

No ROM for Art



Bryon Johnson

Elliott Lefko

Zlenka Volavka used to be mad. Now she is just disappointed.

Eight years ago, she was asked by the former director of the Royal Ontario Museum to examine the museum's South African Art. She found that the collection is very rare and important, and in fact that some pieces are unique in North America. Her enthusiasm convinced director Peter Swan to commission a "Processed Resume" — an item by item catalogue. After applying for and receiving a grant, she hired an assistant and dug in.

She became even more involved when she found that many of the most precious pieces were collected by Canadian missionaries pioneering in Africa who were some of the first whites there not trading in slaves. Working once a week, sometimes cramming in a few spare hours, she finally completed the project five

years later. Calling on the ROM to keep their publishing promise, she found the deal called off due to lack of funds.

"I saw the catalogue as my contribution to Canada," says Dr. Volavka. "I never got paid for my work. I just thought Canada would be interested in the work of its own people, not only here but all over the world."

At present the African art is in storage at the ROM. Only a small part of the collection is on display and that will soon disappear with the museum's coming expansion. Some haven't even been on display at all.

The York community has had two chances to see the art. Along with York Curator of Art Michael Greenwood, Dr. Volavka organized two displays in 1973 and 1975. Greenwood described the exhibits: "The first was entitled 'Hidden Treasures'. These were

pieces from the ROM that had seen little previous exposure. The second was entitled 'Dialogues'; a selection of very fine Central African art borrowed from the ROM and from private collectors. The exhibits were both fully annotated and catalogued. The response both from the York community and internationally was very exciting. Many scholars responded. We had enquiries from France, Belgium, the U.S., many places."

While the stacks of information (100,000 rare documents) for the catalogue lie in a crammed Bethune office, Dr. Volavka continues to work in her field. This past September she represented Canada at the 24th World Congress of Art History in Italy. This was an important event because for the first time the congress gave the floor to art outside of Europe and to an area which was formerly considered primitive. She also made a major discovery and solved a problem in the origin of African tribal leadership, providing an important link in the social history of African life. Because of the discovery, interest in her writing has grown, possibly helping her to find a publisher for her catalogue. In UCLA recently for a lecture, she sought out different companies as possible publishers.

"Right now I have all the necessary information in my files," admits Dr. Volavka, "but I cannot write the final manuscript unless they promise to publish it. Maybe with a joint effort with the museum the project will finally reach fruition. It is important that Canadians know about the treasures that exist in their own country."

Homosexuality from genes?

James A. Carlisle

Present sociological theories of homosexuality are in "an absolute bloody shambles," according to Dr. M. Ruse of Guelph University, who called for a more serious study of the biological basis of homosexuality, in a speech before the Zoology Department at UofT last Friday.

Several biological models for homosexuality have been published, which Ruse claimed, "could explain the genetic basis for maintaining homosexual genes even though the number of children homosexuals have is a lot lower than the rest of the population."

Citing the 'Balanced Heterozygote Fitness' model, Ruse explained, "although the functioning homosexual homozygote, a person with two doses of the homosexuality gene, may not reproduce, the heterozygote (person with one homosexual and one heterosexual gene) may reproduce a lot more than the complete heterosexual." This would favor the retention of the homosexual gene in the population.

Ruse claimed this theory is supported by a study of identical twins (who have the same genetic makeup), which shows they also have the same sexual preferences.

Two theories were outlined which postulate that homosexuals may, under some conditions, foster reproduction in their own families. Homosexuals may have a greater sexual appetite, which in itself is genetically favourable, but which has been frustrated by society. Furthermore, Ruse explained that "anthropologists studying primitive peoples have often found that homosexuals

are tribal leaders or shamans. They were often very wealthy and thus their families had a high status in the tribe." According to Ruse, family members closely related to these homosexuals would be likely to carry the 'gay' genes, which, through further offspring, would remain in the population.

He added that "although homosexuals are often physically smaller than the rest of the population on average, conversely they are significantly brighter than heterosexuals." Ruse claimed this would also

account for the high status of homosexuals in many societies.

Ruse's conclusion that "most criticisms of sociobiological explanations come from left-wing thinkers and social scientists who feel threatened by them," was challenged by several members of the audience. One faculty member stated, "Sociobiology depends upon a complex series of technical arguments. I am worried about popularizing it too quickly and oversimplifying the theories for the general public."

Battle escalates

Douglas Allan

A battle between the York University Faculty Association (YUFA), and the university administration over power within the university has escalated due to a series of recommendations by YUFA to the President's task force on decanal selection procedures.

The task force, whose mandate is to investigate and then recommend changes in the process used in the appointment of new deans, has been asked by YUFA to respect all traditional decanal selection procedures, unless the changes are approved by faculty councils.

Vice-President Bill Farr, Chairman of the task force on decanal selection procedures declined to comment on its future direction, stating that no final decisions had been made yet.

YUFA's current recommendations follow controversies which arose over last year's

appointment of Harry Crow as Dean of Atkinson College, and Bill Found as Vice-President of Academic Affairs. In both cases, faculty organizations felt the administration was trying to broaden its control of the appointment system unfairly.

YUFA claimed in fact, that members of the academic search committee disassociated themselves from its work because committee chairman and University President Ian Macdonald overstepped his authority. Macdonald did not reply to the charge. However, when contacted by *Excalibur*, he stated there was no dissent among committee members.

Two upcoming appointments could raise further contentious issues. It is believed that the Glendon faculty is concerned about the appointment of a new principal, and YUFA is looking into the appropriateness of the creation of the position of a Dean of Research.



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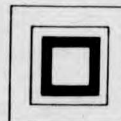
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