kids it's like a video game. For adults it's a way to be creative without too much effort." So says Paul Winstanley, the rather ecstatic co-producer of Spectral Visions.

The concept is simple enough. Channel sunlight into a darkened room, break it into its component colours with crystals, and manipulate the dazzling rainbows with homemade "light instruments." The effect is a room of mystery and magic, like swimming in a fish tank full of neon tetras.

With partner Eric Pittman, Winstanley has welcomed the public into his laboratory-cum-theatre whenever the sun shone—all summer long. Their third-floor Unknown Gallery (1012 Douglas Street, 381-5906) is hung with Pittman's light paintings, actually photoprints of spectral phenomena produced without camera or film. Running up through the ceiling is the Industrial Strength Light Bazooka, a sort of periscope which pipes the sunlight down from the roof and fires it onto wax-paper screens. The carpet is littered with mylar cones and gloves encrusted with mirrored mosaics.

When the lights go out the room becomes a spacious darkness, alive with dancing nets of colour. Sinuous light figures swirl in space, blazing ultra violet and magenta. By



**Eric Pittman and Paul Winstanley: manipulating dazzling rainbows**

twisting shiny things the inventors weave a psychedelic firestorm. It would warm the cockles of an acid-tripper's heart.

Paul Winstanley had the idea for the original Spectrafocus while living on Sombrio Beach. Spectrafocus is a clever wooden armature to hold faceted crystals and focus light. He asked Eric Pittman to photograph the invention and soon they were both lost in the colour fields.

They went public almost immediately, at Victoria's Bank Art Project last April. In their room at the top, Pittman and Winstanley learned how to flash plastic and wiggle mirrors in just the right way. They soon moved to The Unknown Gallery and the public has since beat a pathway to their somewhat obscure door.

Daily from noon 'til sundown the two work out on the Spectral Bazooka and Light Wands. For the historically-minded, there is

a *camera obscura*. Though not electronic, their work is very compatible with video, television programs and live performances at Glendale and Queen Alexandra Hospitals. They dream of a Spectral Solarium in the disused "Checkers House" atop Beacon Hill for September and October.

Besides patented "light instruments", these modern alchemists envision Home Spectral Visions kits, films, and a bigger place to accommodate the groups that come to see them. "I'd like to get a reflective body suit and dance with the light", says Winstanley. The heady atmosphere of inventors onto a good thing is in the air. It's a bit thrilling, really.

—Robert Amos

## Golden handshake dept.

**A**S of August 31, Alistair MacDuff (Cover Story, Monday, July 22-28) will no longer be the director of the Gallery of the Arctic (611 Fort St.). The owners will amalgamate the shop with their own venture, The Quest for Handcrafts. Barbara Colebrook, MacDuff's knowledgeable assistant of almost eight years, is also leaving. The always dapper MacDuff is unhappy to see the gallery go, but seems delighted to pursue a few of his other interests.

But things won't be the same on Fort Street. It's rare (and pleasant) that a man of his qualifications takes up among us as a shopkeeper, and we'll miss him. . .

Another one bites the dust: Stones Galley (1715 Government St.) has closed. The new proprietors are setting up a café on the premises. . .

And rumour has it that Pat Alexander's Crystal Gardens Gallery (707 Douglas) is about to close. Seems like Kyle's Gallery really started something.

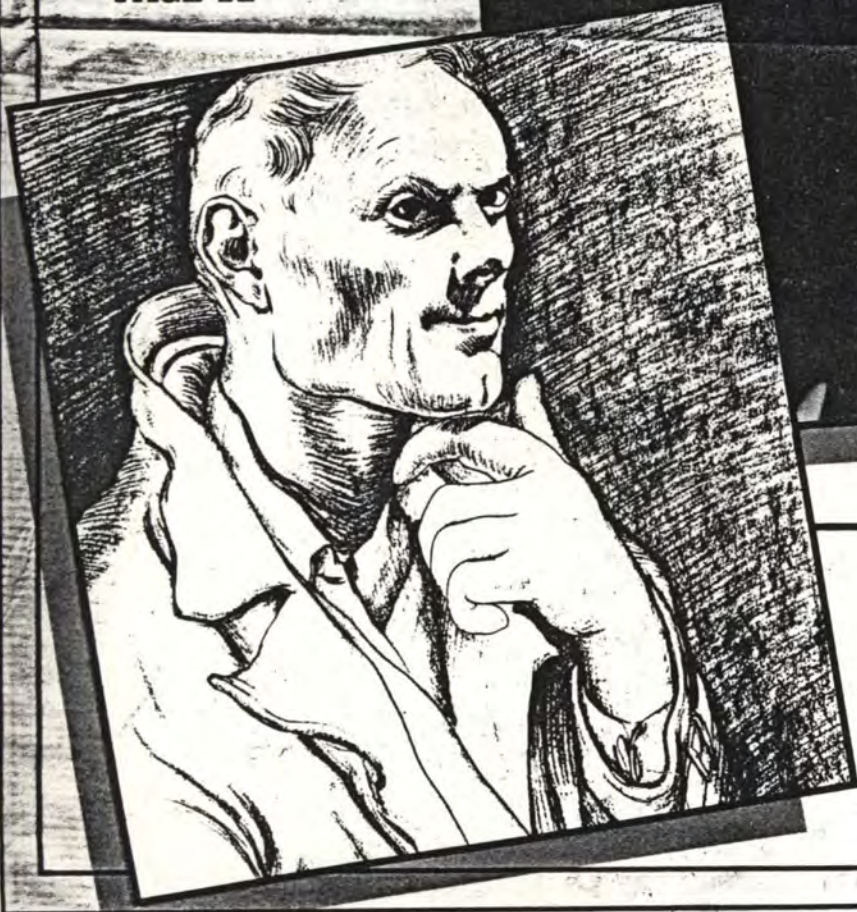
# Monday

VICTORIA'S MAGAZINE VOL.9, NO.21, MAY 20-26, 1983



THE HARBOUR FESTIVAL TAKES OFF—  
FULL DETAILS IN OUR SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

**DOUG BENNETT  
AND THOSE CRAZY  
SLUGS REACH FOR  
OPERATIC HEIGHTS  
- PAGE 12**



**MAX MAYNARD IN  
RETROSPECTIVE  
AN EXAGGERATED  
REPUTATION ?  
- PAGE 13**

# R E V I E W S

## A R T

### A minor talent

MAX MAYNARD  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria,  
1040 Moss St., 384-4101. Until July 3

Remember 1978?

The art boom was on. Adulation for Emily Carr was at a peak and her reflected glory shone round about, giving an inflated credibility to artists with historical claims on her. The Emily Carr Gallery on Wharf Street enshrined the tradition; the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria reconsidered its collection of Carr followers. And Max Maynard returned to Victoria.

Maynard was born in 1903, and lived in Victoria from 1912 to 1938, teaching at Lampson Elementary School for the last 12 years. In 1941 he moved east, to Winnipeg, and then to the University of New Hampshire as a professor of English. When he returned to Victoria in 1978 he had again taken up his painting style, almost unchanged from the 1930s, days when he was an earnest proponent of "modern art."

A living, producing artist who could be connected with Carr was grist to the mill of the late Kyle's Gallery. Maynard's landscape abstractions were in keeping with the Kyle style (*vide* Onley, Graham, Jorgensen, Harvey, *et al*). He was a man in the right place at the right time, and his stature as an artist had never been so high. Maynard, as demonstrated in the



Max Maynard and his drawing *Near Lampson St. School*: persistence in a single style from long ago

current show at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, made stabs at Tom Thomson pointillism, A.Y. Jackson rolling hills, and settled into Lawren Harris theosophical geometry as interpreted by Emily Carr in the early 1930s. Generalized art deco woodlands don't require much drawing. Carr eventually found it lifeless, without soul, and moved on to her juicy riots of colour and life. But Maynard stuck there, with simplified trees which became bare sticks.

There is no reason to denigrate Maynard—artists are free to do what they like and his work gives a lot of people pleasure.



Rhythmic compositions, a novel colour sense and the use of black-primed paper as a support are pleasing features of his art. But his paintings are no big deal. A look at the work of his local contemporaries—In Uthoff or E.J. Hughes, for example—will convince one of that.

Maynard continues to be sold by association. Jack Shadbolt is often mentioned on the same breath—“Maxie and Jackie” feature in Emily Carr's diaries as frequent visitors, and rather a nuisance. But Shadbolt is a protean spirit, gobbling technique and hurling volcanoes of creative productions on a grand scale and leaving most artists far behind. Maynard's long suit was persistence in a single style from long ago.

Persistence in a recognizable style is of great advantage in the selling of an artist. But probably Maynard's great personal charm was an even more invaluable asset. When he died last year, surrounded by admirers and patrons, there was no doubt he was headed for the hall of fame which (unfortunately) is reserved for deceased artists. Extensive documentation of his life and work make him a super project for art historians. But, looking at his paintings, I realize that I know a dozen artists in our neighbourhood who can draw and paint better.

Jack Shadbolt referred to Maynard as “the translator of our basic land experience into a significant metaphor.” I take that to mean that Maynard's lines and strokes are a coherent language by which he represents the landscape. The catalogue from the Art Gallery turns that around for a show title, “Max Maynard: Landscape as Metaphor.” Apparently, every tree can be seen as “a metaphor for man and his spiritual aspirations.” Yet, I just can't see Maynard as a symbolic painter and I think the show is incorrectly titled.

For years this show has been awaited, to reveal the unknown Max Maynard. After all, Kyle's, the Provincial Archives, Bau Xi Gallery, and now the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria are lauding Maynard's accomplishments. But it turns out to be a lot of ballyhoo for a minor talent.

—Robert Amos

The oldest of all

REVIEWER REVIEWED

Sorry Robert Amos took a personal view of Max Maynard's work at the Art Gallery ("A minor talent," Monday, May 20-26). I thought newspaper reporting was supposed to be more objective. Robert is lucky if he can tell the difference between insignificant content and relevant art. In all my years of living I have not yet developed a completely satisfactory definition of what art really is, even with the help of great writers like Tolstoy. I certainly think it is difficult to judge creative work of any kind. Better a reporter do what he can to promote a wider public understanding of Canadian culture than voice a personal, negative opinion. Artists in all areas need as much help as they can get.

Eliza Hawkins  
2080 Oak Bay Ave.

hopes will be ready next year.  
☐ Rumour hazard: Kyle's Gallery is "used for stock-taking", but it seems to be artists who are taking the stock. We knew something was up when Paul Kyle moved his bed into the office and the phone went out of order. Phyllis Serota pulled her show from the gallery and artists have been dropping by daily to take their pictures home. Will bankruptcy be next? Paul's not saying...

> What some people are touting as a new community newspaper for James Bay will be a class exercise, at least until

## The oldest of all

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**T**HE ART Gallery of Greater Victoria has received a gift of two paintings which may fairly claim to be the oldest paintings in any museum in Canada.

One was painted in 670 A.D., the other in 828 A.D. They survived sealed in a cave in China for eight centuries.

The paintings came from the Dunhuang Caves, one of the world's major archaeological sites. The Dunhuang Caves were a major stopping place for Buddhist travellers going to China along the ancient Silk Route. Located in a desert in the eastern reaches of China, the caves were carved into the sandstone between the 4th and 11th centuries. Today approximately 500 of these caves remain their extensive walls painted with a number of Buddhist scenes.

In the 11th century the monks who cared for the caves feared invasion and sealed up thousands of scrolls, among them one by the monk Fa Hui. This small work (ink and colour of folded parchment, 26 x 71 cm) is believed to be the oldest painting from these caves now outside China. Although the work of an amateur, it was no doubt saved and stored even then because of its age. It depicts, in an Indian style, two Buddhas and three Bodhisattvas.

The second work is a Buddhist Tantric painting showing Tibetan influence and dating from 828 A.D. It is painted in ink and colours on cloth. Research is still going on to identify the Tantric protector depicted.

The hidden cave came to light only in 1900. Sir Aurel Stein, intrepid explorer and art historian, purchased several thousand paintings and scriptures for a few dollars and placed them in the British and New Delhi museums. Others found their way to the *Musee Guimet* in Paris. At that time Dr. James Menzies, a Canadian missionary in China, also purchased a few paintings from the caves.

Both the paintings and an interest in Chinese art came to Arthur Menzies, Dr. James Menzies' son, who was the Canadian ambassador to China from 1976 to 1981.

He loaned the paintings to Victoria's recent exhibit *Chinese Paintings in Canadian Collections* and while in Victoria donated

the paintings to the gallery.

These gifts may be viewed at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria August 11 until October 9 as part of an exhibition of *Chinese Art in the Collection*.

— Robert Amos

## The tofu invasion

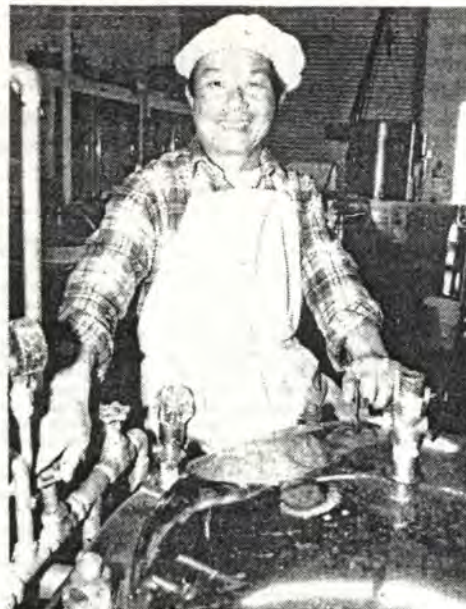
**W**HAT IS that wobbly white stuff that floats naked in tubs of water in Chinatown? Bean curd? Who wants to eat something called bean curd?

The answer is— lots of people. Only they call it tofu. It is a major source of protein throughout Asia, long a loved and accepted part of the diet of people who are neither health food nuts nor lacking a discriminating palate. Tofu is a puree of soya beans, curded like cheese, and can be eaten raw or cooked a thousand ways.

Ten years ago yogurt was a mystery from Europe and now every secretary and corner store connoisseur has a favourite flavour. What yogurt did to desserts, tofu is now doing to the main course.

They make it in Duncan at Thistledown Soyfoods, where the speciality is tempehburger. They make it at Sooke Soy Foods. And on Denman Island most of the production becomes Frozen Buddha soy "ice cream." Make no mistake— tofu is not just quasi-cutlets for lily-livered hippies—it's food. There are already 200 tofu makers in North America, doing \$50 million worth of business a year. In Japan over 50,000 shops make it. And in Victoria, it's a growth industry.

Michael Hsieh didn't need a new trade when he moved here— he was a dentist in Taiwan. But on arrival in Canada he saw a business opportunity too good to miss. And now his Dayspring Soyfoods, at 5-626 Esquimalt St., has taken over the Chinatown market and has their product in most supermarkets. He brought his brother from Kentucky and his parents from the "old country," and installed shiny



BRIAN BOBIASH PHOTO

**Li-Kuo Hsieh at Dayspring Tofu: not just quasi-cutlets for lily-livered hippies**

new boilers from Japan. Now the seven family members make tofu every Monday and Thursday in a production that's like a loving dance. Their output now consumes 240 kg of soybeans a week, but will surely rise to meet the demand for this idea whose time has come.

The mild nutty aroma at the factory is as delectable as fresh bread. Anyone who knows the cuisine of the East knows tofu's place. Soya protein costs only 1/6th as much as meat protein from cows (which we raise on soy beans) and it's good food.

Dayspring also makes soya "milk" from the same beans. "In Taipei," says Hsieh, "there was a kettle of hot soy milk in front of the tofu shop every morning— hot soya milk and a steam bun makes a good breakfast."

Will Canadians ever accept a new food? "At school in Taiwan we had to learn about cow's milk. It was powdered, and sent by the Americans. We mixed it up with hot water and each student had to have a cup full." Hsieh (382-2144) has recipes and a slide show free to interested groups who might want to reverse the milk exchange and try some tofu.

— Robert Amos

# PAINTING WITH IMAGINATION

With some interesting colours and a few time-tested techniques, you can make your home look better than new

By ROBERT AMOS



**P**AINT UP. Nothing is as effective in making people take pride in their houses, their streets and their neighbourhoods as paint applied with imagination. It only takes one stunning renovation to make everyone want to "fancy up." Gardening tools appear, windows are cleaned, people again notice millwork and gingerbread. Residents emerge as if from caves into the light of day and take a new pride in their homes. Carefully painted buildings bespeak individual creativity and don't attract graffiti. And to those who consider any colour but white or landlady beige an affront to the senses, need we remind them that the Greeks painted the Parthenon in colours bright enough to make Zeus blink? One of the principal ingredients of authentic Victorian architecture was a bountiful supply of paint using more colours than Joseph's famous coat.

The war years seem to have dimmed the richness of house

trim. Battleship grey paint was all too available and set a style which we are just now shaking off. Scrap metal drives stripped homes of cast iron fences and columns, grace notes only recently finding their way back. Asphalt siding and other insensitive cladding homogenized and brutalized wooden houses, their decorative charm cast aside in favour of heavy armour plating against the elements.

But now new paint technology—tougher films, brighter pigments and easier application and cleanup—have made painting a more satisfying venture. It's the multicolour approach which highlights the special flavour of Victorian homes—to applaud with paint what the architects did with wood, and if necessary to pick up where they left off.

People have needed convincing that brighter colours can be used with good taste. At first, painters or designers had to "sneak in" a third or fourth colour to accent distinctive shapes. But old photographs will con-

vince even the skeptics that a variety of colours is historically correct and can make a house more handsome. Wooden houses usually have a "body" colour for sides and panels; a contrast for the "architectural elements"—lintels, eaves and edges; a deeper shadow tone to add depth under mouldings; and one or two "punch" colours for dramatic highlights.

For restrained elegance, it's hard to beat the Queen's Printers office at 506 Government St. For years this old mansion was painted the standard government grey. It still has a grey body but the brown "architecture" and black window frames give it a stately elegance appropriate to its vintage. This home was built in 1885 in the Italianate style popular among California's grape growers. It is constructed of California redwood and, because of persistent and careful painting it is as sound as when it was built!

A more striking example of what colour can do is 743 Van-

cover at McClure. The body is raspberry, and the details are picked out in a rosy brick tone. More quietly convincing is 731 Vancouver, with pale olive body, ochre trim, taupe architecture, and the fence and shingles pale red.

The best, though, is around the corner at 1012 Richardson. Bill Murphy, the owner, is likely to be standing out front in his carpenter's apron, considering his next bit of renovation. A red-head, Murphy favours the century-old palette of earth tones for house painting. He has painted his award-winning Victorian home golden ochre with reddish trim. "Next time I'm going to paint the sashes black", he says. That can do for a house what make-up does for a woman—bigger eyes and a touch of formality. Yet some people swear by white mullions, to increase the light inside and the lightness of the outside effect.

Murphy points out he was lucky to find a very patient perfectionist to paint his house, all

with a brush. "He was into tai chi, and he'd come back from his class at the Y, very relaxed and ready to work." When Murphy renovated the Brewin house at Fernwood and Johnson, his painter washed the whole house with a cloth and some cleanser first. That house had been covered with asphalt siding for years, but now it's back to wood and colours.

Sometimes a design-minded painter will prepare a coloured sketch of a house. More often, after the primer goes on, an unobtrusive part of the building will be painted so that the owner can judge the colours against one another, and see the effect in its environment. The roof colour, landscaping and neighbours must be taken into consideration. Colour can alter our perceptions. Dark-coloured houses seem smaller than light ones, cool colours recede more than warm ones. By judicious placement of painted details, the horizontals or verticals of a house can be emphasized.

To maintain a home's market value and as a gesture towards neighbourhood spirit, it's good to keep a house painted. But the main reason is preservation of the house. "Save the surface and save all," says the paint manufacturer. The paint film is the only thing between the wood and the weather.

A house generally has a primer and two top coats. The paint wears away a bit every year. After four or five years one additional coat will bring it up to thickness. Two coats might be too much. The window sills on the northern side will start crack first, but the north side may be good for 10 or 15 years. Too much paint buildup goes brittle with age, cracking and chipping to let moisture get behind.

Most damage to house paint is done by this moisture. It comes in from some damaged spot on



The Murphy house on Richardson: favouring earth tones

the building and works its way out from the inside. When it reaches an impenetrable barrier of paint it pushes the paint off. One of the big advantages of latex paint is that, though rain and snow-proof, the paint "breathes" and will not blister.

Paint needs a clean, solid, dry surface to stick to. Damp spots must be repaired at their source. The surface should be washed and cleaned of mildew. Joints are caulked, window putty repaired, protruding nails replaced with larger ones and sealed. Bare wood should be treated with a preservative and primed. Shiny spots of paint must be sanded. Preparation is a long job, but the paint's surface is only as good as what's underneath.

But what sort of paint is best? Oil-based paints are made from natural or synthetic resins, pigment and white spirits. Synthetic resins may be added—alkyd for flexibility or polyurethane for toughness. Oil-based paints are absorbed slightly into the wood, unlike latex which forms a sur-

face film.

Emulsion paints, usually called latex, are a modern miracle. They are made with synthetic resins and colour suspended in water. When the water evaporates a resinous film is left on the wood. The colours last longer; the cleanup is easier, and drying time is quicker. With latex, as with all paints, it is important not to spread it too thin. Weakening the paint film is no advantage at all.

Trim paint is extra-durable, washable paint for high-use areas, for example around doorways. The surface of a house takes more beating from the weather than window sills and lower-pitched edges on the south-facing windows of a house. The tough waterproof film of glossy oil trim paint is a big advantage and should not be ignored, even if the body of the house is covered with latex.

These days, nylon or other synthetic materials for paint brushes are universally accepted

by all house painters. The brushes will give a lifetime of service if washed up properly. For oil-based paints, wipe the excess on a newspaper, then soak the brush in solvent. Wipe it out, then mix up a solution of dish-washing soap and water and work it into the brush. The solvent breaks down the paint, and the soap disperses the solvent. In the end the brush can be rinsed with water and hung up to dry.

Every painter invents tricks to help him get through the two or three week task of painting a house. Here are a few of the best ones:

- Paint roller cleanup will be a lot easier if the paint tray is put inside a plastic bag before use. When finished throw the bag away.
- If the paint covers a few millimetres at the edge of a window, an airtight seal will be formed.
- When using masking tape to protect windows and fixtures, remove the tape as soon as the paint sets, or in sunlight, immediately after painting.
- To prevent the sash from sticking, move the window frequently while it is drying, and do not close it.

Those with a well-organized life might consider the "one-side-a-year" approach. Start with a well-painted house. After four or five years paint the south side. Next year paint the west, then east, then north. Take a year or two off and start again. Painting one side of a house is a fairly tolerable amount, not enough to turn a man against painting.

The best way to find a good painter? Ask your friends. It takes a few years to find out how good the paint job weathers. The price can vary greatly, but usually you get what you pay for—all paint jobs are not created equal.

Then again, you could call up some friends and get a few crates of beer...

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Friday 7:30-9:00  
Saturday 8:30-5:30

residents is currently completing a of three major cities— Moscow, Lend and Tashkent —where they are preng the mayors with a bilingual plea joint efforts to avoid a nuclear holo-. The message, signed by Seattle's or, city council, and 40,000 citizens, out of a nine-day community-wide osium which attracted thousands of le to discuss the dilemma of nuclear

— Ted Alden

## The birth of a whimsy

EVERYONE BUT Jim Gibson was there. Niels Knudsen, a man of consummate taste; Gregory Brown, a net-maker of unbelievable refinement; Jim Stark, the designer; Bill Johnson, Victoria's antiquarian bookseller; R Smeath, the architect; and Lynn es, a botanist on her way to Japan. gathered to celebrate the completion of Carol Davidson's Whimsy. "Technically it's a folly, but no one knows what a is any more," she says. So it's a whimsy-skylit glass house sprouting from the id storey of her modest home at 1155 ora Street at Chambers.

The effect is a lot like the Crystal Palace, for London's Great Exhibition of Half the material is recycled from polished Victoria buildings. The other was custom-made by top local joiners, gett and Brown. It is assembled with intuitive sense of proportion which a simple porch into a charming essay neo-neo-Classicism. Of course, the whimsy makes a lovely studio and sun-let, but, as Davidson says, "chiefly it's



Carol Davidson in her whimsy: "technically, it's a folly"

an illusion". This small glass room seems larger than all the rest of her apartment. The plate glass roof is a kaleidoscope of reflections. The extra light, views and solar heat collecting are added treats. The fantasy evident in her whimsy is an important part of all Davidson's designs, expanding the actual size of a space by inviting the imagination to wander.

Davidson can treat architecture as a plaything because she is not an architect. Like many Victorians, she is "an amateur everything." A former student of St. Margaret's and Norfolk House, she later worked as a computer consultant, then ran

a small farm. Her enthusiasm led her to study orchard management, fish farming, and woodlots; then a herb store, cooking school, "and all the time I was doodling house designs." It took her a long time to settle on that as her major interest. Now, at 41, though not accredited, she is in demand as an amateur architect and designer.

As Davidson looks out over Victoria she dreams about space, salvage and renovation. She knows that she is not alone in her plans for Victoria, but is eager to realize "old folks residences on the second floor of empty buildings downtown; a new paint job for the whole of Mason Street; a pedestrian passageway in the 500 block between Johnson and Yates Streets," and a lot more. The opening party for the whimsy was a popular gathering with the tastemakers, for they recognized in its construction the genuine Victoria spirit— imagination, a bit of reverence for the past, and construction with care.

— Robert Amos

## Hot wheels at the skatorium

GAINING SPEED fast on a step-over turn, around the far end and into a pack of people who melt out of the way like Mexican traffic. One foot forward, one foot back, into the splits, carving up the next turn on the hum of rubber wheels; past the strobe lights, the DJ, the column speakers and off into the dim echoing vastness of the Oak Bay Curling Rink. The ice is out, the Skatorium is open again for a new season.

# High spirits

GALLERIE UNTITLED

1618 Government Street (phone out of service)

The art shows change and change, and the art galleries remain— with a little bit of luck. A year ago K.C. Tebbutt opened his Gallerie Untitled and it's still there. In Victoria, it is the home of spiritual values in art. Tebbutt isn't big on realism, or sales. The works exhibited tend toward an organic abstraction which depends on the beholder's long patience to see and appreciate.

K.C. Tebbutt is just a young fellow. He's the one in the three-piece suit, Birkenstock sandals and the asymmetrical haircut. His own paintings made a strong debut a few years ago— swirling phantasmagoria in which infinitely tiny brush strokes of amoebic doodle merge with cataclysmic paint texture to create images inviting quasi-mystical contemplation. These grew from the teaching of Jack Wise at the Victoria College of Art and through the influ-



SKY LIGHT PHOTO

K.C. Tebbutt (left): avoiding formulas

ence of Chin-Shek, legendary astrologer-calligrapher-painter now living in Edmonton. They are garnished with a catholic interest in the mysteries of the East. But Tebbutt has now become an enthusiastic aesthetic entrepreneur.

A gallery representing transcendent values— there's a task that needed doing. There has long been a mystical bent in the art of the Pacific Northwest. It can be identified by a preoccupation with calligraphic line, the integrity of each brush stroke. Mark Tobey, some of whose work just finished showing at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, was the great white father of the trend. The "light swooping through" Emily Carr's paintings partakes of the same spirit.

Tebbutt's gallery offers a sympathetic scene to people with a touch of genius who

fit nowhere else, a whole segment of the bizarre and driven.

For example, during 1982 Norval Morrisseau dwelt among us. He is the founder of the Woodland school of art, the Ojibway traditions of northern Ontario set down in acrylic paint on canvas. His history as an artist has hit the high points— a lavish coffee table book, government collections, huge revenues from reproductions on collectors plates and so on. He has a biography of mysterious disappearances, alcoholism, Eckankar, sex and drugs— the whole thing. And, to top it off, he is a shaman, an authentic timeless messenger of the gods. He paints with a blazing directness that gives no quarter, speaks to everyman, and has the power to transform the beholder and short-circuit the senses. There's no telling why he ended up here— except that Victoria's psychic energy drew him west. His work is on show at Canadian Impressions on our tourist strip, but somehow it doesn't work there. But Tebbutt's place is perfect. I don't know if anyone made any money on Morrisseau's show there in December. But there is an audience here that needs to see these things, and Tebbutt is serving it.

Sure, there are shortcomings to Gallerie Untitled. The publicity is brash, sensational and full of spelling mistakes. The gallery walls are rough and dirty. The framing is sometimes pretentious, running to virtuoso mat-cutting in half a dozen colours. The business angles look tricky, run-

ning to pyramid sales (bring in two purchasers and get a free painting) and free coupons. The exhibits are too big and often tediously uniform. For example, Charles Brookman's work seemed like a huge dose of navel-gazing. Linda Cayer's current exhibit is more appealing but it's hard to tell one drawing from another.

Yet Tebbutt keeps on actively serving a need. He likes to be open "after hours." Two nights running. Queen Ida partied there till dawn after her zydeco stomp next door at the OAP Hall. Looking at paintings, rapping about the spiritual side of art, printing, photography and picture framing are what it's all about. Tebbutt has something going that doesn't fit the formula. Neither slick nor government subsidized, it's Untitled. And it's still there.

— Robert Amos

## WORST FEARS CONFIRMED

I'm writing in regard to the review of Gallerie Untitled (*Monday, March 25-31*) in which I feel Mr. Amos missed some valid points concerning art and intellectualism, and confused some simple issues with some very big, useless

...tly, galleries, unless otherwise funded, depend on sales to keep themselves open. Now, if K.C. Tebbut is more concerned with spiritual values in art rather than realism and sales, why on earth would he revert to "brash, sensational" publicity, "pyramid sales" and "free coupons" to keep his operation running? Secondly, I don't understand what "quasi-mystical contemplation" is. Contemplation, on any level, is a mystical thing; this in reaction to Mr. Tebbutt's own work only tells me that his work must be pretty confusing to look at.

Art, that is, art that works, is an intense representation of an artist's personal spirituality. It would be foolish to think that Victoria's artists are any more spiritual than the artists of any other community. That is to say, who can say that Jack Wise's paintings are more intensely spiritual than the paintings of Raphael or Monet, merely because Jack Wise is modern and Victorian? You can't. Art stands on its own.

It doesn't need pretentious pseudo-new-wave backdrops to support it. It does not emerge from the world of the bizarre and driven, from the eccentrics of a small community who may, or not, believe that they are a demi-monde of New York or San Francisco. There are a lot of talented artists in

Victoria who, because of a lack of adequate financing, may never be seen in a gallery. Their work is quietly passed over, while those few "with a touch of genius," the right amount of money, and something abstract enough, will be more than visible to the great delight of the pseudo-intellectual crowd, who seem to feel it their duty to praise Victorian art whether it be good or bad.

The Gallerie Untitled set an important goal in Victoria when it first opened, that of making Victoria aware of the vitality and important energy reflected in its art; but to pretend that Victoria is an artistic mecca or a trend setter when it is more and more obvious that a great deal of our "pop" culture comes to us from California and eastern Canada and the U.S., to pretend that is to deceive ourselves. Robert Amos has not convinced me that the Gallerie Untitled represents "transcendent values;" rather, through his verbosity, he has confirmed some of my worst fears— that art is becoming not so much a "Harrod's" as it is becoming a "Shopper's Drug Mart;" that commercialism is becoming more important than sincerity.

Michael Yoder  
102-1060 Linden Ave.  
Victoria, B.C.

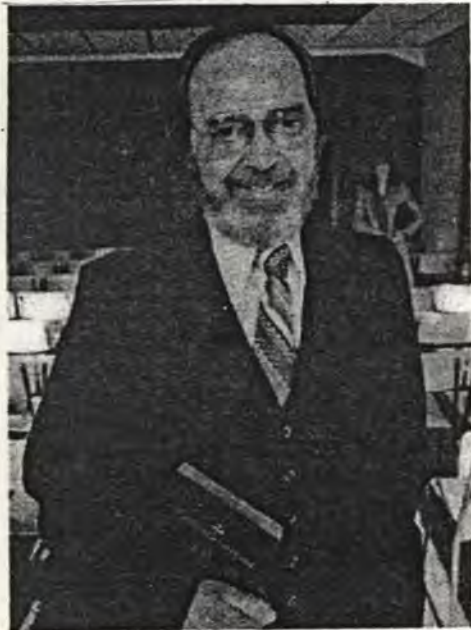
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## Leaven is like unto a Mustard Seed

**T**HE MUSTARD Seed Church (550 Pandora, 385-0512) is founded on a text you just can't ignore.

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me... as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

(Matthew 25.35+40)



**Gipp Forster: streetwise and committed**

This Church is located way downtown and has a reputation as the church of the rejected — hookers, junkies, ex-cons and street people of all sorts. "Jesus was a street person," says Gipp Forster, founder and pastor. "He was the one who said 'the fox has his lair, and the birds have their nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head.'" But there is the Mustard Seed. As Forster puts it, "This is not a mission. We're a street church, belonging to the street people. They run it. It's theirs."

The Mustard Seed has weathered eight stormy years in Victoria, first on Government Street, then in its storefront on Pandora. Forster himself is street-wise and thrives on the challenge of ministering to those who need it. "If everything's going right, you better start wondering why. If you're gonna start Christ's outreach in the centre of the enemy camp, do you expect them to leave you alone?"

Forster was himself taken off the streets by an Anglican priest. "I had holes in my shoes, knives strapped to my legs. I was an

altar boy for three years. And yet in those three years I never came to Christ. I was given His name but I never knew Him as a friend." He took the attitude that churches were full hypocrites, but one day met a minister who told him "If that's so, come on in— there's always room for one more."

Forster was preening his ego, writing poetry and recording his songs at the time. But he gave it up and started a church. "We must give up ceremony for service, fear for faith, guilt for grace." And so he did. This year he will be ordained as a Baptist minister. The credentials committee will ignore his lack of seminary training, to recognize endless field work. He gives the credit to the Mustard Seed Church. And to Jesus.

Today's message is the Food Bank. "Gorde Hunter of the *Times-Colonist* came up with the idea. If just every person who could would come up with one food item per week..." Since Christmas, drop boxes have appeared in every grocery store and many public places. The initial response was great, but apathy has set in. It's time for a new awakening.

Forster is quick to point out, "We didn't start the Food Bank. God started it... You look at the churches in this town, their sanctuaries are sitting silent and empty. Ours is going back and forth with food all day long. God called for it in a little tiny, dingy place. He could have called it any place He wanted it. Yet our God is humble. It's humbling for someone to come and ask for food. And it's humbling for us to give it." Since Christmas, 5,000 people have been fed. Now stocks are very low. Are there any among us who can spare a loaf or a fish?

— Robert Amos

# Ondine surfaces in Victoria

LOOK OUT, Victoria— here come the sixties. On Saturday, March 19, Open Space is playing hostess to two of Andy Warhol's early films and one of their stars. In 1963 Warhol shook the world awake with his six-hour film *Sleep*, soon followed by *Empire*, an eight-hour portrait of the Empire State Building. With his friends at The Factory, his New York studio, Warhol produced *Vinyl* in 1965.

*Vinyl* was the first film version of Anthony Burgess' novel *A Clockwork Orange*. Critic Stephen Koch had this to say:

"For all its fist-fights, arm-twisting, grovelling, whining, sneering; for all its he-men pilloried and tortured, *Vinyl* is silly, with a look of farcical cornball amateurism. The actors— very visibly reading their lines from idiot sheets out of frame —are hardly able to get the words right, let alone believe what they are being made to say."

*Loves of Ondine* was originally part of \*\*\*\*, a 25-hour film with two projectors showing different images simultaneously on the same screen. This in turn was part of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, a total sensory circus which also included Lou Reed and The Velvet Underground. Inevitably it exploded into its component parts, now presented for our more mature and serious consideration.

Ondine says he started out dramatic:

"They kept my scholarship back in high school because I was caught in the men's room teaching some black boys to cha-cha." Warhol gave him a platform: "I sold my soul to the camera. I have a feeling I was sent in there because they knew I was

going to explode." And explode he did, high on methedrine and playing the role of the Pope.

Warhol does not distribute the early films but he gave Ondine prints of *Vinyl* and *Loves of Ondine*. "I keep wondering why he pulled the films out of distribution and then allowed me to go around with them... another thought keeps popping into my brain. He's forcing me to watch my performance."

So, if you were doing something else when the sixties went by, or if you want to check out your opinions of Warhol, mel-

lowed by hindsight, turn out for Ondine, on celluloid in *Vinyl* and in the flesh.

— Robert Amos

## Taking his cue

**F**ROM GIBSON'S Pool Hall in Victoria to the World Professional Snooker Championships— that's the path Cliff Thorburn has followed. Thorburn, 34, is now based in Toronto. Fresh from his £16,000 victory at the Benson and Hedges Masters Snooker Tournament at Wembley, England, he performed an exhibition match and trick shot demonstration at the UVic Auditorium on Feb. 24, sponsored by the Firemen's Mutual Benefit Society. The exhibition raised a handsome amount for the burn unit at Victoria's new hospital.



**Cliff Thorburn: the homegrown shark**

Years ago, when Thorburn finally beat local hot shot Ernie Jay, he dropped out of Vic High and headed east to pursue his

serious interest in the "gentlemen's game". Snooker is played on a large, 6' x 12' table and is more strategically complex than billiards or pool. Thorburn hadn't the "hustler" mentality necessary to fleece the rubes in Toronto and so he became a snooker pro there, training young talent.

In Britain, snooker is almost as big as soccer. When Thorburn won the World Championships in 1980 he was the first non-British player ever to do so. He then took up residence in England and got on the trail as an exhibition pro. As a measure of his fame, in Britain he is recognized on the street wherever he goes. But the traveling, and homesickness too, weakened his game and he returned to Toronto to work with teammates and polish his style. With one of his young protégés, Kirk Stevens, and Bill Werbeniuk, he captured the World Team Championship in 1982.

Jim Wych of Calgary, former Canadian amateur champion, was brought in to play Thorburn in the exhibition match and downed him three games to two. A good crowd packed the balconies at University Centre to watch this unusual event, a blend of cue skill and stage presence. It concluded with a display of trick shots—the machine gun; the chopsticks, walking the cueball and shooting the black ball from a volunteer's mouth.

Of course there is talk of doing this again next year. But Victoria's Peacock Billiards in the past week has sold a 5' x 10' table to lawyer Chris Considine and received another commission to hand-craft an oak and rosewood model nine feet long. Perhaps next time Thorburn comes "home," we'll have some competition for him.

—Robert Amos

## Increasing a peal

Victoria is often alive with the sound of bells. Among the most noticeable are those of Christ Church, the Anglican Cathedral on Quadra Street, the only ones which still ring in the traditional way. Soon two new bells will be added to the eight which ring forth from the north tower, though the church still needs to find the money to hang them.

The new bells are relatively small, as bells go, weighing in at 316 and 294 kilograms, and will add two higher notes to the octave of D flat already present. The bells were cast in Britain at a cost of about \$6,000 and have arrived at the Cathedral, where they await installation. Ker Priestman and Associates of Victoria have donated their services to alter and redesign the bell frame, but the installation is expected to be quite expensive. The bells were purchased using money raised from private donations, but the Cathedral still

must raise additional funds to hang the bells.

On March 8 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and Philip The Duke of Edinburgh will attend their dedication, to be conducted by the Bishop, Rt. Rev. Hywel Jones. The larger of the two bells is marked "God Bless Prince William. Pax Nobiscum" to commemorate the birth of the new prince, second in line to the throne.

The smaller bell is a memorial to Edward "Pop" Izard, the Master Ringer at the Cathedral from the time of the hanging of

the original bells until his death in 1978. "The original bells were hung courtesy of Yarrows shipyard. The manager, Pops Izard, was an old country bell-ringer and many of the band worked in the shipyard in the old days," said one of the current ringers. Izard's son Arthur is currently Tower Captain.

The eight bells already in use were a gift in 1935, the Silver Jubilee Year of King George V. They are replicas of those in Westminster Abbey. The largest, a tenor, is 42 metres in diameter and weighs 1,300

kg. The bells swing on large wheels and are rung by hand. They don't play hymn tunes, but on the dedication a quarter peal of 1,260 changes will be rung. (A "peal" is a program of chords or "changes" which takes about 4 hours to ring, so the quarter peal will take about 50 minutes.)

- Robert Amos

# Moments of real beauty

B.C. WOMEN ARTISTS: 100 YEARS  
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria,  
1040 Moss St., 384-4101, until Feb. 3

**A**NY EXHIBITION with the title *B.C. Women Artists: 100 Years* is by definition a Herculean labour and a thankless task.

For starters, curator Nicholas Tuele compiled a list of some 700 women of British Columbia who were or are artists. For the exhibit, he managed to fit in work by only 60 of them—so somebody's going to feel left out. Choosing all of British Columbia as his field made it impossible to really give fair representation. Perhaps he should have concentrated on Victoria's women.

With only a short time to gather the show, and the perennially inadequate budget, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria's current "gender show" has the expected shortcomings. However, it does include some lovely pictures, and many features of the total package are commendable.

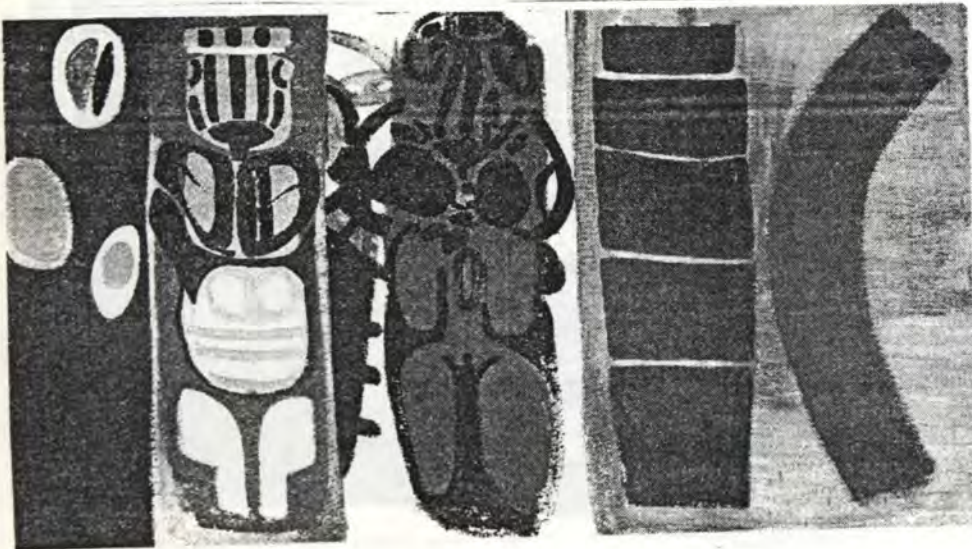
Accompanying the show is a super video tape produced by Tuele and Verna Hall. Gentle music without intrusive narration introduces about a dozen artists—including Sybil Andrews, Carole Sabiston, and Gathie Falk—who have their say as they stand in their studios. Excellent camera work weaves a tapestry from the painters' disparate images and often the paintings look better in video than in real life. A poster featuring a reproduction of a stunning painting by Margaret Peterson is a real bargain at \$4.95.

This show sheds light on a number of artists due for a retrospective look: Madame

de L'Aubiniere, Statira Frame and Molly Bobak, to name a few. One comes across isolated moments of real beauty, such as Elza Mayhew's sensuous bronze *Sphinx*, but there is no thematic "glue".

The show is scheduled to tour the province through 1985.

—Robert Amos



Margaret Peterson's *Five Phases of Woman*, painted in 1961

VICTORIA'S MAGAZINE VOL. 9, NO. 16, APRIL 15-21, 1983

# Monday

**TWELVE YEARS LATER**  
THE LEGACY RETURNS TO THE PROVINCIAL MUSEUM



**C**AN YOU preserve the past without sterilising it? A trip to the Provincial Museum's new temporary exhibition, like a trip to the zoo, raises questions. Is it fair to trap sacred trappings under glass, remote from the life that created them, to offer them up to the public gaze? Must they be sacrificed to a purpose they were never originally designed to fulfil? When you take the sacred element away from an object is there anything else left? Can we consider Indian art without talking about land claims?

These questions all float in the air around *The Legacy*, the pivotal Indian art exhibit that opens Saturday, but the commanding presence is the supremacy of art over politics, the proof that the past can be preserved without sterilising it.



When it was first assembled in 1971, this was an exhibit of over 90 pieces commissioned from living artists, all of them native Indians. *The Legacy* has since been on the road 12 years, updated, redesigned four times, and exposed to audiences of experts (in Alert Bay, B.C.) and complete strangers (at Cliffe Castle, Keighley, in Yorkshire).

One of the prominent artists in the show explains why it has been so successful: "The people who come and appreciate it, who understand its emotional impact, are Europeans with art training," says Bill Reid. "People who live with it all their lives just haven't got the background in art to appreciate it or appreciate what went on here." Bill Reid's words ring especially true in his native Victoria. Perhaps he is talking about the pole made by John Livingston and Gene Brabant in front of the Sasquatch Trading Post on Government Street, or the one in the harbour by Laurel Point, both masterpieces of carving. What *The Legacy* does is provide an alphabet for reading the stories that are all around us.

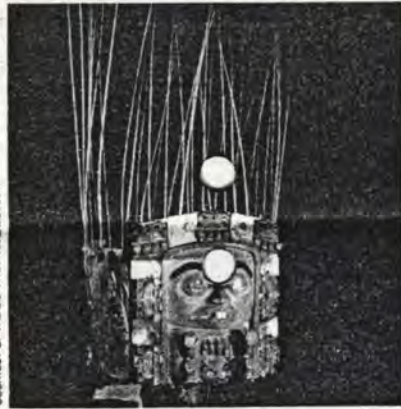
*The Legacy* originated as a temporary exhibit at the world-renowned museum in 1970, a renaissance of what



Willie Seaweed: selling the family treasures

had become a moribund tradition. Critical response was such that the show was redesigned and sent on tour, from Charlottetown to Vancouver. Later it was featured at the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton in 1978. In 1979 and 1980 it visited areas in British Columbia with large native Indian communities: Kamloops, Queen Charlotte City, Hazelton, Alert Bay, and Cape Mudge, where it was always eagerly awaited. Just as Marius Barbeau's books on argillite carving are the definitive source for workers in that medium, the catalogue for *The Legacy* has become a basic work by which young artists identify each other and the new styles.

In 1980 the exhibition was entirely redesigned for an appearance in Edinburgh, Scotland, at the prestigious Edinburgh International Festival. Older pieces from the museum's collection were included, to give a survey of tradi-



# THE LEGACY

An old exhibit comes home again  
how Indian art has adapted to

tional and transitional stages of Northwest Coast art forms. These pieces act as a basis of comparison by which to judge the quality and vitality of new work. There is no doubt that the strength and otherworldly power is still there.

After Edinburgh, the Federal Government's External Affairs Department helped book one more stop in Britain, at Cliffe Castle, Keighley, in Yorkshire. That museum could hardly believe its good fortune in getting the sort of show usually seen only in the capitals.

The show was held over for more than three months. Attendance at the museum shot up to double normal figures and 23,600 people made the trek to the out-of-the-way castle to see what the local press called "Heap Strong Art". The Bradford *Telegraph and Argus* reported that "with the impact of a tomahawk between the eyes, *The Legacy* suddenly reveals the true power of art." Since that showing, *The Legacy* had a long engagement at the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver.

What is unique about *The Legacy* is its chronological overview of the art of the Northwest Coast native peoples. As well as a number of choice older pieces, the exhibit includes post-contact curios—trinket baskets, miniature totem poles, and argillite pipes. Although made to decorate the mantelpieces of Boston traders and collectors of exotica, these artifacts are particularly intriguing for their mixture of symbols. The misguided efforts of missionaries and government to save the natives from their own culture resulted in the outlawing of potlatch and ceremony in 1884. The art productions—drums, rattles, masks, and much more, were effectively stopped and very nearly died out before they were once again "allowed" in 1951.

However the major focus is not the past, but the present, the new generation of artists who have claimed their legacy. Some of these have been able to follow an unbroken line, having learned from older men, knowledgeable in traditional ways. In other cases, artistic traditions were rediscovered through the study of objects preserved in museums. Many older pieces weathered the years of proscriptive museum storage and now are the source material for a new generation whose works are the show's raison d'être and chief glory.

**T**HE "REBIRTH" of Indian art goes back a few years. When anthropologists Harry and Audrey Hawthorn hired Kwakiutl carvers Ellen Neel and Mungo Martin in 1949, their intentions were to restore some of the old poles collected by UBC's Museum of Anthropology. Martin, then 70 years old, had retired from carving long before.

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— Couples and single adults welcome —

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1627 Fort Street, Junction Centre Building

or call the "foster care worker"  
at 598-5121  
Ministry of Human Resources



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# LEGACY LIVES ON

comes home again to show us  
as adapted to the modern world

Nevertheless, he did more than restore the poles. He went on to a distinguished second career as the carver at the Provincial Museum, from 1953 until his death in 1962. It is this man who carved the "world's tallest totem pole" in Beacon Hill Park, and built his Kwakiutl house in Thunderbird Park, on the corner of Douglas and Belleville. His son-in-law Henry Hunt, and his grandson Richard Hunt succeeded him, in their new family tradition that there should always be a Kwakiutl carver working at the museum.

In 1957 Bill Reid came to the museum to work with Martin for two weeks in the carving shed at Thunderbird Park. Reid, son of a Haida mother and Scots-German father, had been working as an announcer for the CBC in Toronto. "I hadn't known anything about the Haida side of my ancestry when I was a kid. My mother was brainwashed at school that being an Indian was not the best thing in the world," Reid says. But, having got in touch with his roots, he took charge of the reconstruction of part of a southern Haida village on the UBC campus. It was completed in 1962. Today Reid has taken the art productions of his forefathers beyond the realm of ethnology and into the marketplace of fine art.

Another stage in the rebirth of the Northwest Coast legacy took place in 1970. The provincial government, in an innovative attempt to counter the chronic lack of employment for young Natives, offered training in traditional crafts. The Kitanmax School of Northwest Coast Indian Arts opened in 1970 in the town of Hazelton, a development which soon became known by the name K'san.

Museums have also played a direct role in the rebirth. For example, Tim Paul and Richard Hunt are both employed full time by the Provincial Museum as carvers. Part of their work is to carve masks that will be loaned out to Native Indians for use at potlatches. The museum did not originally plan to administer a lease program for ceremonial articles but 10 or 12 years ago they began to get requests to show family pieces that had been donated or sold to the museum. And *The Legacy* itself was a project to commission original work for an exhibition, a remarkable undertaking for a museum.

An undeniable feature of the new wave of native art is the changing profile of the collectors. Marjorie Halpin, of the UBC Museum of Anthropology, has said "the primary consumers are now white collectors and museums, rather than members of the artists' tribal groups." And yet museums are primarily concerned with articles from the past, and concerns other than aesthetics.

Native artists are aware of their markets, of course. In fact, *The Legacy* has been criticized for the proximity of its souvenir shop to the display area. It is a thorny point. Bill Reid says, "I would be the first to agree that, in general, the



Bill Reid (left) and Richard Hunt: honest tradesmen

so-called 'renaissance' has been oversold...Look, I have a hard job assessing what I do. I'm making baubles for the pretty people but I've made some very pretty things. They've given me great pleasure and I think I'm an honest tradesman."

The carvers vary their perspective, depending on the job. "If it's for hanging on the wall, that's one thing," says Richard Hunt. "If it's for a potlatch then it's really got to be finished— rigging and all. I'm working on this piece for the museum's collection, so I can take as long as I like: For that pole over in the corner the money wasn't there so I didn't finish it up too much."

In another case, Ron Hamilton, who also uses the name Kwaytsapahth, has decided that his production of ceremonial items will only be for those who are themselves part of the tradition. For the marketplace, he makes screenprints.

These shifting values are not a new thing. Two masks of the Crooked Beak of Heaven illustrate the point. One was Willie Seaweed's family treasure, which he sold to the



museum many years ago. The other one in the show he carved to replace it. It came to the museum later. Selling the mask doesn't mean selling the prerogative of using it as an exclusive family totem. If the money is appealing, the artist may be happy to sell it— he can always make another.

Next to these masks is a small totem pole, obviously a curio, but Mungo Martin's work just the same. Is one more valid than the others? *The Legacy* clearly reveals the beauty in each.

London's *Sunday Times* reviewer felt the tone of the exhibit to be "preachy and sanctimonious" and wondered if you can "preserve the cultures of the past without sterilizing them." This exhibit, more than many others, tries to preserve a culture in a number of ways. You can preserve a culture by educating— hence the "preachy" tone. You can preserve it by supporting its best workers, through commissions and exposure to new markets. You can preserve it by inviting the artists and practitioners to take a leading role, to demonstrate, lecture, perform and answer questions. You can honour a culture and enhance its pride. The Provincial Museum and the Newcombe Auditorium program are making great efforts to "preserve without sterilizing." This is our chance to share in the process.



## FILM, SLIDES AND TALKS

HERE IS a guide to the introductory films, slides and discussions to help viewers get a better understanding of *The Legacy*. Admission to these events is on a first-come basis. They are presented by the Friends of the Provincial Museum and are free to members in most cases. Otherwise admission is only one dollar.

Thursday, April 14, 8 pm: *Ninstints*, a film premiere. Anthony Island is the location of the abandoned Haida Indian Village, Ninstints, which has recently been desig-

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# ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## THEATRE

### A report from Victoria The wonderful world of Edna Brown

Welcome to a dreamland of fine china, velvet love seats, and sexual titillation in Victoria

**T**HE 1300 block on Government Street sees a lot of action on a good night. Cruisers in Chryslers flow by the hookers who wait at the edge of the stream. Someone leans on every lamppost.

Just out of the hurly-burly nightscape at Government and Johnson is a haven—not the picnic table democracy of Little Sammy's burger shop or the subterranean fury of Pal's, disco for the gay crowd. It will never attract the swaggering buckaroos sauntering down the sidewalk from the Century Pub. In fact, it's hard to picture the clients of this world of manners and decorum sharing the sidewalk with the rest of the crowd. It's called Edna Brown's Little Dinner Theatre.

Built in 1909 as a nickelodeon, for the past three years it has been the home of Victoria's one and only dinner theatre.

Step into the spacious foyer, past the protective sculpture of the baby Hermes (guardian of travellers) and make yourself at home on the generous brocade sofa. Check your hemline and coiffure in the mirrors and catch your breath while your date makes the arrangements and the many statues finish their greetings—owls and fisherfolk and a plaster llama sitting on the carpet. Printed souvenirs of past performances warn visitors that this is going to be something very different: "Did you know? Edna Brown, an imaginative restaurateur, changed the history of dinner theatre one afternoon?..."

Suddenly Edna Brown pops out of the kitchen to greet her guests. She is simply dressed, a small woman, 72 years old, who moves with restraint and sureness. She proudly welcomes you to her theatre, her home. She dreamed up the concept, styled the decor, wrote the play and now she's cooking the dinner. "Leave your coat in the checkroom dear," she advises. "The theatre is designed that way" (Coats would spoil the decor.) And she's back to her cooking.

The theatre is just a few steps away, back past the bar. Everyone gasps at first sight. It's breathtaking, a tiny room (only six metres wide) like a jewel-box, decorated



like a dream. It's very clean, finished to perfection with the best materials: foil wallpaper picks up the warm red lights set into the tables and magnified through glowing waterglasses. A mirrored staircase leads to a small balcony at the back. The tiny canopied stage promises wonders behind a ruffled curtain while love seats line up facing the stage—a gracious, genteel red velvet tunnel of love.

From the piano, Robin Sealy vamps softly: "Happy days are here again" and "People will say we're in love". The world of Edna Brown is taking over.

The audience sits entranced, taking in every detail—sparkly ceiling, designer cutlery, and the Aynsley bone china (service for 90) in a Chinoiserie pattern of birds and flowers dating from the 18th Century. "I don't wear jewellery" says Edna Brown, "but I like nice china."

**I**N 1980 she bought the building at 1323 Government Street. Her previous restaurant was the Red Swing,

which Howie Siegel turned into Pagliacci's, hardly believing the Royal Doulton china dinner service he inherited. He also fell heir to a two-metre mannequin in a red velvet dress which used to swing there, from a papier mache tree, beneath fibreglass clouds. The decor was all dark drapes and mirrors, even the 16-foot front window. Edna Brown also ran The Sugar 'D Mule (a euphemism for Sweet Ass?) in the Chateau Victoria Hotel from 1975 to 1980.

The menu is simple: Chicken Grand Marnier, Salmon with Hollandaise and English Roast Beef. During the brief wait for dinner, everyone is a trifle giddy, the bearded hairdresser and his boyfriend, the couple from Alberta, the young woman taking Grandma out for the evening. Quiet chat enhances the cozy atmosphere. Since the red benches all face the same way, everything can be overheard but no expressions seen; it's an eavesdroppers' paradise.

Edna Brown does the cooking herself,

Edna Brown in her make-believe world: a red velvet tunnel of love

calling on a long career of cooking at Jasper Park Lodge, Banff Springs Hotel and, back in the early '40s, Vancouver's Macombo Club (where Yvonne de Carlo got her start). The meals are usually satisfactory and often include some extra-special feature like homemade blackberry preserves on the chocolate cake with whipping cream. Anyone who thinks the meals are less than extravagant should know that what she saves on the meals she spends on the actors.

Edna's dinner theatre project is the realization of a dream. Without government grants or sponsorship she runs a full-time theatre that will hire and expose young, untried actors. As one of them said, "I'm the only 16-year-old actor in town with a paying job." Many local directors and playwrights, among them Phil Wagner and Kevin Land, have been given a chance here at a time when it really counted. Said one: "I hope she never quits. With all the difficulties inherent in making this thing a go she

has the courage and determination. She's producing theatre. It's totally new, all original and it's here."

The curtain rises, slowly, into the sky blue canopy, like Diamond Lil raising her ful-

*The curtain rises, slowly, into the sky blue canopy, like Diamond Lil raising her fulsome ruffled skirt pleat by pleat.*

some ruffled skirt pleat by pleat. Tonight's play is *The Vicar's Daughter*, one of Edna Brown's romantic suspense comedies. ("I got so mad at paying royalties that I started writing my own plays", she explained.)

The greedy vicar leaves his oversexed teenage daughter, Helga, and his oversexed garlic-and-onions wife for a "pleasant and profitable summer" with his flock. He leaves them in the care of Peter, a newspaper reporter, who promises to cure Helga of her problem—streaking nude through the house. As soon as the vicar is gone, Peter convenes a meeting of three members of the Association for Homeless Newspaper Reporters. Add an unsolved murder and the appearance of Benny, "a dangerous paranoid with homicidal tendencies" and you've got something for everybody.

Edna Brown's playwriting is based on giving the audience what they want, then adding a touch of her personal philosophy and, some say, throwing in autobiographical incidents from her own colourful life. What the audience wants seems to be sexy titillation and mystery. Helga keeps promising a nude scene and, in fact, plays the final minutes in her "skivvies"—a lavender corset, bloomers and stockings. The suspense keeps the audience (of 10 or 20—not all stay to the end) in place, if not totally entranced, for the 90-minute performance. Edna Brown's talents as an author rest partly on the ruthless efficiency with which she manipulates sex and suspense. As the play pours along in a stream of consciousness, the characters take sleeping pills or poison without a thought, dropping dead on stage left, right and centre. The effect verges on surrealism.

**E**DNA Brown has written many plays and to date has staged *Love and Lies*, *Breaking Out*, *The Vicar's Daughter* and is now producing *Noah in the Lion's Den*, a two and a half hour musical which reportedly will be completely based on hymn tunes. She says they're all available on video, and that some have been staged in other cities, and are being prepared for passenger nights on a coastal cruise line.

It has been said of Edna Brown that "she feeds you and then she talks to you." What

does she say in the plays? "I wouldn't believe a damn thing I read in the newspapers now. What a way to make a living—writing about dead nude girls. I'd rather write about live nude girls."

"Dora was a girl of a heart of gold. She didn't realize you had to sell sex."

Edna Brown speaks bluntly. She is proud to consider herself a rebel, a bit of a nut. One of her characteristics is a love of younger people; she surrounds herself with youth and it pays off. *The Vicar's Daughter* went through four directors in a few weeks and then it was left up to the young actors, whose dedication and intensity never let up. Peter, the pivotal role, is played by 16-year-old Dominic Lawless. The calm of his remarkable performance holds the cast together on course. All the other characters are morally reprehensible but somehow endearing. Helga, played by a scrumptious 17-year-old (Cathie Whitney), fights off a repressed nymphomania that allows for no character development but keeps the audience transfixed.

Occasionally Edna Brown will appear at the back of the theatre. She's been known to bang the pots loudly in the kitchen if she isn't pleased with the performance, just one of the ways she controls every aspect of her creation and keeps her staff in fear of her impulsive decisions. She sometimes hires and fires on the spot, though some loyal employees have become like family members. "Benny" writes his own parts in the plays—he's a fixture.

Her regular audience may be unsophisticated theatrically, but they are loyal. They exit smiling, and send postcards from all over the world—"a unique experience, so enjoyable". When the mood is right they gather afterwards in the banquet room downstairs to sing and linger beside the palm-tree mural.

And when they go home, the creator, her pacemaker working overtime, keeps going until 3 am. She's back up at 7 am. Her vigorous constitution is sustained without medicines: "I let my ideas out—I don't get head-

*Without government grants or sponsorship she runs a full-time theatre that will hire and expose young, untried actors.*

aches". Besides painting and playwriting, she's working on her autobiography, where the truth about her teenage homesteading days in Manitoba may finally be told. She's a voracious collector of antiques, the best of which are in her penthouse apartment upstairs.

She's shrewd, tough, and protective, but without ever losing a lovable streak of zaniness. Edna Brown's Little Dinner Theatre is not for everyone. It will only work on those susceptible to the magic of manners, decorum and the tastes of a 72-year-old lady, and not just any 72-year-old lady.

—Robert Amos



# DOORWAYS

GREAT ENTRANCES—  
A PICTORIAL ESSAY

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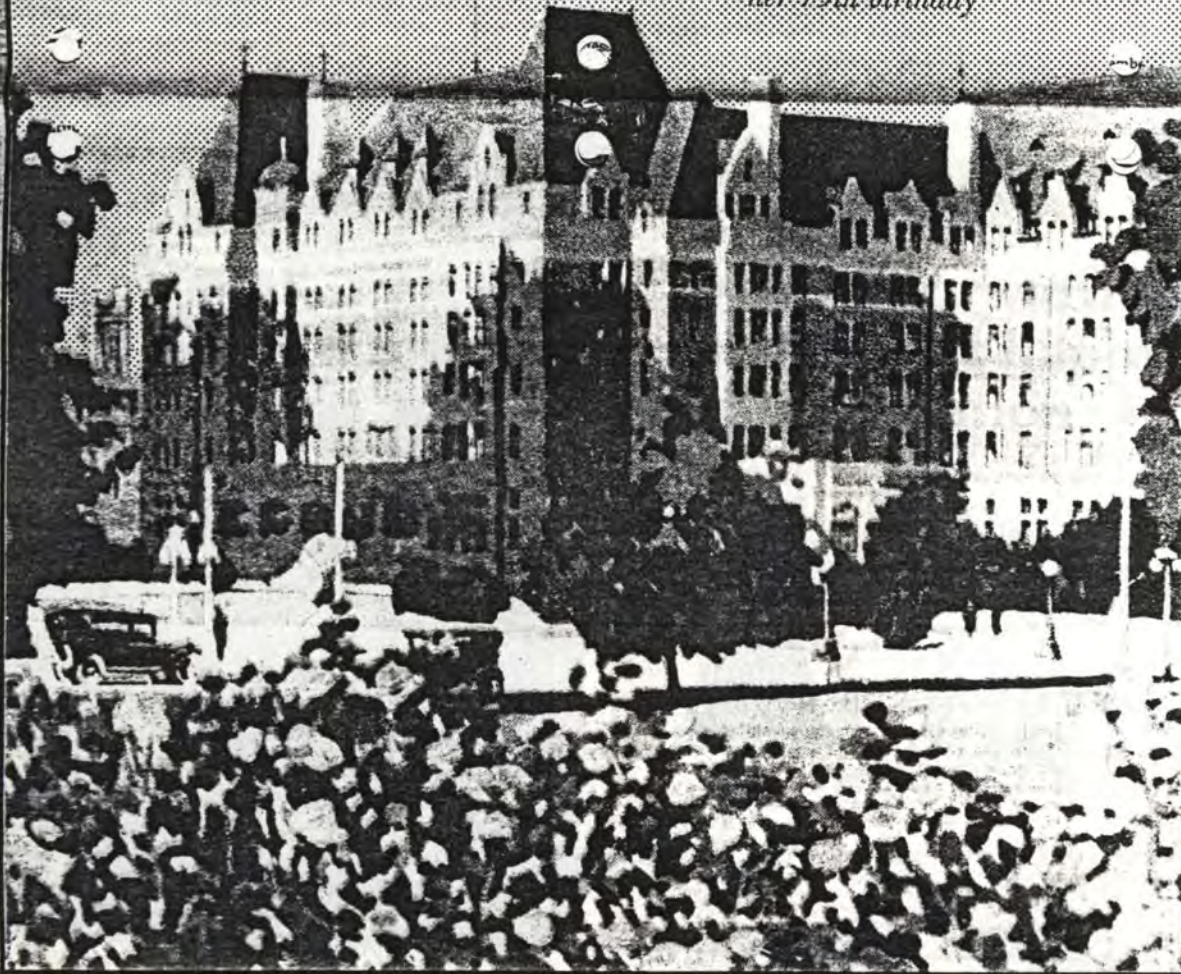
VICTORIA'S MAGAZINE

VOL.9, NO.4, JAN. 21-27, 1983

# Monday

## OUR LADY OF THE HARBOUR

*On the occasion of  
her 75th birthday*



**A**T THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, VICTORIA LACKED AN IMPORTANT link to connect it with the mainland and exploit its "kingpin" location in the Pacific Northwest. The CPR built a ferry fleet to service the triangle route—Vancouver, Seattle and Victoria—and to sail each leg in both directions every day. The Empress Hotel was part of the plan.

The Indians remembered being able to paddle from Ross Bay to the Inner Harbour via James Bay, the site for the Empress. Named for Governor James Douglas, the bay was a stinking tidal flat, a convenient dumping ground just down the street from the fort.

*King Prajadhipoh of Thailand came in the 1930s with his queen and 556 pieces of luggage*

Captain J.W. Troup and S.H. Barnard came up with the idea of landfill and a hotel. While Troup went to talk the CPR into the Triangle Route Ferries, in 1903 Barnard became mayor and arranged concessions for the hotel scheme. In return for freedom from taxes and water rates for 15 years, the CPR would build a hotel worth at least \$300,000. The first stage of construction cost \$1,600,000 and in the end a lot more than that was put into what had been James Bay.

Horse-drawn wagons brought fill to the site throughout 1904. "Even in those days they were labouring 'round the clock under what passed for floodlights," says Howard Hemmings, formally chief engineer of the Empress. "Bales and bales of straw were dumped into the morass to give some sort of footing for the workmen, while pile

drivers thumped day and night driving 125-foot piles as close together as possible until they reached bedrock." Eventually there were 2,853 timber piles, as long as the Empress is tall.

The choice of architect was obvious—Francis Rattenbury. "Ratz" had built the Parliament Buildings almost next door. On Government Street he'd done the Bank of Montreal in the CPR's favourite style, Victorian Chateausque. And he'd already worked for the CPR, building two successive railway depots on Government St. The design Rattenbury came up with was nothing if not electric. The overall emphasis is vertical with flat wall surface relieved by a picturesque broken roofline. The details are concentrated on this roof architecture, including neo-gothic dormers, tudor arches, and domed polygonal turrets which reflect similar motifs in the Parliament Buildings.

Does the tide rise in the sub-basement of the Empress? Not really, though the piles are kept damp at all times. Seeping fresh water preserves them. The entire edifice rests on huge concrete pyramids which stand on clusters of pilings. Under the

The stinking tidal flats of James Bay, 1903: \$1.6 million later, the Empress

Porte Cochere, a cavernous room with seven-metre high ceilings was created. The earth removed lightened the load which could cause the landfill to sink on the 10½ acre site.

When the central section of the hotel opened in January 21, 1908 there were 160 rooms. Nobody seemed to mind the gravel roadways and plank sidewalks. Of course the fill had to settle before the paving was done. On entering the Porte Cochere "the visitor finds himself in a magnificent oak-paneled hall, patterned after the baronial halls of the great mansions of England," boasts an account of the opening of this wonderful edifice. "Carved oak panelling extends up the walls to a height of almost 10 feet; the ceiling done in yellow is very heavily beamed with oak timbers relieved at either end by small medallions representing the beaver, the lion, the crown and the thistle... the whole effect being one of artistic strength coupled with solid wealth."

The "lay of the land" in the Empress



VICTORIA CITY ARCHIVES PHOTO

# OUR LAY OF THE HAR

*On the occasion of her 75th birthday*



*The 75-year history of the Empress, a Victorian mystique, has been filled with tradition*

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# OUR LADY OF THE HARBOUR

On the occasion of her 75th birthday

remains as it always has been. The front desk is much the same. What is now the Library Bar was at first a ladies' parlour. In those days it was unlady-like for a lady without an escort to sit in the Rotunda. There was no mistaking the feminine charm of this Elizabethan room. The handsome tufted rugs had been specially woven in pinks and greys to match the handpainted floral swags on walls and furniture. Later it became an antique shop and the hotel's gift shop and finally the Library Bar. It is fortunate that throughout various rearrangements it retained its ornate plasterwork ceiling, justly considered a masterpiece.

Of course, most people whisked past the ladies' parlour, past the brass cage elevators, to the Rotunda or lounging room. That "potted palm jungle" was a veritable hub of the universe. Victoria was a point at which many touring passengers sought to spend a few days, to break up a trip around

the world. The British India of Kipling and the hill stations beckoned. The Himalayas are not entirely dissimilar to the Olympics. Edward Backhouse, the famous Hermit of Peking, fled to the Empress Hotel when the Forbidden City was in an uproar. The prevalence of Australian materials and Victoria's place on the British "All Red Route" marked the Empress as a nodal point in the Empire—like the Oriental in Bangkok or Raffles Hotel in Singapore, the Empress was a grand British outpost.

**T**HE ATMOSPHERE OF THE ROTUNDA (AS THE LOBBY WAS THEN CALLED) must have been quite rich. Perfume and cigar smoke, spittoons, and staff in uniforms added to the bustle around

Wicker chairs and a domed ceiling in the Palm Court; before the snowstorm



the Porte Cochere, especially when the midnight boat from Vancouver came in. The electric lights showed a prodigality of design—cut and carved hardwoods or Rocky Mountain sheep cast in golden metal with a round glass globe on each head and another hanging from the mouth.

A second phase of building was completed in 1912, and in 1928 the north, or Tower, wing was built, giving the grand hotel its final shape. The hotel then had 570 suites.

The whole concept must have been very pleasing. Passing from the busy hotel lobby, one was attracted to the light and sound of falling water in the conservatory. There was a Moorish tiled fountain in a glass room. On the way was the Palm Court, a tea room under a splendid green glass dome. Six metre palms sheltered those sitting out a dance on spindly-legged, wrought iron chairs among exotic flowering plants. The circular ceiling acted as a sort of sounding board that magnified the lowest whisper and betrayed untold confidences. Inscriptions of wise and witty sayings from well-known authors were written in white on the green panels of the walls, and an aquarium completed the tropic and tranquil decor. The domed glass skylight fell in during a thaw which followed a snow storm in the winter of 1968 and was not replaced.

Opening off the tea room was the magnificent Crystal Ballroom, added in 1912. It had an arched, glazed roof and deep windows on three sides. Devotees of the terpsichore could stargaze as they whirled about the floor. The ceiling is still glass but, now painted blue, it has the hotel's air conditioning installed above.

Dinner at the Empress was the ultimate way to celebrate a wedding anniversary in Victoria. The dining room is large and seems unchanged. The effect of solid wealth is supported by massive beams and pillars of Australian rosewood, entirely carved and glowing a rich, roast beef brown. The floor is Austrian red beam,

DRAWING BY ROBERT AMOS

VICTORIA CITY ARCHIVES PHOTO

...y of the Empress, the living heart of ...ns been filled with grandeur, beauty and tradition

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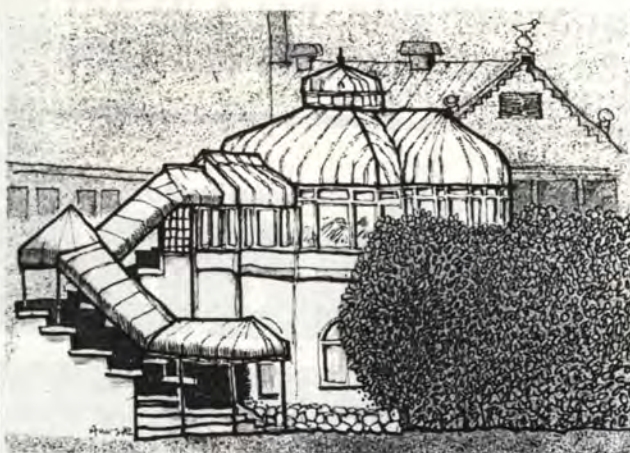
On Her 75th Anniversary

CONGRATULATIONS FROM ONE  
VERY PROUD VICTORIA ESTABLISHMENT  
TO ANOTHER!

"by comparison with which our hardwoods are quite soft", we are told. Some of the celebrated foodstuffs were grown in the Empress' own garden, but Astrakhan caviar was available, too. On special occasions the chefs were happy to turn out a model of the hotel in chocolate, a cake like the Bluenose II under full sail or a relief map of British Columbia flanked by chocolate cannons.

Gardens have long been the pride of the Empress. In 1922 the Empress could boast of the tennis courts, putting lawn, the north lawn, rose covered pergolas and greenhouses. Mr. Sanders, the gardener, put out 125,000 annuals a year and supplied cut flowers for the hotel. The lemon tree was famous and the fig tree still grows at the northeast corner of the site. At one time guests were permitted to reserve their own garden chairs, which were stored for them from year to year. The gardens have been pared down by encroaching parking lots over the years, but then the CPR never promised us a rose garden—merely the best and most prestigious hotel on the coast.

By 1928 the hotel had reached its largest form. This was a fine setting for the thousands of events in the life of a hotel. The Prince of Wales' visit in 1919 saw the hotel closed for a day and gala ball to which 700 were invited. Queen Elizabeth has visited four times. Five-year-old Shirley Temple posed by the fountain in the conservatory. The five-day Olde English Yule Festival, now a seasonal highlight, had its beginning in the earliest years of the hotel. The Spring Flower Festival saw hostesses dressed like daffodils. The Children's Fan-



The Porte Cochere: "artistic strength coupled with solid wealth"

cy Dress Ball was sponsored by the IODE from 1916 to 1957. The Spinster's Ball and The Sigma Chi Sweetheart Ball were indicative of the events which made the Crystal Ballroom the very centre of Victoria's social life.

Godfrey Holloway, in his definitive book *The Empress of Victoria*, gives us some of the stories of the people who made the Empress the lovable living heart of Victoria's mystique. John Rowland sat beside the clock in the lobby every evening for 16

years, and became a fixture, though he was never a guest. Tommy Johnston retired after 50 years as a waiter at the Empress. Billy Tickle and his Trio played for tea every afternoon and in the evening became the William Tickle Orchestra. They went on from 1928 until 1960.

The Empress guest list includes just about everyone from Lassie to the Queen. King Prajadhipoh of Thailand came in the 1930s with his queen and 556 pieces of luggage. Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia and lord of the reggae Rastafarians, came to stay. Richard Nixon honey-

mooned at the Empress. Ronald Reagan's son Michael won a (chaperoned) date at the Empress on the "Hollywood Squares" television program.

"Operation Teacup", a \$4 million renovation, breathed new life into the Empress in 1965-68. The new Bengal Room uniforms then included red "Nehru" jackets and small, cerise turbans. In addition to the well-known tiger, an actual stuffed elephant was ordered to surmount the bar. Unfortunately it never arrived in Victoria, though one was delivered as far as the docks as New Westminster. Someone bought it there and it never came to Victoria.

In 1971 an art theft occurred— one of the Governor-General's wives was stolen from her hook in the lower lobby and held for ransom. In October of that year a discotheque called The Paint Cellar opened downstairs at the Empress. It later became Tiffany's. But discos were never quite right for the Empress and it now has become the Prince of Wales meeting room.

In 1980 the management announced another renovation, a \$4 million project to be finished in 1983. And the Empress goes on towards the future with confidence and pride. The hotel is the darling of the American and Japanese tourists who love to stay in a building which is legendary, and visibly so. A never-ending series of special events and conventions keep the rooms full.

The Empress now has 216 rooms, including the vice-regal suite and the penthouse. The staff ranges from 250 in January to well over 400 in the summer. The life of this hotel is a huge and fascinating story and it's far from over.

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THE MLA JAIL AND OTHER REASONS TO  
VISIT THE LEGISLATURE THIS WEEK —p.10

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VICTORIA'S MAGAZINE

VOL.9, NO. 30, JULY 22-28, 1983

# Monday

ALISTAIR MACDUFF  
AND THE STRANGE ADVENTURES  
OF AN ARCTIC ART COLLECTOR

— p. 11



# POLAR VOODOO

When he's not in his gallery, Alistair Macduff is stumping the Arctic for carved whales' teeth that have the power to drown people.



BOB MANN PHOTO

By ROBERT AMOS

**A**S ALISTAIR Macduff unravels the story, the small room in the back of his Gallery of the Arctic (611 Fort St.) becomes the snow-bound infinity of Ultima Thule. This is Macduff, the native of Blair Athol in the highlands of Scotland, the son of a remarkable art collector and dealer, a man who has travelled the length and breadth of the Arctic. This is Macduff, who the National Museum of Man retained to assemble their collection of Inuit carving. Since 1967 collectors from all over the world have made their way to his Gallery of the Arctic at 611 Fort Street to buy carvings from this rare and authentic source. They've lined up overnight in sleet and cold to await the chance to buy prints the moment the doors opened. And now in the gallery's window stand polar voodoo dolls called tupilaks, carved whales' teeth from the Eskimos of Greenland. We asked him about the shopping trip he took last winter to get them.

*A dreadful journey. By air from Victoria to Vancouver to Copenhagen to Reykjavik to Julianehaab in Greenland, over the tip of the icecap in a chopper to the American air base in Angmassalik. Then you battle your way out to the islands in a komatik pulled by dogs or a snowmobile.*

"I think the most miserable journey on the face of the earth is travelling anywhere in a komatik—a big, long, wooden sled. You know, they don't have hydraulic suspension. It's bad enough travelling on a komatik pulled by a dog team, but at least it's silent. All you have to put up with is a temperature of 30° below, a wind of 15 or 25 miles per hour. And the jarring. You can feel the fillings coming out of your teeth. On rough sea ice there is never a let up. If you're not being ceaselessly vibrated you're crunching down over

ridges. And that goes on and on. And you're inactive. The only thing you can do is get off and run along with the dogs.

"But with a snowmobile, that's something else. You're sitting right there looking into the tailpipe and you have four or six hours of carbon monoxide. I was unconscious for three or four hours, almost lost my life.

"To the islands off Angmassalik it's 75 or 100 miles and it takes a number of hours. Tupilaks are also obtainable at Julianehaab, Sondre Stromfjord and Thule. But the best ones "grow" off Angmassalik and if you want the best you have to go there.

"Tupilak' means helping spirit. These carvings are not like anything you find among the Central Eskimos, the American or Siberian Eskimos. They are truly unique to the Greenland. It is generally accepted that they originated in the time of Eric the Red and his expeditions into Greenland and Iceland. They have connotations that one would connect with Norse mythology. Eric the Red went into Iceland and Greenland and had a nice period of murdering there, following his bent of killing everybody that he didn't want around. The tupilaks seem to be a legacy of this Norse culture.

"The Eskimo will carve and carry a tupilak for his personal protection, to protect him from whatever evils or ills may befall him—a very general application. For example, the Inuit used to have a life expectancy of 30 years, so short because of starvation and botulism. The meat or fish they stashed away at night go through two summers and a winter. Nevertheless the Inuit can eat anything—because there's nothing to eat. So life was very short. The tupilaks were to try to eliminate some of the daily dangers.

**T**upilaks can become more specific. One of the things the Eskimos are paranoid about is the cyclonic spindrift that comes off the tail of the runners of the sled— especially as night falls.

"They're travelling along and they're looking to the left and right and whipping their dogs on. And out of the tail of their eye they keep seeing this snow swirling around them. They call this effect the snow worm. And they become convinced there is a creature in there and it's moving up and moving up and finally... (at this point he lunges across the desk and utters a cry).

"And so they carve a low, crawling type of tupilak. They are half-fleshed and half-skeletal. This is the kind of creature that will deal with the snow worm. As night draws on it gets absolutely black. You can imagine— there's nothing, black night and white tundra, and maybe the Eskimo has the whole night to travel. So he carries this in his parka to guard him from the creeping crawling worm.

"Now we come to the problems of living together in peace. When an Eskimo is being threatened by another and

the ill will becomes pernicious he will decide to secret himself away and carve a tupilak to kill his adversary. And he will spend a long time working on the tupilak, thinking about this person. He will talk to the carving, confide his terrors to it, and infuse it with his passion, hatred and fear. He might say "I have done nothing against this man and he is choosing to threaten me. I want you to kill him." If the enemy is a coastal hunter, often on the sea in his kayak hunting seal, he might say "I am going to give you a seal brain and a sub-human brain as well. You have everything you need. Get him off my back. I want him out of my life."

"The hunter in question is paddling along in his kayak and suddenly he sees a turbulence on the starboard quarter. Because he has been hunting all his life he knows it is not a fish, not a seal, not a walrus, not a whale. And he gets a little suspicious. Now the turbulence is off his port beam and he ignores it. But after a while it comes up again— nothing there, just turbulence on the water. And finally he gets angry and frustrated and because he's a hunter he unlashes his harpoon. And then... (he suddenly hurls an imaginary harpoon out toward the shoppers on Fort Street) the spirit of the tupilak is under the water and gets out of the way of the harpoon and catches the line and pulls the hunter in and drowns him.

"There's a problem with this manner of settling accounts. If the victim happens to be a hunter of very strong character and very difficult to scare, he realizes that after some time that a tupilak has been set against him. He notices that he is doing stupid things, things that he knows better than to do. All his life he has been driving his dogs wherever he would be safe. One morning he sees something that interests him and he turns his team and he goes over the ice that's got water on it— he knows it's strong. But in this case it is not and he goes through. He thinks, "What have I done? I should have recognized the signs." And then, seeing a ptarmigan on a rock, he takes an arrow and shoots, hitting the rock. The arrow ricochets back and narrowly misses him. He wonders, "What's happening here?" and he declares to the air, the spirit of the tupilak, "I am not afraid of you. I am stronger than the man who made you. Go back and kill him." The tupilak then has to react in that way. The man who has carved it is faced with this. When he realizes what has happened he must face his enemy and declare "I carved it against you"— and they fight it out or settle the enmity. That's the theory of the tupilak as given to me by a Greenland Eskimo."

Are the tupilaks dangerous to us? Macduff doesn't think so. And yet, the man who first showed him one told how, whenever he went to his mother's house and knocked on the door, she would ask, "Have you any tupilaks about you?" before letting him in. To us they are mysterious, precious and beautiful, another of the riches brought to Victoria by the Gallery of the Arctic and the inimitable Alistair Macduff.

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# ART

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## A world shaped by dreams

MARTIN HONISCH, Winchester Gallery, 595-2777; until September 20th.

**M**ARTIN HONISCH was born in 1942 in the geographical region known as Moravia. Moravia has

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### Martin Honisch: the homeland of René Magritte and Salvador Dali

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been called by various political names— Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany— but for Honisch it was another world, and it fell to pieces in 1945. "It leaves its marks on a child who grows up in it," he says.

Honisch grew up in the turmoil of Eastern Europe at the crux of the old world and the new. He fled with his family in the face of the Russian invasion of Hungary, arriving in Vancouver in 1957. During the 1960's Honisch studied art at the University of British Columbia and on scholarship at the Univer-

sity of Hamburg. And then the psychedelic revolution rearranged his world. Honisch sees flower power and the anti-Vietnam era as a continuation of the effects of World War II, for, as he says, "those were the babies that were bombed on."

Travel through the Middle East to India and Nepal followed, and his years of bold experiments in art and living. Then, in 1973, he moved to Kitimat in northern B.C. and began eight years of secondary school teaching. Through the summers he took a Master of Education degree at Western Washington University in Bellingham, with a thesis on oil painting technology. Already a very good painter, Honisch was slowly learning the sublime discipline of oil painting. Honisch and his wife Usha were married in 1979 in the Punjab in India, and they have two children, Stefan, five, and Erika, four. They now live in Chemainus.

"I hope by revealing myself, what makes me tick, I can suggest that other people become more aware of their inner life, their dreams," Honisch says. "Most of my paintings are based on imagery seen while dreaming or having my eyes closed. When I was younger I wasn't aware of my inner life," he continues. But now he cultivates his subconscious, clearly previsualizing each of his paintings. His pictures are not those come-by-chance images born of feverish expressionism. They are created fully formed in his imagination. "I act only as an observer," he explains, for he is neither shaman/conjuror nor prima donna/ego-maniac.

So, methodically and with great care, he sets down his dreamscapes. Of course, the experiences of his many-faceted life are the source of his imagery. As a youngster he went to church with his family, to churches cluttered with religious symbols, murals, frescoes, statues. The paintings of the Flemish masters have also had a great effect on him, their imaginary religious scenes bathed in the clear light of naturalism. Are Honisch's paintings religious? "I look at religious imagery in a detached way. If I paint a lamb with blood spurting out into a golden chalice I enjoy it as an image, not as an image of Christ. I'm always detached from my paintings."

Often his imagery echoes wartime—downed planes, camouflaged tanks, armoured ships. Yet the scenes are not violent or malevolent; rather they are brooding and enigmatic. For these scenes are not set in the world we know, "the dark dungeon with its attendant horrors," as Honisch puts it; "I try to avoid those reflections and rise above sad memories and rebellion." He has created a parallel world called Sokolniki Park, "where things are the way they might be."

Sokolniki Park looks strangely familiar, as if it was the terrain Bosch painted, and the homeland of René Magritte and Salvador Dali too. The woman on a couch in the jungle in *The Dream* of Henri Rousseau dreams in Sokolniki Park.

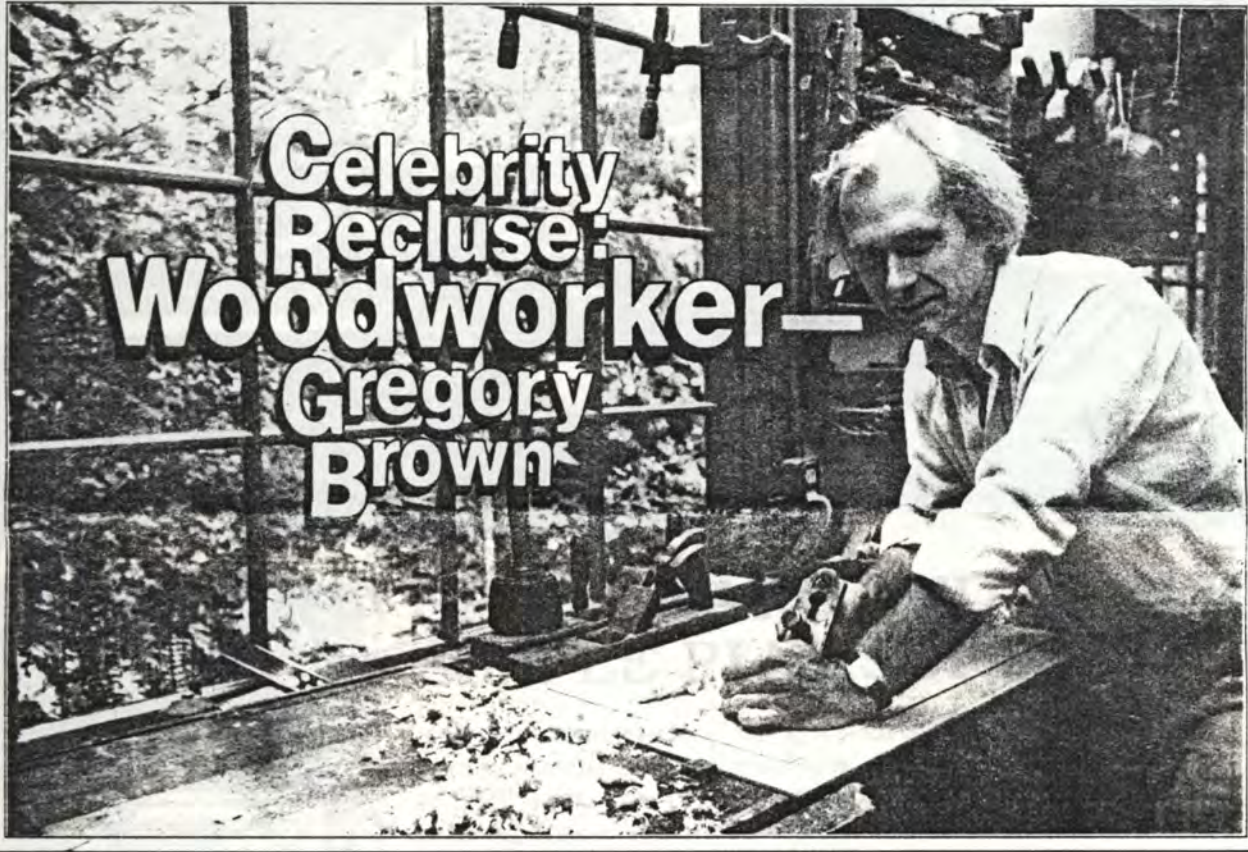
Honisch paints with an old-master technique as finely crafted as any you'll see. His drawing is based on the "firm, bounding line" with which William Blake engraved his visions. Honisch paints with dark, even glazes that create a rich profundity of tone. Hung in a quiet place at home, his paintings lure one with a gentle power of intrigue. They are paintings to live with.

The paintings are without doubt mysterious, and the artist admits that most people have a natural resistance to things they don't understand. Yet Honisch desires it. "The kind of art I enjoy most," he reveals, "is images that I cannot figure out, that leave me stunned. Something in me is confounded." Even if you don't understand it completely, his work will yield great satisfaction. Approach it calmly. Relax, half close your eyes. Let the images come to you. Daydream, remember, wonder. Don't be afraid.

Local artists Glenn Howarth and Phyllis Serota acquired paintings from Honisch's first show at Stones Gallery in 1983. Honisch is exactly the sort of artist who should be well represented in the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and the B.C. Provincial Art Collection. Winchester Gallery owner Bernard Raffo is to be commended for his support of this wonderful painter. Please honour him with your custom.

—Robert Amos

# 10th Year Monday MAGAZINE



## Celebrity Recluse: Woodworker— Gregory Brown

The first rowboat he built, on show at the upcoming Classic Boat Festival, was adored by boat-builders across North America. But Gregory Brown prefers to hide away in his Sidney workshop, carving spoon oars for customers who might be passing by.— 9

## Escape from Afghanistan

How Robert Usatch and Rosina Izzard fled Afghanistan in 1978 with a newborn baby and a carpet from the Royal Palace.— 7



## Hey, sailor

Victoria is poised for a rare gathering of naval ships to celebrate the Navy's 75th anniversary—and a social assault by 5,200 sailors from four nations.— 16

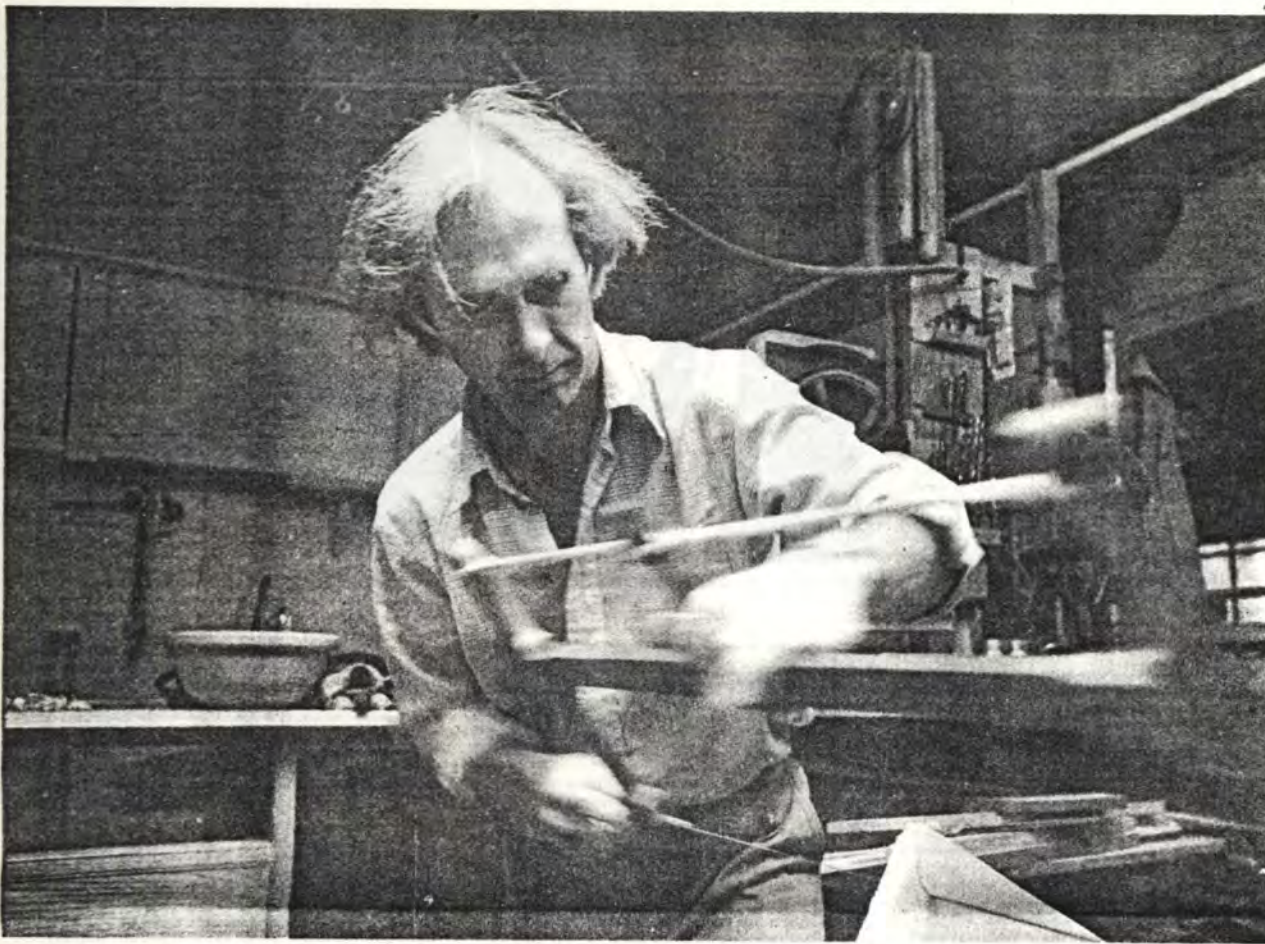
## Year of the drag

Michael Cimino's re-entry into the big budget movie sweepstakes is a crashing flop. Not even scenes shot in Victoria can save it.— 12

## Succulent salal

Barrie Angus McLean reveals the little-known pleasures of our most abundant wild berry.— 20

PLUS: CRIES AND WHISPERS: JAPANESE WAR HORRORS 2/ UP FRONT: BISHOP DE ROO AND ERIC CHARMAN 3/ BIERMAN'S GALLERY 3/ SEVEN DAYS: BREWIN HOLDS UP IN EARLY POLLING 5/ IN ONE EAR: DEREK DASHWOOD'S DREAMS 6/ ART: A MASTER FROM TAIWAN 12/ FOOTNOTES: SOUTH AFRICAN REGGAE 13/ DOONESBURY 15/ CALENDAR 16/ CLASSIFIED 21/ OVERSET 23/



## SPOON OARS AND OTHER SIMPLE PLEASURES

Sidney woodworker Gregory Brown prefers hand tools, spontaneous holidays, and rowboats with inlaid trim. His proficiency has made him a celebrity among those who work with wood

By ROBERT AMOS



Gregory Brown uses hand-held tools to push a dying art beyond its own traditions



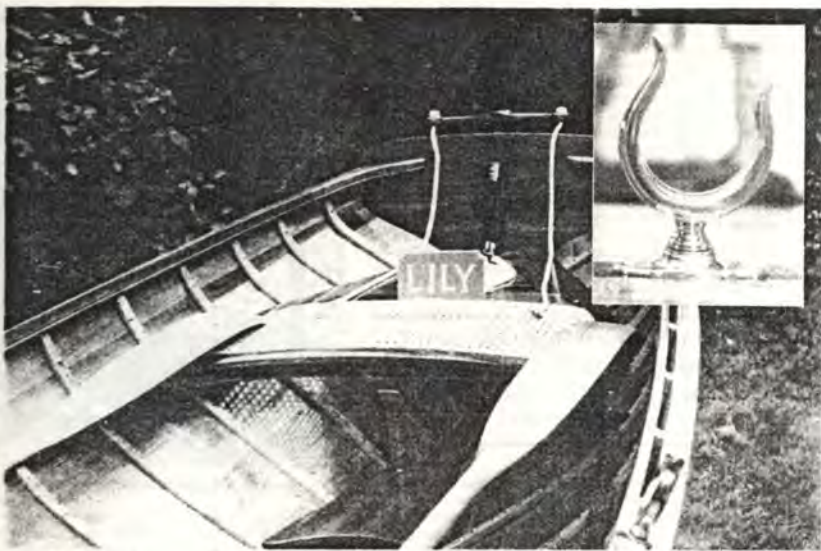
AROUND THE corner and down the way from the Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal a little workshop sits tucked in among towering cedars on McDonald Park Road. Inside, Gregory Brown, 40, is hunched over his workbench turning chunks of wood into truly fine furniture, boats, and musical instruments. No one who sees the slim leg of one of his traditional English tables can doubt his expertise. A circle of marquetry, inlaid with veneers, graces the top with the elegance of another age. The power tools lie silent while the hands carve, plane and saw with tools they built themselves, tools that put the measure of hand and eye into spoon oars, flutes, and candlesticks.

Gregory Brown is a celebrity in the world of woodworking. CBC television sought out his shop a few years ago. *Wooden Boat Magazine* featured his first boat in a cover story. When UVic's Maltwood Museum and Art Gallery presented the Designer/Woodworker exhibit in 1982, Brown's display was the focal point, winning him a description in these

pages as "a living national treasure." Maltwood director Martin Segger, writing in *Canadian Collector*, said "Brown must be ranked among Canada's small but growing band of elite craftsmen who, in retrieving a dying art, have pushed it beyond its own traditions."

Brown seems anything but a celebrity. Wispy-haired, wiry, soft-spoken and genial, the man and the gentle patience of his craft are indivisible. "I'm really out of the mainstream," Brown admits. "I'm quite ignorant about what's happening locally." Perhaps that's because he's too busy keeping up the production in his secluded workshop. Only by working alone can he maintain his output. "Some people like to work with people," he explains. "I like to work with wood."

As a cabinet maker, Brown is best known for his traditional furniture. The most typical is perhaps the Pembroke table, a tea table standing on delicately tapering legs, with drop leaves and a single shallow drawer. The joinery is all mortise-and-tenon or dovetail; the materials are well-seasoned hardwoods. His special touch is marquetry, wood veneers of almost transparent colour inlaid in fan-shapes,



stripes or rope-twist patterns. To add to the smooth fit and finish of the drawer Brown throws in a touch of sensual intelligence: an invisible finger-hold carved inside the support of the table leaf.

This connection of mind, eye and hand is pervasive, yet it's not something he could have learned at a trade school, even if he had attended one. Brown left his native England in 1953 at the age of eight, and only in later years did he learn that his great-grandfather had been an organ builder and his grandfather a carpenter. (His father sold typewriters and business machines.) As a young man he tried his hand at various jobs—selling batteries and anti-freeze, working on geological surveys—before he discovered his affinity for wood.

It started with renovations to a little house in Victoria, a former summer cottage on Gonzales Bay into which he put wide plank floors, arch-topped doors and an art nouveau hallway in pine and antique tiles. The affair with wood entered a new phase after he bought a broken flute from Faith Grant Antiques on Fort Street. When the shopkeeper saw his repair job, she invited him to work on antique restoration projects ranging from eighteenth century long case clocks to Chinese lacquers.

A boat lover's dream: workmanship appropriate for the manufacture of a violin



It was then he met John Rodd. Trained as a woodcarver in Britain, Rodd came to Victoria with his family in the early 1920s. He soon opened a shop on Pembroke Street where, Smith's Foundry is now located.

Rodd executed much of the best ecclesiastical woodwork in the Victoria area and wrote *The Repair and Restoration of Antiques*, considered the definitive book on the subject. Approaching retirement, he was glad to pass along a variety of jobs to the antique shop. In 1977 he also handed over his workshop in Sidney, many of his tools and, doubtless, a lot of knowledge to this young man whose skills and tastes were so similar to his own.

The shop is small and sweet with the smell of cherry, oak and cedar. The floor is usually covered with current projects, with room for a couple of Raleigh bicycles and some chairs for visitors. Along the sides are two work benches, described by Martin Segger as "robust enough for the purpose but meticulously detailed with turned columnar legs and inlaid

striping." Above the benches rest neat ranks of tools. The handmade bow saws are as fine as musical instruments; dozens of chisels are graced with brass and rosewood handles; antique molding planes line up along a shelf, and woodscrew clamps with hawthorn wood screws are ready to hold a table top in place. Brown says he bought a lot of the tools at the Tillicum Swap 'n' Shop in the 1970s, "when they were just old tools, before they became antiques." The few power tools date from John Rodd's days and work well, but they don't get a lot of use. "I like whatever I can do quietly, peacefully, without a lot of dust and noise," Brown remarks.

*'No one makes these oarlocks anymore,' says Brown, turning a heavy brass casting in his hands as if it were a sculpture*

An antique armoire big enough to hang a racoon coat in awaits varnish in the corner. It was made in Quebec around 1910 from burl maple, and Brown has re-carved some of the ornaments. Next to it, a guitar awaits final forming. He has his heart set on a lute, his next instrument-making project. Lest anyone think his work is all precious and expensive, consider the stack of chopping boards he has cut, turned and bevelled specifically for cutting up garlic, and the circular handmirrors which he produced in an attempt to cash in on the craft market. "A vain attempt," he notes.

Even though a side table from his shop may cost \$2,000, Brown doesn't get rich following his craft. He works slowly and depends on customers to seek him out. Victoria's many woodworkers could probably fill a furniture gallery along the lines of the one in Seattle, but Brown feels there wouldn't be enough customers to support it, and the markup would make his prices too high. He is well aware that he is making luxury goods. "You can't treat crafts like a union," he explains. "You can't say 'we'll make them listen, or we'll deprive them of what they need.'"

Brown will take on a remarkable variety of antique restorations. Recently he restored a 200-year-old French fan with a scene of gallant lovers painted on paper, mounted on chicken skin for flexibility and attached to ribs made of pierced mother-of-pearl. This sweet relic has been repaired, reassembled on a brass pivot and mounted in a cabinet Brown made of glass and mahogany inlaid with boxwood. It is evident from the intricate mountings that he loves making little fittings from brass.

On a larger scale are his oarlocks. "No one makes these anymore," says Brown, turning a heavy brass casting in his hands, as if it were a sculpture by Brancusi. To make the oarlock first he carves a wooden model, has it cast at a foundry, machines the shanks on his lathe, hand-files the yokes, then gives it a gleaming finish with a buffer and lots

# Monday

MAGAZINE

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of Brass. A pair of these oarlocks, presented in a mahogany box, was Brown's contribution to this year's Great Sidney Rowing Review, an annual event to which he is keenly devoted.



A few years back Gregory Brown took some time aside from other projects and devoted about 700 hours to building *Lily*. That's a lot of time to put in on a 17-foot rowing boat, but the result is sublime. Technically it's a Whitehall rowing boat, a style which evolved in New York Harbour before motorboats were invented.

The design has proven itself as a ship chandler's work boat, and as all-purpose public water transportation. Of course, it could look like a fisherman's dory, but the finish on Brown's version is different. To compare its workmanship to that of a violin or guitar wouldn't be an exaggeration, as anyone who saw it at recent Classic Boat Festivals will agree. It will be there again this year, looking for a buyer with \$7,000 to spare. Not concerned that it was Brown's first boat, the prestigious *Wooden Boat Magazine* of Brooklyn, Maine, put it on the cover of their July/Aug. 1983 issue for a story called "A Boat Lover's Dream." The photos were replete with long dresses, champagne and parasols. This summer's best-seller has been pairs of eight-foot

long spoon oars, another item "which just isn't made anymore" but which is irreplaceable for smooth sculling. Brown first laminates three long pieces of local cedar and then starts carving. "It's an honest form of woodworking," he says. "I'm fascinated by the whole idea of beauty and function together. The oars are quite a complex shape and to make a set, a certain amount of taste is involved." As he finishes a pair he leans them against his shop front. They usually find a buyer within hours. "I've never had a dissatisfied customer," Brown attests, "because I've never been a salesman."

Respect for wood comes first. "Wood is such a valuable thing," he says. "You're bound by your material and bound to honour it." For Brown, "bound by your material" implies design which is essentially conservative, respecting the way wood reacts to climate and mechanical stress. Yet "conservative" doesn't necessarily mean "old-fashioned." Some of his

*'I used to think that technical skills were the difficult part. Now I realize that the real trick is designing'*

furniture is discreetly modern, while other pieces, like a pine blanket box with a top like a pirate's chest, bring the flavour of folk art to fine woodworking.

"I used to think that technical skills were the difficult part," Brown recalls. "Now I realize that the real trick is designing. That's where your problems lie, the capacity to design well."

Gregory Brown has designed his life by the same principles of beauty, efficiency and respect. "I always try to do things which are within my means," he offers as a dictum. When he's not working, his pleasures centre on his wife Jill Ann and six-month-old daughter Niecea, meeting friends to play Irish jigs, and taking rowboat picnics around the waterfront and the nearby Gulf Islands. Once he and his wife rowed off for the afternoon with light summer clothes and basket of strawberries. They found a combination of friends and pleasures and didn't get home for a week.

A bigger boat or more deluxe amusements wouldn't appeal to Brown. "I'm not interested in debt. What's the use of having something if you can't afford to maintain it?" He feels any sort of debt would disturb his creativity. "While you may be able to do your work in a practical sense, there's no time for reflection if you're in debt. And you can't evolve if you don't reflect."

Out of that evolved understanding of himself and his craft, Gregory Brown is able to carve an oar that turns rowing into an aesthetic adventure. He does it with a cheerful fanaticism that is quite beyond pretension, quietly working in his small workshop among the cedars.

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Theatre - A Report from Victoria:  
The Wonderful World of Edna Brown

The 1300 block on Government Street in Victoria sees a lot of action on a good night. Cruisers in Chryslers flow by the hookers who wait at the edge of the stream. Someone leans on every lamppost.

Just out of the hurly-burly nightscape at Government and Johnson is a haven - not the picnic table democracy of Little Sammy's burger shop or the subterranean fury of Pal's, disco for the gay crowd. It will never attract the swaggering buckaroos sauntering down the sidewalk from the Century Pub. In fact, it's hard to picture the clients of this world of manners and decorum sharing the sidewalk with the rest of the crowd. It's called Edna Brown's Little Dinner Theatre.

Built in 1909 as a nickelodeon, for the past three years it has been the home of Victoria's one and only dinner theatre.

Step into the spacious foyer, past the protective sculpture of the baby Hermes (guardian of travellers) and make yourself at home on the generous brocade sofa. Check your hemline and coiffure in the mirrors and catch your breath while your date makes the arrangements and the many statues finish their greetings - owls and fisherfolk and a plaster llama sitting on the carpet. Printed souvenirs of past performances warn visitors that this is going to be something very different: "Did you know? Edna Brown, an imaginative restaurateur, changed the history of dinner theatre one afternoon?..."

Suddenly Edna Brown pops out of the kitchen to greet her guests. She is simply dressed, a small woman, 72 years old, who moves

with restraint and sureness. She proudly welcomes you to her theatre, her home. She dreamed up the concept, styled the decor, wrote the play and now she's cooking the dinner. "Leave your coat in the checkroom dear," she advises. "The theatre is designed that way" (Coats would spoil the decor). And she's back to her cooking.

The theatre is just a few steps away, back past the bar. Everyone gasps at first sight. It's breathtaking, a tiny room (only six metres wide) like a jewel-box, decorated like a dream. It's very clean, finished to perfection with the best materials: foil wallpaper picks up the warm red lights set into the tables and magnified through glowing waterglasses. A mirrored staircase leads to a small balcony at the back. The tiny canopied stage promises wonders behind a ruffled curtain while love seats line up facing the stage - a gracious, genteel red velvet tunnel of love.

From the piano, Robin Sealy vamps softly: "Happy days are here again" and "People will say we're in love". The world of Edna Brown is taking over.

The audience sits entranced, taking in every detail - sparkly ceiling, designer cutlery, and the Aynsley bone china (service for 90) in a Chinoiserie pattern of birds and flowers dating from the 18th Century. "I don't wear jewellery" says Edna Brown, "but I like nice china".

In 1980 she bought the building at 1323 Government Street. Her previous restaurant was the Red Swing, which Howie Siegel turned into Pagliacci's, hardly believing the Royal Doulton china dinner service he inherited. He also fell heir to a two-metre mannequin in a red velvet

dress which used to swing there, from a papier mache tree, beneath fibre-glass clouds. The decor was all dark drapes and mirrors, even the 16-foot front window. Edna Brown also ran The Sugar'D Mule (a euphemism for Sweet Ass?) in the Chateau Victoria Hotel from 1975 to 1980.

The menu is simple: Chicken Grand Marnier, Salmon with Hollandaise and English Roast Beef. During the brief wait for dinner, everyone is a trifle giddy, the bearded hairdresser and his boyfriend, the couple from Alberta, the young woman taking Grandma out for the evening. Quiet chat enhances the cozy atmosphere. Since the red benches all face the same way, everything can be overheard but no expressions seen; it's an eavesdroppers' paradise.

Edna Brown does the cooking herself, calling on a long career of cooking at Jasper Park Lodge, Banff Springs Hotel and, back in the early '40s, Vancouver's Macombo Club (where Yvonne de Carlo got her start). The meals are usually satisfactory and often include some extra-special feature like homemade blackberry conserves on the chocolate cake with whipping cream. Anyone who thinks the meals are less than extravagant should know that what she saves on the meals she spends on the actors.

Edna's dinner theatre project is the realization of a dream. Without government grants or sponsorship she runs a full-time theatre that will hire and expose young, untried actors. As one of them said, "I'm the only 16-year-old actor in town with a paying job." Many local directors and playwrights, among them Phil Wagner and Kevin Land, have been given a chance here at a time when it really counted. Said one: "I hope she never quits. With all the difficulties inherent in

making this thing a go she has the courage and determination. She's producing theatre. It's totally new, all original and it's here."

The curtain rises, slowly, into the sky blue canopy, like Diamond Lil raising her fulsome ruffled skirt pleat by pleat. Tonight's play is The Vicar's Daughter, one of Edna Brown's romantic suspense comedies. ("I got so mad at paying royalties that I started writing my own plays", she explained.)

The greedy vicar leaves his oversexed teenage daughter, Helga, and his oversexed garlic-and-onions wife for a "pleasant and profitable summer" with his flock. He leaves them in the care of Peter, a newspaper reporter, who promises to cure Helga of her problem - streaking nude through the house. As soon as the vicar is gone, Peter convenes a meeting of three members of the Association for Homeless Newspaper Reporters. Add an unsolved murder and the appearance of Benny, "a dangerous paranoid with homicidal tendencies" and you've got something for everybody.

Edna Brown's playwriting is based on giving the audience what they want, then adding a touch of her personal philosophy and, some say, throwing in autobiographical incidents from her own colourful life. What the audience wants seems to be sexy titillation and mystery. Helga keeps promising a nude scene and, in fact, plays the final minutes in her "skivvies" - a lavender corset, bloomers and stockings. The suspense keeps the audience (of 10 or 20 - not all stay to the end) in place, if not totally entranced, for the 90-minute performance. Edna Brown's talents as an author rest partly on the ruthless efficiency with which she manipulates sex and suspense. As the play pours along in a stream of consciousness, the characters take sleeping pills or poison without

a thought, dropping dead on stage left, right and centre. The effect verges on surrealism.

Edna Brown has written many plays and to date has staged Love and Lies, Breaking Out, The Vicar's Daughter and is now producing Noah in the Lion's Den, a two and a half hour musical which reportedly will be completely based on hymn tunes. She says they're all available on video, and that some have been staged in other cities, and are being prepared for passenger nights on a coastal cruise line.

It has been said of Edna Brown that "she feeds you and then she talks to you." What does she say in the plays? "I wouldn't believe a damn thing I read in the newspapers now. What a way to make a living - writing about dead nude girls. I'd rather write about live nude girls."

"Dora was a girl with a heart of gold. She didn't realize you had to sell sex."

Edna Brown speaks bluntly. She is proud to consider herself a rebel, a bit of a nut. One of her characteristics is a love of younger people; she surrounds herself with youth and it pays off. The Vicar's Daughter went through four directors in a few weeks and then it was left up to the young actors, whose dedication and intensity never let up; Peter, the pivotal role, is played by 16-year-old Dominic Lawless. The calm of his remarkable performance holds the cast together on course. All the other characters are morally reprehensible but somehow endearing. Helga, played by a scrumptious 17-year-old (Cathie Whitney), fights off a repressed nymphomania that allows for no character development but keeps the audience transfixed.

Occasionally Edna Brown will appear at the back of the theatre. She's been known to bang the pots loudly in the kitchen if she isn't pleased with the performance, just one of the ways she controls every aspect of her creation and keeps her staff in fear of her impulsive decisions. She sometimes hires and fires on the spot, though some loyal employees have become like family members. "Benny" writes his own parts in the plays - he's a fixture.

Her regular audience may be unsophisticated theatrically, but they are loyal. They exit smiling, and send postcards from all over the world - "a unique experience, so enjoyable". When the mood is right they gather afterwards in the banquet room downstairs to sing and linger beside the palm-tree mural.

And when they go home, the creator, her pacemaker working overtime, keeps going until 3 a.m. She's back up at 7 a.m. Her vigorous constitution is sustained without medicines: "I let my ideas out - I don't get headaches". Besides painting and playwrighting, she's working on her autobiography, where the truth about her teenage homesteading days in Manitoba may finally be told. She's a voracious collector of antiques, the best of which are in her penthouse apartment upstairs.

She's shrewd, tough, and protective, but without ever losing a lovable streak of zaniness. Edna Brown's Little Dinner Theatre is not for everyone. It will only work on those susceptible to the magic of manners, decorum and tastes of a 72-year-old lady, and not just any 72-year-old lady.

Robert Amos

This year every third person yearns for a trip to Japan. The western liberal meekly approaches Japan as a tea ceremony world with spiritual underpinnings. The hard-nosed businessman on a five-day tour sees Japan as a ripe market. Yet for a westerner who speaks the language and lives in the ordinary workaday world there, Japan has a different aspect.

Such a man is Byron Black. He has been in Japan for the last three years teaching video production at Osaka Photographic College. A rare bird, this Black is simultaneously a conservative salaryman and an avant-garde artist, a man who can see the unique mid-Pacific culture from many points of view. And for him the bloom is definitely off the rose.

Tall and balding, dressed in white from head to toe, Black stands out. He's forty two years old, a naturalized Canadian, born and bred an army brat in Texas. At the school in Osaka, "Buracku-san" stands before his class of twenty five Japanese teenagers. The boys try to ignore him while the girls fidget, repressed and volatile, as Black expounds video theory in rapid-fire Japanese. He's a westerner on fast forward, teaching or travelling or showing his art in galleries, museums and department stores.

Black went to Japan the first time in 1962, after making friends with Japanese at the University of Texas. He says: "I was drawn to Japan, and I got there as a teacher of modern language methods to Japanese high school teachers. I suspect that I was there long ago.

Probably in a previous incarnation I was a Japanese. I have a very strong suspicion that a lot of people, especially those who died in the war, came back again on the other side because of negative attraction. Take a look at the way the character of Americans and Japanese men has changed over the past 25 years. Now there's a large element in North American men of sensitivity and subtlety, of awareness and latitude which you didn't have in your traditional "yohoho" swaggering American guy. Conversely, in Japan there is a new hard-edge aggressive attitude. It's not discrete, it's not circuitous, and it's not very Japanese."

In the morning when he takes his desk at Osaka Photographic College, the night cleaners are still finishing up. First Byron works on his international correspondence. "Mail Art" is a fixation with him and he launches a fleet of post-card missiles daily. His other creative projects go ahead until, two hours later, the students arrive and Black is calmed down and ready for them. "Students don't like too much energy," he says, "They're still tired and trying to wake up." Even so, his classes are especially stimulating. He's the first non-Japanese to teach at the school, and he's a practising artist too.

When he was invited to the College in 1980, he was teaching "English as a second language" for his tenth year at U.B.C. in Vancouver. In those ten years he had repeatedly gone broke as an experimental film-maker with grand visions, and here he was offered access to state-of-the-art video gear, wages and free rent. The new posting was welcome, to say the least.

Up till then, the self-styled "radioactive aristocrat" had been too fast moving, too far out. But these days, when the news reports increasingly read like the novels of William Burroughs, his

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work is seen to have a lot of relevance. At the new Vancouver Art Gallery's opening on October 15, Black's films, video tapes and electrostatic colour copy prints will be part of the History of Art in Vancouver, 1970's section. At the same time, the International Print Exhibition in Frechen, Germany, will feature his work, already familiar to Japanese museum goers. Belated recognition is a way of life in the art world. By-passed in the seventies, Byron Black is getting his due this year.

The pace of life "in the fast lane" of downtown Osaka has prepared Black to take advantage of this success. But the rocket send-off of Japan takes its toll.

"I spend much of my time trying to avoid the intense stress - and my school is a Mickey Mouse outfit. The staff at my school is not in danger of being fired or of making great mistakes which will cause the death of somebody. But the stress is everywhere. Of course, some people have grave responsibilities to handle. Across from us, for example, is the gas engineering company. Okay, you've got to get the gas right, otherwise you're going to have a serious explosion, and you're going to have bodies lying around. Right? In our school we don't have such grave responsibilities. However, everyone's under such frustration, such stress. And it's very contagious."

Many young men now show signs of breaking out of the drone-like existence of the company man. "I've watched them when I've been in the major companies doing translation work. Come 6 o'clock the 24 year olds want to go home. 'It's time to go home', they say.

The 45 year olds glance up muttering over their desks, scribbling things off, pushing papers around, because they're used to being there every night till 9 o'clock, six days a week. When something comes in, it has to be done right now. Pow pow pow."

Black himself works late at his second job. "At the advertising agency where I work, I always ask this question: 'How soon do you need it?' - which is the most stupid question ever breathed. They've got to have it right now. Why? No 'why' about it. Because everything happens that way in Japan. That's why the businesses are cooking. And the companies are cooking. The people are paying a very heavy price which is their mental health and their physical health. You give cirtually your entire life for the company. Eight in the morning till nine at night. And then you go out with the same people you've been in the office with all day, and you drink till 11 o'clock and discuss things. Then you go home on the train, you fall in the bathtub, wifey tucks you in bed, you get up the next morning and you're off to the company again. The kids never see you. On Sunday you go out and play tennis with the kids and you go through the motions... but you're too wiped out from the whole week, you're so exhausted that you can't do anything. And this is not an unusual case."

Bachelor Byron's answer to this lifestyle is not to bail out, but rather to keep ahead of things in the "techno-anthill". Black lives life at a relentless pace. In his home in the Osaka suburb of Senrioka he's up at 4:30 a.m. to do his meditation before the atmosphere is jammed with action. Then, in quick succession, he runs a few miles, takes a deep bath, smokes a cigar and drinks a cup of potent espresso

coffee. Finally astride his motorcycle, he flies off to the school.

"On the motorcycle I always go like a bat out of hell, and I'm afraid they'll catch me on the bike doing 140. I'll have had it.

"Apparently at the speed traps, if you're a woman, or if you're young, or if you're driving a red car or a motorcycle, you're especially vulnerable. They won't stop big black Lincolns with curtains and lace doilies in the back, and they won't stop rich people.

Especially yakuza (gangsters), because they are afraid of them. It's power and influence, isn't it? In Japan the yakuza and the government are hand in hand. The gangsters get their hands slapped, they get lectured. The finger is pointed and they are asked "please be careful in future". It's gangster capitalism. The government uses the yakuza to keep the populace down - to keep crime organized. As long as crime is organized things run smoothly. For example, go to New Jersey, the streets are clean, your sister can walk the sidewalk. You cross over to Manhattan, it's like anarchy. Wild in the streets. But in New Jersey... why, it's a Mafia state. You aren't going to mess around with the Mafia, or you end up 'without due process of law'. You get a concrete overcoat. And in Japan, in the major entertainment areas, these big bruisers keep the traffic moving, they 'keep a lid on', as you might say.

"There are very few cops in Japan. The government's really stingy. That's why they're so rich. Very few police. Traffic police - if you get caught - Woe! - you get the book thrown at you. Once I took the rap for somebody else's parking ticket. I was asked to say I had parked the car illegally in front of the office. I went down... it

took me half a day, two interrogations, standing in for a parking ticket. Four hours, twenty-five bucks and half a day of interrogations. It was nothing unusual. There were several hundred people there - you could see they were dug in and ready to do their half day.

"Not a nice interrogation, eighter. Question A, question B, question C, question A, question B.... And they compare your two answers. For a parking ticket! It didn't matter. Once you cross the line.... But getting caught is very hard."

Years ago when Byron first went to Japan he was the object of a lot of attention simply because he was a foreigner. Students accosted him to practise their English and he was treated royally wherever he went. But times have changed.

"I feel a lot of aggression towards foreigners, not much of it directly expressed, but lots of 'clipping'. Clipping is not right. The referee will penalise you five or ten yards for clipping. I get clipped all the time or I have to step aside. I am walking towards somebody, necktie, suit, you know, someone who works for a company, he'll clip me.

"Shoulder to shoulder. Clip. It's the same as in football isn't it? Bam, pass on by. And when it happens three or four times in a row, it manages to transfer to you a degree of rage and frustration. It isn't like Thailand. Because if someone tried that in Thailand, he'd get shot to death immediately. End of story. But in Japan, things are discrete, circuitous, one is not quite sure."

However, certain groups of foreigners fit in very well because they're not too different from the Japanese themselves.

"Mormons in Japan are very big. Not that they are successful

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there, because Japanese are basically wary of Christianity or foreign doctrine. But Mormons in Japan are well understood because they are such straight arrows and they are so completely rigid that it fits into that very rigid society.

"The nature of existence there is very defined. And I think the kind of soul which incarnates in Japan wants the following characteristics: it wants extreme stability, security, predictability and safety. It wants to cultivate its own obedience, it wants to be guided from above, and it wants to have a kind of harmony. These are qualities you have to respect, if someone wants them.

"Robert Rauschenberg (the American artist) fitted into Japan very well. He's like an old master. He knew what he was doing. He wanted to do this and do that in a very civilized, a very scientific, studious way. He bowled them over.

"Yet Rauschenberg was funny because he didn't want the media to look over his shoulder. The immediate news coverage was okay - but other stuff, very personal - 'no, please, no, thank you.' Yet that's how Japanese media coverage is. They want to get right in. They really like to interfere. If they don't interfere they haven't really gotten the image. So at a certain point he said 'No. I'm trying to do this, please.' They had to console themselves with being outside and peeking in through a little window. The Peeping Tom School of Journalism. They just go too far.

"It's on the news everyday. For example, there's a weeping mother who was dragged away from the scene of the accident. 'Are you sad your children were killed? Yes? How do you feel? What do you think is going to be done about this? Yes, I see. What plans do you have for more children? Okay, thank you, fine, fine.' I've seen that.

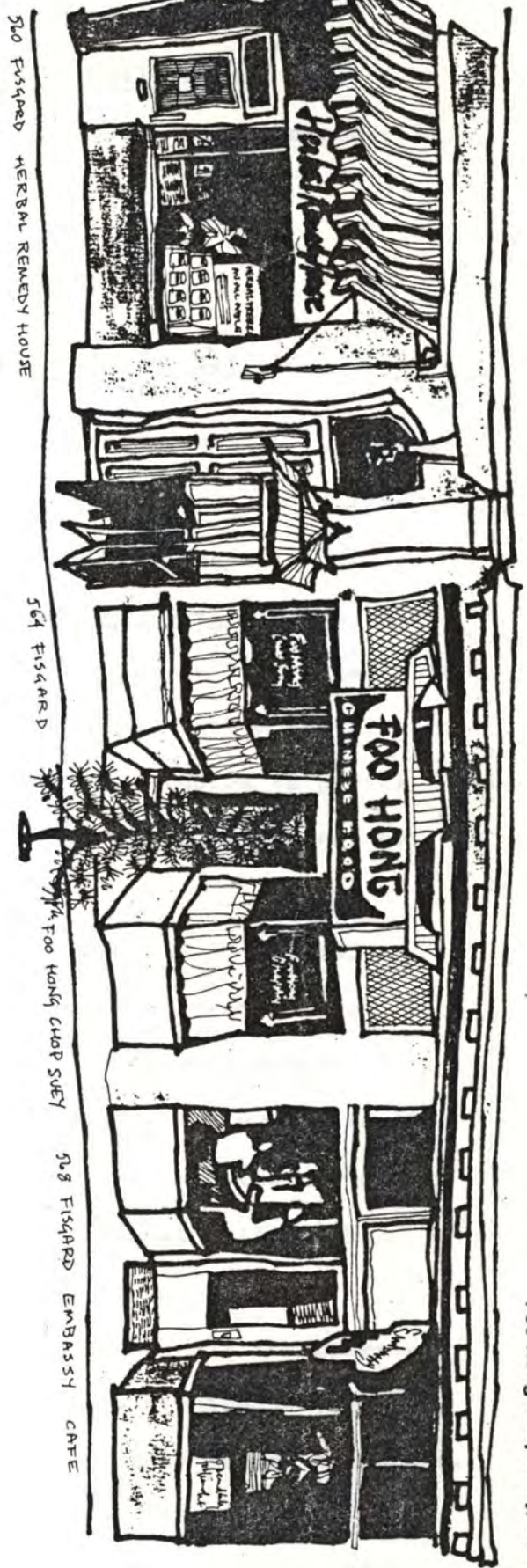
I just get so enraged, I feel like kicking the TV in the ass.

"Twenty-one years ago, when I first went to Japan, there was some sense of what can still be found here and there - the graciousness and the enjoyment of the moment for its own sake with no regard to profit or loss - that's going, that's gone.

"Of course, you can catch glimpses of that antique world. That's why the elderly in Japan and people who still live life that way are like refugees in their own country. They're like refugees.

"I'm sorry that I have to be so strongly critical of the current mood, the lack of flexibility and consideration I find in Japan. It's smash and grab capitalism. It's go, go, go. It's total distraction. That's the fundamental social disease of the moment. Distraction.

"There's annoyance also, people are not happy. What is this we've done? We've worked so hard, we've conquered all these barriers, these goals, we've got this much. But somehow this is not really what makes us fulfilled. And there's always more to get and somehow things are not right."



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Joe Plaskett: A Retrospective from West Coast Collections

Maltwood Museum, University of Victoria. (721 8298). Until November 11.

"There is a secret garden in me that I wish to cultivate. I leave it to the young artists to wage their revolution."

Joe Plaskett, Vie des Arts No. 63, 1971.

If you like the sensual aspects of painting, the darts, drips, dashes and oily squibs of colour - Joe Plaskett is your man. If you imagine that an artist should live in a 15th Century house in Paris, surrounded by exotic treasures from the Marche aux Puces supping on Camembert and Baaajolais with men and women of genius - then Plaskett's your man. His extensive show at U. Vic.'s Maltwood Museum (until November 11) includes landscapes and architectural studies in pastel but that Paris apartment and those who visit are the real subject of this man's work.

Joe Plaskett was born in New Westminster, B.C., in 1918. Brought up in the rectory there, his early days were spent in the countryside above the Fraser River. "Close at hand were ruins, gardens, a "hinto temple and cemeteries", he recalls. In this idyllic setting, combining country and town, life was quiet, provincial, old-fashioned - a golden age, the quality of which Plasket still seeks to rediscover.

His art training and Canadian career touched all the bases - U.B.C., the Vancouver School of Art, Banff School, Winnipeg Art School, and Emily ~~xxx~~ Carr Scholarship and a year at the Slade School in London. Since 1957 he has been painting full-time in Paris, though "with frequent and often long trips to Canada", he admits. At this point

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the inexorable march of his biography seems to have ceased. He works in his Paris home and history spreads out from there as his circle of visitors and models expands.

The apartment is a sort of time machine in which mirrors and clocks and myriad antiques help him travel to the era of the impressionists when the artists' task was to capture the ravishing impressions of the play of light. Plaskett's romantic soul impels him to paint the people he loves yet his skill and joy in painting carry him beyond the model to fill his pictures with virtuoso flourishes. Chevaliers and fencers, actors, poets and languorous lovers people his canvases while billowing ~~curtains~~ curtains, glistening chandeliers, melon rinds and mantelpieces cavort in the background. Yet Plaskett is not a symbolist. A fellow artist observed "he is one of the few people I know who do not view things moralistically."

Simply put, the man paints very well, his approach is warmly human, and he is achieving a sufficiency of success. This exhibit is a bit jammed in, a bit unselected, but if you like painting - the art and the object - Plaskett's your man.

Robert Amos

# Visual jazz of the streets

LINE-POEM DRAWINGS, Keith McKellar. Ekstasis Editions, Box 474, Victoria, V8W 2N8, 1983, \$50 (only 100 copies printed), 44 pp., sc.

**D**URING THE past summer Keith McKellar was a habitué of the harbour, doing drawings to sell, laying out his cards on the causeway and jiving with the gawkers all day long.

Now his best work has been published in book form. *line-poem drawings* isn't a very revealing title, but the stark black covers told one man's visual jazz, 40 pen-drawn improvisations on life as he finds it.

Individually the success of these drawings depends on our recognition of the subject matter, for McKellar has chosen Victoria (and some scenes of Vancouver and Mexico) as his field— coffee counter boys at Ian's Coffee Stop; ladies blethering over tea in Oak Bay; Clifton "Odd Job" McLean leaning on a trash can at Yates and Douglas. McKellar's cartoony style captures our unsung local heroes in recognizable form. Arabesques spring from his pen and echo the vitality of the street people, the forthright riffs of sidewalk musicians like Harmonica-mom at Eaton's. The tight-knit cross hatching captures each permanent wave as tea is taken in the Empress.

One by one these drawings are amusing, but gathered as a book, McKellar's cartoons begin to reveal his philosophy. From his curbside viewpoint he presents the other side, "a vista into the comic-climate of the cafe and street," as he puts it. The street characters seem to be down-trodden, yet in his view they are fallen angels, light spirits who have accepted their position in the scheme of things. The artist points out that the icons of these realized souls are "sprinkled amidst cafe-gatherings of the overtables of very-worldly pastries, the waiting and the weighted-low mateless in the late afternoon." McKellar's cafe scenes bring to mind the characters who T.S. Eliot described as "measuring out their lives in coffee spoons."

It's a curious little book— a self-published limited edition, entirely pictures with just a few words of text for each one. Yet the artist— who fancies the alias "Laughing Hand"—has put a line around the temper of the times in Victoria. Aren't there a lot of us passing the time, waiting in Victoria? When you see McKellar at work (in the Harbour Public Market until Christmas) ask to see the book. It's all true.

—Robert Amos

Harmonica-Mom

Keith McKellar

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One man's visual jazz: scene from Keith McKellar's book *Line-Poem Drawings*

# ART

## The selling of ceramics

EIGHTH ANNUAL VANCOUVER ISLAND POTTER'S PRE-CHRISTMAS EXHIBITION AND SALE, Georgian Lounge, Empress Hotel, Nov. 15-16, 12 to 9 pm

**R**OBIN RIGHTON showed us around his small house on the edge of Swan Lake. The house seems unpretentious but there is a factory in the basement, and the ramshackle shed in the back opens out to reveal a business-like gas-fired kiln big enough to walk into. Obviously the man is a professional potter.

Eight years ago Righton, with Art Brendon and others, put together a show and sale of pottery, exclusively pottery and only the best. It has continued to be a small show of invited artists, artists of national renown like Jan and Helga Grove, Wayne Ngan and Walter Dexter. It seems these artists are too busy throwing and firing to hit the craft fair trail all year. And for their sophisticated ceramic art other show places may not be quite right— church basement

sales may be too funky, and the recent monster exhibition at Vancouver's Sheraton Landmark too slick and huge. For them the ambience at the Empress is just perfect— close knit and high class.

Over the years this pre-Christmas sale has built a strong following. Buyers line up at opening time, ready to spend \$200 or \$300 on a couple of choice items— for they know that the potters bring their best, newest and most challenging work to this show. Lately it has become a marketing conference as well, when shop owners from the east take the opportunity to fly in and spend three days at the Empress, meeting a number of potters from the Islands, to see their wares and arrange shows for the coming year. Make no mistake: culture is an industry in Victoria and these potters are making it pay.

"There is a very high proportion of good potters here," Brendon pointed out. "At first they establish a market somewhere else, but they all move here for the lifestyle." It is true, then, that the quality of ceramics improves as you go west in Canada? "I notice an improvement— even between here and Vancouver," said Brendon. In light of a complete lack of local workable clays this seems remarkable, but the prospect of trucking all that material from Moose Jaw leaves our potters undaunted. The abundance of talent is stimulating and has set a tremendous standard in the market here.

Who buys it all? "I'd like to see a cross section," he mused, "They seem to be, you know, people with theatre tickets, people interested in the arts in some way. I'd say we get very good support from people here."



The potters deserve their success. Even as we talked Linda Mackie was working away in the basement workshop. With hot wax she drew a floral motif on the teapot she had made, then plugged the spout with clay and dipped the whole thing into a murky bucket of glaze. "We work afternoons and evenings," she said, looking up from the muddy corner. "Eight days a week," added Righton.

There are some very good outlets for ceramics in Victoria year round. The Potter's Wheel (633 Courtenay, in Nootka Court), The Handloom (625 Trounce Alley) and Out of Hand (1619 Store Street) all carry pieces by some of these artists. But the pre-Christmas sale is special. For the hard-working potters it's a social event— "this is the only time of the year when we get together," says Righton. And it's a chance for better displays and the best work, presented to an audience known to be discriminating and eager. Get there early.

—Robert Amos

**Potter Robin Righton: preparing for the 8th annual Vancouver Island Potter's pre-Christmas exhibition and sale. It's at the Empress, Nov. 15-16**

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# A BIT OF VICTORIA CHRISTMAS TRIVIA

By BRUCE LOWTHER

1. The Legislative Buildings have lights all year, but they do help make Christmas more attractive. When and why were they installed?

2. How long has it been since the last White Christmas in Victoria, which means since we woke up to snow on Christmas Day?



3. Good Christmas sounds in town include the Netherlands Centennial Carillon beside the Provincial Museum, played by Herman Bergink. What centenary was marked by this gift?

4. Ask older Victorians why they went to Head Street and Moss Street when they were young, and what will they tell you?

5. The Times-Colonist 1000 Fund is only one of many local groups helping needy people. Which paper started it, in what year, what was its original name and who supplies the names to be helped?

6. Before the Second World War, and even before the first, many Victorians followed the tradition of going to church on Christmas Eve. Most walked; what was the second most popular way of going?

7. In Victoria and Vancouver, many people made sure, during Christmas shopping periods before the Second World War, to go to one store and hear the employees' choir. Name the store and give its name today.

8. To the children of today, some of the best Christmas lighting is in the shopping malls. Which was opened first: Hillside Mall, Mayfair or Town and Country? Be warned. It's a tricky answer.

9. Why does Victoria remember Christmas Day in 1966 with warmth and Boxing Day in 1968 without?

10. Christmas has had a special meaning for two well-known Victorians, Zebulon Worthington and Big Jim Ryan. What are the two meanings?

Answers in Classified, p. 37



Merry Christmas from Phyllis and Shelley

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Robert Amos, art critic

Paintings by Robert Amos are at Baba Fine Art Books in Nootka Court until Jan. 4, 382-4262.

Robert Amos  
BABA BOOKS  
DEC. 3 - JAN. 4  
3-82-42-62

At the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1040 Moss (384-4101): **Robert Amos' Paintings** of rainy streets are in the gallery tearoom to Jan. 17. **Mingei**, folk crafts of Japan, is a display Dec. 21-Feb. 17 of everyday items made by Japanese craftsmen. Included: ceramics, textiles, paintings, paper stencils, wooden and bamboo utensils. A selection of silver, glass and porcelain from the permanent collection illustrate the beauty of **18th Century Decorative Arts**, Dec. 13-Jan. 13. The first west coast showing by Alberta artist **Jeffrey Spalding** opens Dec. 13. To Feb. 3 Spalding uses reductive formalism. **American Prints** of the best known American artists, including **Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns** and **Robert Rauschenberg** open Dec. 13. To Feb. 3. A major 100-year survey of 80 women artists of the past and present is **B.C. Women Artists: 1885-1985**, opening Dec. 13. To Feb. 3. **Christmas Print Sale and Exhibition** features **Toni Onley, Pat Martin-Bates, Jack Shadbolt** and many others. A donation of 40 per cent of the purchase price goes to the gallery. Winter hours are 10 am-5 pm Tues.-Sat., 1-5 pm Sun. Free admission Thurs. 5-9 pm. Public tours are included with the price of admission Sun. at 2 pm. Adults \$2, students and seniors \$1, children under 12 free.

Strange Occurrences, Part II: strange occurrence at Southside restaurant



ROBERT AMOS

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# ART

## Visions of veiled faces

MILES LOWRY: LANGUAGE OF LOVE  
Gallerie Untitled, 1618 Government St.  
until Jan. 5

**T**HE GALLERIE Untitled doesn't suit just any artist. Inconsistent hours of opening, an unlisted telephone number and a dedication to the

more mysterious aspects of visual art are just a few of the obstacles to popular acceptance.

But Miles Lowry's show suits the space very well and offers an integrated art experience which could well be a model for other galleries.

The front window features a delicate and low-key installation by Wayne Ryzak, another Victoria artist. Her glass teardrops and a veil set the mood for Lowry's work, a nice bit of artistic cooperation. Inside the gallery, spacey/exotic music lends a mystically flavoured background to paintings capable of touching us on levels deeper than the surface.

Lowry's paintings are mostly figurative, built on a solid foundation of drawing. In their evolution, Lowry draws veils, vapours and misty distances across faces full of yearning and absorption. Is it just the ethereal airbrush technique that implies the spirituality? "Actually, artists who want the mystical look choose airbrush," Lowry says.

The best of his series of paintings of veiled women is a watercolour titled

*Evening Star*. It has been handsomely reproduced in colour as a 34x26-inch poster. By means of smaller posters and word of mouth, this show has garnered encouraging sales and a supportive audience. Good paintings, good promotion— have a good look.

—Robert Amos



## SID FRY'S STONE ARCH

He hired an army of street kids to work through the night hauling stones. The result is a \$26,000 arch on Broad Street.—20

# ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT



## ARCHING THE ALLEYWAY

Sid Fry set out to build a stone arch the old way, hauling and shaping by hand

By ROBERT AMOS

**“S**TONE IS the most expensive material on earth to build with because of the labour involved— but you can just pick it up off the ground. It's the pure raw substance from this place,” says Sid Fry.

Fry has just built an English-style stone archway, nine cut stones, standing without mortar, spanning the alley beside Southside Restaurant (1215 Broad St.).

Fry went into Southside the second night it was open and he liked it. It had atmosphere. Owner Alan de Fiore asked him to extend the front steps because women in high heels fell down there. “I made it like a diamond ring,” says Fry of the herringbone pattern of bricks. “I thought, maybe if I did something really nice he'd want me to do more.” Next he built a planter around the gas meter and soon decided to do something to hide the trash kept back in the alley.

Fry encountered stone-cutting 20 years ago, working in the mason's shop at the B.C. Penitentiary. “There were guys in there who built that place,” he says. They taught him the rudiments and he's been in love with the craft ever since, teaching others, “to pass it down, to give it back.” Starting out as a bricklayer, he became a master craftsman, now the best stone cutter in the city.

The arch itself is modelled after I.K. Brunel's famous Maidenhead Bridge in Britain. “For some reason that arch

Fry's \$26,000 arch next to the Southside restaurant



drives women crazy," claims Fry. "if you lined up every kind of arch in the world..."

"Southside made me wait a month and then gave me \$3,200 to do it all," he says. Fry ordered \$1,000 worth of Southside food while he waited. Southside is a new restaurant, located where the Cultured Cow used to be in the old Colonist newspaper building on Broad Street. Paperboys have gone to pick up their bundles in the alley for years. Fry foresees the day his arch will lead to a candlelit cafe under the stars.

Work began in July. To get things started he went to Clover Point to retrieve a sandstone pillar dumped there as building debris. It's nine and a half inches wide, five feet long, weighs 250 pounds, and was perhaps once part of Victoria's original Post Office. Fry carried it two miles up from the beach between dusk and dawn. "I'm fanatical, I'm crazy, I won't deny it," he says.

He is well aware of Parks By-law 69-69, making it illegal to remove debris from the seawall, but he wanted those stones to match the original building. "I tried to get a tow-truck or a crane, but nobody would help me. So I picked up

Arch builder Fry (r.) with Kevin, one of the 'army of workers' Fry picked up to help build the arch

an army." Fry scouted Yates and Douglas, offering jobs to people who could use the work and a meal. The rocks, weighing 1,200 pounds, were moved inch by inch up and over the 35-foot cliffs. These were heroic days and nights. Hard work and long hours winnowed Fry's volunteer

*Fry foresees the day his arch will lead to a candlelit cafe under the stars.*

crew. "He can be the most arrogant son-of-a-bitch you want to meet," says one long-suffering helper. Fry admits, "I was running scared from day one. It was beyond me. But I had a vision. I believe in the Almighty."

Again acting without permission, he searched and found



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stone at the old Labatt's brewery site. (The stone arch which formerly fronted that building has been removed and set up at the Sooke River Project.) "The key stone is granite, the most refined of rocks," Fry explains. "It's igneous, from the earth's core, lava purified."  
National Trust and the Grey Trust Company allowed Fry and his pick-up crew to carve the stones in their vacant lot across Broad Street. "Mind you, I had to clean up the whole thing, take \$385 worth of garbage to the dump," Fry recalls. Then the "tinkle tinkle" of steel on stone was heard once more in Victoria.

**T**HE ARCH has nine rocks; each has six sides. That's 54 surfaces which are not square but each perfectly in tune with the others. The eight sandstone pieces were easy to carve, using two \$10 chisels from Spencer's. But on the granite piece they used two \$500 carbide steel chisels made locally by the Victoria-based and owned Kennametal, renowned world-wide for chisels.

The stones were cut and recut many times and it took two months to get the nine stones in place. "Do you think it'll ever get done? What is this, a con or a scam?" people asked,

*'I was running scared from day one. It was beyond me. But I had a vision. I believe in the Almighty.'*

but Fry's burning determination never left him. Nor did his gratitude to de Fiore. "I'm only as good as my word, and I told Alan I was going to build the whole world there," he said.

Many of the hundreds who stopped to watch suggested that with a diamond saw he could cut the keystone in a day. But Fry's crew did it the hard way, the old way, and eventually lifted it—415 pounds—into place by hand. People kept telling him "they're gonna make you tear it down if you don't use cement," But Fry didn't allow room for mortar—the tolerances were less than one-eighth of an inch. Besides, he was working to an altogether different standard. "This is the nicest arch that's been built here for at least 35 years," he

claims, and he has worked in the trade for over 20 years. The Engineers' Department came several times to visit but work continued.

Forming an overhanging roof for the lights and planter at the base is a brick superstructure, corbelled and herringboned to the limit. Fry cut the bricks three times; "I couldn't seem to find the formula," Fry admitted. "A brick-layer can lay 300 bricks an hour, I did one and a half. Nobody spoke to me for a month." This brick facing was wired in place, then filled with 29 wheelbarrows of cement.

Some of the restaurant staff were clearly tired of Fry and his band of apprentices. Each day they fed as many as 11 workers, over 30 during the project. But Fry kept hiring.

*'If it's nice enough it's gonna outlast me. It is me.'*

"Work with me and I'll feed you, take care of you, talk to you, I'll help you smarten up and I'll teach you something that maybe will help you to get a trade," was his generous offer. By this time it was clear that the restaurant couldn't afford Fry. "This place was a baby and I was taking all the cream off the top. They couldn't afford me but they didn't shut me down. And so I just poured it in"—both time and money. "As a mason I've made a lot of money and I've thrown away a lot of money," he said, and work continued.

Finally the slate roof arrived. "When they got the bill for that they really freaked," Fry recalls. He could have done it with \$75 worth of grey slate, but instead he chose red slate from Israel and green slate from Spain and Italy. The surface, a bit bigger than a sheet of plywood, cost \$1,150.

For inspiration he kept James Dunsmuir in mind, the Dunsmuir who built Craigdarroch and Hatley Castles. "I respect and admire Dunsmuir," Fry mentioned. "He was

*'What a mind can conceive, a mind can achieve.'*

dynamic. He set a good example. What a mind can conceive, a mind can achieve. He was a romantic like me."

Out front by the sidewalk, Fry the romantic plans a statue of Nipper, the dog who listens to His Master's Voice, and in back he'll carve Charlie Chaplin, life-size, out of granite. Iron spears for a gate, gas lamps, and a canopy that cranks up and down continue his fantasy, and the menu will feature smoked ribs and beer.

"You've just got to see it at night," Fry admonishes, and when we stepped outside there was the moon, hanging above the arch. "See the angel just there in the keystone, on her knees, her wings are up like so..." he continues. But it's an angel only he can see.

"Labour, food, tools: altogether it cost \$26,000. Southside stopped at \$13,000. I put in the rest. There's not another like it in the world. It's permanent, people appreciate it and they don't tear it down. If it's nice enough it's gonna outlast me. It is me." So says Sid Fry.



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# ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## ART

### A dream come true

Shoulder-to-shoulder at North Park Studio's grand opening

"IT'S AN art and people show," commented Luis Ituarte, as he surveyed the massive opening night turnout. Like moths to wool clothing, more than 2,000 people were drawn upstairs where they rubbed shoulders and raised a glass to Victoria's most exciting exhibition space, the new North Park Studio (1619 Store St., 381-3422). Elizabeth Rogers, wife of the Lieutenant-Governor, officially opened the gallery, calling it "beautiful, elegant and exciting."

Throughout the evening the high ceilings and built-in display cabinets brought gasps of admiration. So bent on enjoying themselves were the scene-makers that the string trio couldn't make itself heard. It is obvious that the visual arts crowd in Victoria is extensive, excitable, and has taken this venture to heart.

North Park Studios were, until recently, located at 951 North Park Street. There the art show openings always attracted overflow crowds and for some time owners Michael Cullin and Fran Willis, irreplaceable renovators both, had their eyes on a bigger

place, the former Buckerfields' warehouse. Now they've moved into their "dream come true." Across from the Johnson Street Bridge, overlooking the waters of the harbour, the new space shares the spirit of Market Square, the Harbour Market and Chinatown. In record time, between March and September, they built their unique cultural supermarket.

Having taken more area than they needed for their business, they've rented out six spaces. On the ground floor find Larousse, a non-smoking French restaurant. Next door is Out of Hand, a craft gallery and purveyor of architectural accessories (hand-made stoneware sinks, for example). Out back, Ian Rossiter works with silver, copper and brass, and The Finch Gallery does picture framing. Upstairs, the two jewelbox graphic arts studios have been taken by Pacific Illustrations (Soren Henrich) and the Weeks & Humphries partnership.

North Park saved the best for themselves. Their keynote has always been "post-modern classicism" and one approaches the second floor gallery through corinthian capitals, semi-circular windows and a cloud-scape mural by Gordon Hughes. Lots of multi-level studios, skylights and acres of glossy wood floors set the tone.

Interior design projects like the Royal Victoria Yacht Club and the Beaconsfield Inn have been North Park's bread and butter. It is a special feature of their gallery that their design customers are exposed to the art, and the art shows are enhanced by a bit of "better homes and gardens."

At a recent brainstorming session at North Park, Bill Porteous spoke of the local art community's fondest hope when he described the "vital movement" which could go on within a gallery, "creating a centre for the arts, not just a show space."



The former Buckerfield's warehouse, now Victoria's most exciting art centre

"It won't be a pure art gallery a la New York," Cullin explains. "We'll show a mix, the best of art and design." Original work in glass, porcelain, tapestry, carpets and cabinetmaking enhances the paintings from Victoria and further afield. Music, dance and performance are likely to find a natural home here too.

At the same meeting, Herbert Siebner reminded us, "There are quiet times in a gallery when a painting speaks of itself," and we can expect those moments in abundance.

There's plenty to look at in the opening show. Those invited to exhibit took trouble to present their newest and best work. Top-

notch paintings from Myfanwy Pavelic, Herbert Siebner and Pat Martin-Bates join super examples from Martin Honisch and Jim Gordaneer. Walter Dexter's vital virile vases and Sue Hopper's lacy porcelains are only part of the choice ceramic collection. Elza Mayhew's iconic bronze sculpture is the finest work she's shown in Victoria in years. Young Louanne Rhine has reached new heights in painting, as demonstrated by her angst-ridden suburban scene; and fellow painters Brian Grison and Bill Goers both display fresh development in their thoughtful works. Don't miss Karl Spreitz' *Who Let the Cat Out of the Bag*, which was apparently painted on Max Bates' palette.

"Now that we have a professional gallery, we really do have an obligation to become more professional," said Cullin.

Victoria has long needed a gallery willing to develop artists, and willing to cultivate an audience.

—Robert Amos

## Beyond trees and ducks

BEYOND THE MALAHAT, Open Space Gallery, 510 Fort St., 383-8833 until Nov. 17

**B**eyond The Malahat started with a "bean feast," 50 artists sitting down to dinner at a long table in the centre of Open Space. They had come at the invitation of curator Michael Harding to show Victoria what goes on in The Land of the Nanaimo Ferry. Surrounding them was a smorgasbord of the visual arts.

Work by 36 artists was brought down the Island Highway by consultants Tutti Casano (Courtenay), Annette Hurtig (Hornby Island) and Richard Lewin (Duncan). This local selection process creates a better feeling among the artists than the technique of parachuting a selection committee in from outside.

And, perhaps surprisingly, these three curators have a taste for work vastly more challenging than what was chosen for the Community Arts Councils of B.C. show at Open Space last spring. Let it be said this art is not by "hicks from the sticks." Most of these artists have made a conscious choice to live beyond the suburbs, there to nurture highly individual, often obsessive talents



George de Pape's painted cement figurine: honest folk art

founded upon strongly-felt beliefs. Ducks and trees are in very short supply.

Most of the "famous" residents are not included— no Jack Shadbolt, no E.J. Hughes, no Takeo Tanabe. But some artists with a following here are on exhibit— Will Julsing (a stone torso), Martin Honisch (a Bosch-like diptych), Jerry Pethick (a sculpture titled "Brushing by a chair in the dark while thinking of a Persian carpet in New York").

And the sublime George Sawchuck steals the show. At the opening, Sawchuck stands off to one side, rocking gently in his boots, wearing suspenders and a sort of bowler

hat. He's an older man, a country man. Yet there is any amount of revolutionary and intellectual depth in his well-crafted logger's sculptures. His work has brought international acclaim to his Fanny Bay home.

Out beyond the Malahat they really understand form. Even without any Indian art, the show has some delicious sculpture. On a carved wooden lintel by Nanaimo's George Norris, four umbrellas (and what they shelter) are depicted. Renee Poisson's delicately articulated *Voyage Alone II* is an assemblage of yellow cedar ribs, chamber music made visible. Wade Jones (Nanaimo) and Gus Galbraith (Lake Cowichan) both carve with obsessive, almost excessive skill. One display by Robin Cambell (Hornby Island) juxtaposes a lump of rock with a perfect, tiny, pit-fired ceramic vase. Titled *There is nothing between us but love*, this simple statement has a profound effect.

And for the first time Victoria is blessed with the work of George de Pape, also known as Sammy Sammy, the Legend of Hornby Island. Poet and philosopher (among other things), de Pape was born up-island in 1908. He has, over the years, embellished his 22-acre *Place des Bois* with the most heartfelt and honest folk art the west coast has ever seen. Consider the painted cement figurine crowned with a halo and draped with a scarf:

"This is my beautiful Anastasia long departed but still bugging me" says the legend. Sammy Sammy is the genuine article. When Michael Harding was setting up the show, the lights accidentally flicked off at one point. By chance, the only one that stayed on was shining down on a little sculpture shrine Harding had set up as

a memorial to de Pape's wife, who had died a week before.

With few exceptions, the work on the walls is not as arresting as the sculpture. As expected, post-psychedelic Emily Carr undergrowth bespeaks long rainy afternoons of labour. Yet Bob Cain's insightful photographs definitely put camera work on the level of art. *Boys on the Beach* is a contemporary classic in the tradition of Jacques-Henri Lartigue.

Once again our thanks go to Michael Harding for showing us what a fine and extensive artistic community we live in. As he himself said at the opening, "When you feel support, your creativity explodes." It's a good, and necessary, show.

Having given out paragraphs of praise I would like to say that group shows like this leave me with an upset stomach. As with the Bank Art Show and the opener at North Park Studio, the hanging was horrible, the overall effect indigestible. It's like an uncooked stew. We've read the menu— now let's order a meal.

—Robert Amos

# Monday

M A G A Z I N E



Art curator Barry Till has brought to Victoria a stunning exhibition of the history of Japan's cultured warrior— 9

## WATER TAXI, ANYONE?

A boat ride down the Gorge sounds like a nice way to commute to work, but city hall doesn't seem to want to let Jay Pfahler be your water cabbie.— 4

## DON'T BLAME ME

Federal election candidates in Esquimalt-Saanich are tripping over each other in the rush to avoid association with provincial government restraint policies.— 7

## FIRST FLIGHT

The Green Party tests its political wings against the headwind of an election campaign.— 8

## 28 - LOVE

There are 28 tennis courts in Greater Victoria but, if you don't plan ahead, it's easy to be shut out. Find out where and when the courts are available, and what they offer.— 18

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# MEN OF THE SWORD



No female demon mask, 19th century (above); at left, Kuniyoshi Utagawa woodprint block of 16th-century battle

The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria presents a unique look at the art and culture of the samurai

By ROBERT AMOS

**S**AMURAI, THE Cultured Warrior, is a beautiful and informative show, a tribute to Barry Till, curator of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. When someone gave the gallery a full suit of samurai armour, he set out to put on an exhibition about the ancient warrior class of Japan. He succeeded, in spite of a refusal of funding by the Canada Council

and the National Museums Corporation. The samurai of Japan were a provincial fighting force. In the late 12th century they overthrew the indulgent courtiers and took charge of the country. The generalissimo of this fighting class, Minamoto Yoritomo, took control from the Emperor and, as Shogun, ruled over Japan from 1185. The samurai dominated the country until the Emperor was restored in 1868.

During the early years, warring factions within the samurai elite fought endlessly and honed a code of martial arts and supreme loyalty which still grips Japanese men. Later, in the long and peaceful Edo period (1615-1868) the samurai elaborated their peaceful pursuits—tea, ink painting and *No* theatre. Finally, in 1876, the Shogunate was abolished and samurai were prohibited from wearing their two swords. No longer did they have the right to kill

disrespectful commoners on the spot. Yet even today, the spirit lives on in the selflessness of the kamikaze pilot and the loyalty to corporations in modern economic warfare.

The samurai was born to his class and was entirely dedicated to the service of his lord. This required total self-control and unquestioned moral obligation. At an early age he trained in swordsmanship, archery, wrestling, riding, spear-throwing and military tactics as well as the liberal arts. These pursuits are on display in the Victoria show.

He also learned the rites of honourable suicide. Preferring death to capture, if badly wounded or outnumbered he would perform *seppuku* (also known as *hara-kiri*.)

"For a moment he seemed to collect his thoughts for the last time, and then stabbing himself deeply 'twixt the waist on the left-hand side he drew the dirk slowly across to the right side, and turning it in the wound, he gave a slight cut upwards. During this sickeningly painful operation he never moved a muscle of his face."

A.B. Mitford, quoted in the catalogue. This readiness to end his life made the samurai fearless of death.

The samurai practised Zen Buddhism, a philosophy which considers all things as fleeting as blossoms on a bough. "It rejected the scholarly aspects of old Buddhist sects, despised ceremony, scorned the scriptures and had a disregard for religious images," says Till. "It was a sect of contemplation, which stressed that one reaches sudden enlightenment from within rather than without." (We are fortunate that, to emphasize the importance of Zen, Till has borrowed calligraphy by Gesshu and a Zen painting by Fugai from the Leslie Wright collection, among the finest Japanese art ever seen in this city.)

**T**HE SOUL of the warrior's arsenal is the sleek Japanese sword, considered the most nearly perfect fighting weapon ever designed. The forging of the blade is truly a work of alchemy in which layers of steel are fired, welded together, hammered out and folded back on themselves, over and over again. A number of naked blades are exposed in the Victoria show. As the light glints off the beautiful, irregular patterns forged into the cutting edge, images of mountain ridges or wave crests come to mind unbidden, to blend poetry with the flavour of death.

Each blade is enhanced with sword furniture of sublime detail. The handle is covered with ivory-like knobs which are in fact the skin of the giant sea ray. This, bound with



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silk braid, provides a good grip for bloodied hands. The *tsuba*, or sword hilt, is a separate item, a compact metal field in which the



Weapons of the 18th century: the tanto (dagger) in a red lacquer scabbard; kuzuka (small knife); kogai (skewer)

legendary Japanese design sense is given free play. Pierced, carved, engraved and enamelled examples are all on display, many inlaid with special alloys.

Notice in particular the short sword from the Meares Collection, property of the British Columbia Provincial Museum. It is a *tour de force* of elegant decoration. Tiny seashells and blowfish decorate theommel; lacquer sea urchins, mother-of-pearl oysters and an octopus enhance the sheath; and a marvellous metal crayfish completes the design. Yet the purpose of the keen sword is not overwhelmed by the unspeakably fine craftsmanship.

A fine suit of armour is the centrepiece of this show, as rare and beautiful as a stag beetle. It dates from the 17th century and is the gift of Mrs. Hana Ikoma and family of Osaka, Japan. Gallery Director Patricia Bovey records "the gift was given by them on behalf of their ancestors who preserved it, to our successors for whom we must preserve it." In its presentation one perceives more than a suit of armour. Before a huge gilded screen painted with flowers, the living samurai seems to sit, ready for the fray. Cascading plates of lacquered steel are tightly laced with rivers of silk cord. Here is an impregnable helmet surmounted by antlers and crest atop an iron face mask set forever in a ferocious war cry. "I'd have a heart attack if I met that one," one visitor exclaimed. Five full suits are set out, each arranged like a miniature castle on its stand. The sounds of battle seem to crash in our ears while our eyes feast on battle scenes.

205

Depicted in colour woodblock prints, warriors hack and slash their way to victory. The tale of the 47 Ronin tells of valour beyond the battlefield. In this classic of loyalty, 47 samurai avenge their master's death and then, to a man, commit honourable suicide. Victoria's series of prints is by Hiroshige, the most famous of all print artists. Arrows sharp as scalpels, small cannons inlaid with butterflies, and knives disguised

*Before a huge gilded screen painted with flowers, the living samurai seems to sit, ready for the fray.*

as fans are a hit with the kids— "I wish I had that," gasped one little fellow.


After the samurai overthrew the courtiers, "they were eager to demonstrate that they were men of culture, not just men of the sword," says Till. Thus we are offered a chance to delight in the gallery's collection of No theatre masks and paintings by samurai. Also a tea house has been constructed in



Samurai suit of armor from the 1840s

the gallery. Samurai cultivated the tranquility of the tea ceremony, the savour of eternity they found in the few fleeting moments of tea. And, as always, the flower arrangements here are in exquisite taste.

A half-hour video tape (produced by Chris Munson of Cable 10) is drawing rapt audiences for continuous showings near the bonsai trees. A large colour poster of the show is available for \$4.75. And the catalogue (\$15) is not only the perfect guide to the show but a book to treasure. Loads of superb photos, many in colour, were superbly printed by Sono Nis Press who donated the entire publication— typeset, layout, colour separations and printings. This is a remarkable contribution to the gallery. There really should be someone at the door with a stack of these fine books for sale. The supporting events— tours, films, demonstrations —go on until September 30. 1040 Moss St., 384-4101.



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## Sculpting with humour

PAT REEVE SCULPTURE. Bente Rehm  
Craft Gallery, Mattick's Farm, 5325  
Cordova Bay Rd., Sept 1-21 (658-8333)

ONE OF the sculptures depicts two Rocky Mountain sheep perched on separate pinnacles. It's called *Missing Ewe*. Elsewhere, two giraffes twine together in *Necstacy*. And a sort of horse with a goofy look in his eye scans the heavens—he's the *Lunicorn*.

Pat Reeve, the Victoria artist who made these ceramic pieces, calls herself an intuitive artist. "I'm manifesting the psychic reality of our times," she says. "Our generation gets all its images from *Sesame Street* and Dr. Seuss. Walt Disney showed us that everything is alive. He gave a soul and emotions to his creations, to trains, to everything. Now, when we see animals, we imbue them with human attitudes. I think that, in making my sculptures, I'm dealing in Jungian archetypal images", she adds, "but with a twist of humour."

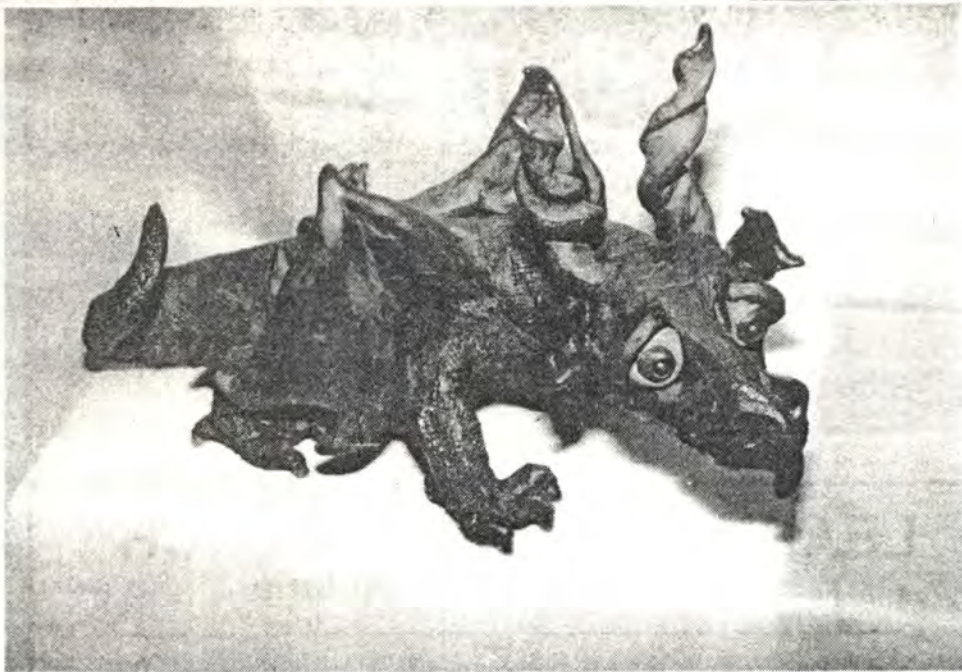
She has been working in various media for years: "I was a weaver when that was valid," she notes. Now, these glazed and painted stoneware sculptures of tabletop size are a popular form in which to mirror the public's self images. Her technique is very good, but the images are foremost.

Though Reeve was a devoted horse-lover as a girl, she is no naturalist. "I don't see many animals; I'm a city person," she admits. To emphasize the point she brings out a statue of *Chlorine, the Pool Rat*. Then she shows her turtle with a head at both ends. ("I call it *Condominium*.") The double images and transformations are fundamental to her work. Consider the black horse with spikey mane, flaring nostrils and enough harness to make Sid Vicious jealous. He's a rocking horse—a *Punk Rocker*, of course.

At this year's Vancouver Island Ceramic Association show, Reeve made her debut, walking away with three of seven trophies: best amateur, the creativity award and most outstanding piece in the show. Her toys for adults are admittedly not high art, but Reeve models her horned and hooved caricatures with great skill and much wit.

What's next? "I'm thinking of branching out into birds..." she says. "Or maybe a rock cod."

—Robert Amos



A Pat Reeve caricature: putting skill and wit in tabletop-size ceramics

# FOOTNOTES

**Hanging out in colour:** When it was the Oasis Cafe, a mural depicting purple camels covered the side of the building at 615 Johnson St. (between Government and Broad St.) But now, as it has become King Solomon's Studio Cafe, something different is in order. Different, indeed! Proprietor (and artist in his own right) Jim Lindsay gave permission to local artist and high diver Jerome Zachary to let it all hang out with cans of spray paint. Now the wall is a fiesta of colour, with something to offend everyone—sex, drugs, comets on the pavement, even a portrait of the owner. Is it pornographic? You be the judge. Even better, confront the artist Thursday Aug. 16 between 5 and 8 pm. (R.A.)

**Chinatown Trading Co.** is a must stop on your visit to Victoria's Chinatown. Upon entering this shop you will find yourself immersed in the world of Hong Kong, China, Japan and other exciting Oriental locales. Interesting yet inexpensive gift items are their specialty. Shop at your leisure. Enjoy! The world of the Orient awaits you at **Chinatown Trading Co. Ltd.** 551 Fisgard St., Victoria, B.C. Tel. 381-5503.



**How much for this, please?:** Bill Johnson of Johnson and Small Books, 45 Bastion Square, realized every small business owner's dream about a month ago. A customer walked in and bought the entire stock in the store. It was all over in 10 minutes. Johnson and Small have been one of the premier sources for esoteric Canadiana, as well as books on aircraft and fishing. The store wasn't exactly "for sale", but Johnson was willing to accept the cash offer. The new owner recently purchased a seven-storey building in Vancouver and moved the contents of the shop over there at once. Johnson is planning a trip around the world.

## Muralizing graffiti

A show of art that stops them in the streets

**H**ERE IT is 1984 and the second stage of View Towers hasn't been built yet. There has been a plywood fence around a weedy patch at Fort and Quadra Streets since 1973, the owner lives out of town and his property is the scene of the Graffiti Artists Convention. Two years ago it was muralized by Victoria's many artists, and now the artists have done it again.

*Monday Magazine* is a co-sponsor of the project, the artists donate their time and materials, and Island Blue Print is awarding prizes of \$400, \$200 and \$100 of art materials to the three most popular panels.

To vote, pick up a ballot from either sponsor and deposit at Island Blue Print, 905 Fort (at the Fort Street entrance) by 4 p.m. Sept. 27. *Monday* will publish the winners Oct. 3.

Everybody's got their favourite. Organizer J.C. Scott pointed out the polka dots in the background of #18, *Babaloo*. "Meticulous," he called it, "like Lichenstein." Pamela Brooks also came in for praise. "She brought a fist full of daisies and, holding them in her left hand, in a matter of minutes, painted them with her right," said Scott. Considering the scale, that's no mean feat.



Everybody gets to vote on their favourite painting; ballot page 33

I asked organizer J.C. Scott what's next? "I'm tired of giving this landowner a free ride. The city should expropriate the site and turn it into a park."

—Robert Amos

Did you notice that #7 is a mirror image of the scene across the street? To read the reverse writing on #14, last year's winner Stewart Brands pointed out that you go across the street and look at the reflection in the window. Brands also mentioned the electrifying red-yellow-blue colour scheme of #17, a beatific foetus. His own *Rising Star Bakery* (#24) is depicted in millions of pink and mauve dots, colours "to appeal to the old ladies," he informs us. Bill Goers' panel (#21) is also composed of a lot of discreet brushstrokes which form a mandala of peace and calm. Perhaps that graceful work will be preserved, for it has real merit.

Generally, the fence is more conducive to graffiti than graciousness. "Violence on TV affects children whose parents act like TV personalities," warns #27. "Rap Breakers are Back" proclaims the tattered and artless #45. "Liberals Wake Up," exhorts #36, with no apparent effect. And already the public is responding in kind—for example, #2, portraying a sex kitten in a torn loincloth, was immediately and justly denounced as "a male pornographic fantasy." Number 16 is a do-it-yourself panel which instructs us to "feel free to write inspirations or statements to society." In the spirit of the library washrooms, many have taken the hint. Did anyone notice the words *RATION PASSION* written across Fort Street itself?

This year the quality of painting and design has improved. It seems the artists are learning how to plan images on a large scale which can be "read" by passers-by. "Tourismo Charismo," #32, is quite successful on those terms, as is Margaret Shorter's red and black #42, and the *The Pilot* by K.L. Wilson (#34). Wilson's unasked-for offering on the fence three years ago really started this project, and her vandal practice in Vancouver since then has not been in vain.

One might well ask "Where's Lincoln Clarkes, now that we don't need him." Perhaps now that the fence painting is legitimate, even accepted, the thrill of illegal midnight scribbling is gone. This year's artists worked long and hard, and the top marks in the Labour of Love category go to Jerome Zachary (#35). His hummingbirds vibrate, his flowers burn with a holy light and the ripe berries glow as if William Blake himself had painted them on the Fort Street Fence.