

Gallery improves under new curator

by Eric Wood

The Dalhousie University Art Gallery has been operating under a new curator with some new and improved ideas. Bruce Ferguson has already made some marked improvements in the gallery's appearance, operation and policies. A firm believer in promoting Canadian art, he has arranged many interesting exhibits to treat your visual appetites.

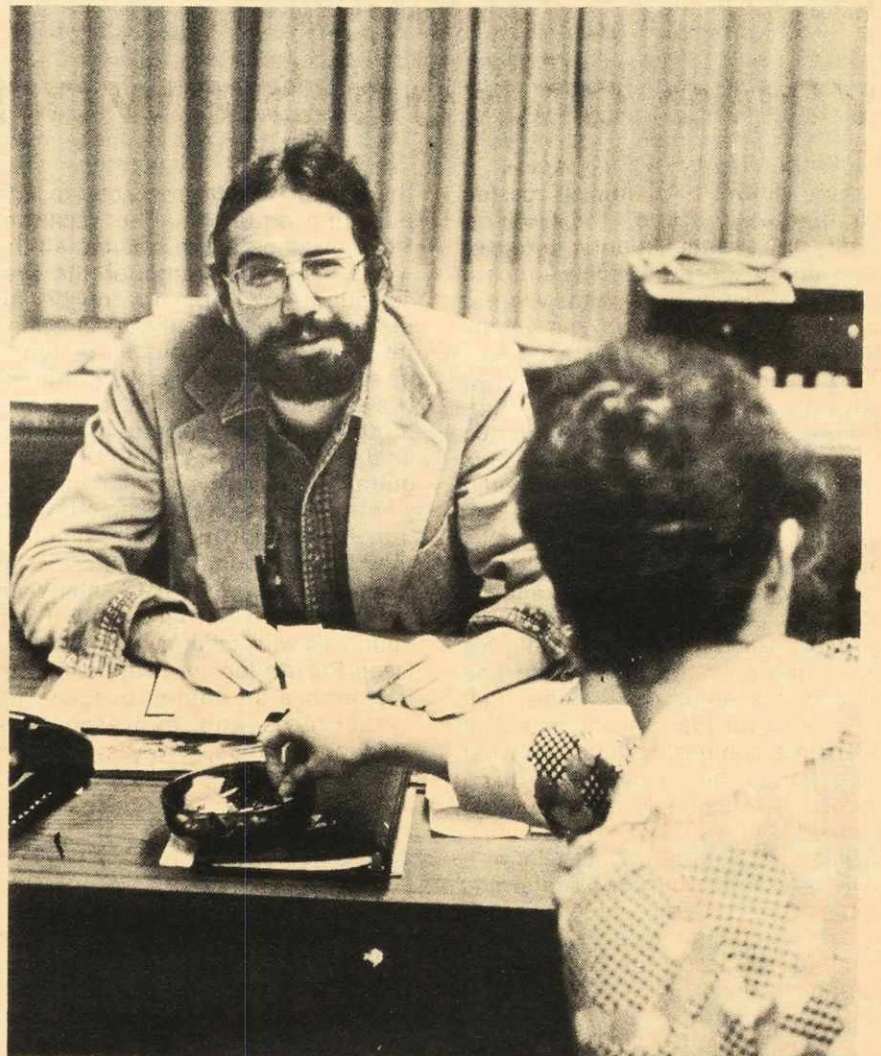
For those of you who are not familiar with the gallery it is located in the Dalhousie Arts Centre to your immediate left and down the stairs as you enter through the front doors. On your way down the stairs you will notice the Sculpture Court which is, as its name suggests, used mostly for three-dimensional presentations. The main gallery is below the court and has recently been altered to add more wall space which can act as a division between two smaller shows. There are also exhibits in the Music resource Centre at the Killam Library, so the next time your taking a break from studies why not indulge in a visual treat?

Though a university financed operation, the gallery is also meant to serve the needs of the general public. Mr. Ferguson is hoping to see more students coming into the art gallery this year. The lack of a Visual Arts program at Dalhousie shows up in student attendance at the exhibits. He feels that some people walk in with the impression that because a piece of art is being shown it must be excellent-not necessarily so.

The gallery's objective is to give an artist some exposure and this often means showing all of his work. A gallery is a space where the artist meets the people and vice versa, not a museum of showpieces.

The most popular showings seem to be the photography and realist representations. Abstract art is gradually becoming more warmly accepted by the public, but this will all come with time.

There is a permanent collection at the gallery which, from time to time, is exhibited as a unit, but for the most part is on loan to various



Bruce Ferguson

offices and departments across campus.

A Collections Budget is used to purchase the pieces for the permanent collection. The budget is so small, however, that only

one-half or one full good piece could be purchased per year. Bruce Ferguson feels that buying Canadian drawings is a better, more economical idea. These drawings are a primary source material for the artist's finished product and showing them at a university, supposedly a centre for sources and research, seems justified. Every year there will be a showing of Canadian drawings and from each show a few works will be selected to add to the permanent collection. This year's show will represent young artists from throughout the country and will run from January 4 to 28, 1976.

The shows usually change every month and Mr. Ferguson is trying to achieve a balance between historical and contemporary displays. These showings are the work of professional artists and not local part-time "hobby" artists. Each show is carefully selected, produced and displayed.

One thing you may not be familiar with is the Dalhousie Art Gallery Film Program held every Wednesday at 12:15 in room 406 of the Arts Centre. You will see the newest, most imaginative films that are being produced today. There is always something unique for everybody.

Because of the limited budget the gallery can not extend its hours to include lunch or supper hours. This is a problem that should be corrected at the first opportunity. Presently the hours are: Closed on Monday, Tuesday through Saturday 1-5, 7-9, Sunday 2-5.

The exhibits are often run concurrently with a particular cultural activity in the community. For example an 18th Century Society Exhibition; "Glams of a Remoter World" will correspond with the annual convention of the 18th Century Society of Canada, to be held here in March. A major photography show will correspond with the Nova Scotia Festival of the Arts, in August.

The gallery is good, so take a breather from your academics and take advantage of the free services offered. It doesn't hurt and you will undoubtedly benefit from it.

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