

Arts

Evans' art reveals pessimistic views

By E.A. JOHNSTON

Blake Evans' exhibition, running in Founder's College Gallery until the 25th and titled "Dance to the Tension of a World on the Edge," reveals the artist's pessimistic view of the world. Evans, a fourth year fine art student, makes his criticisms of society in works which combine painting with structural installation work.

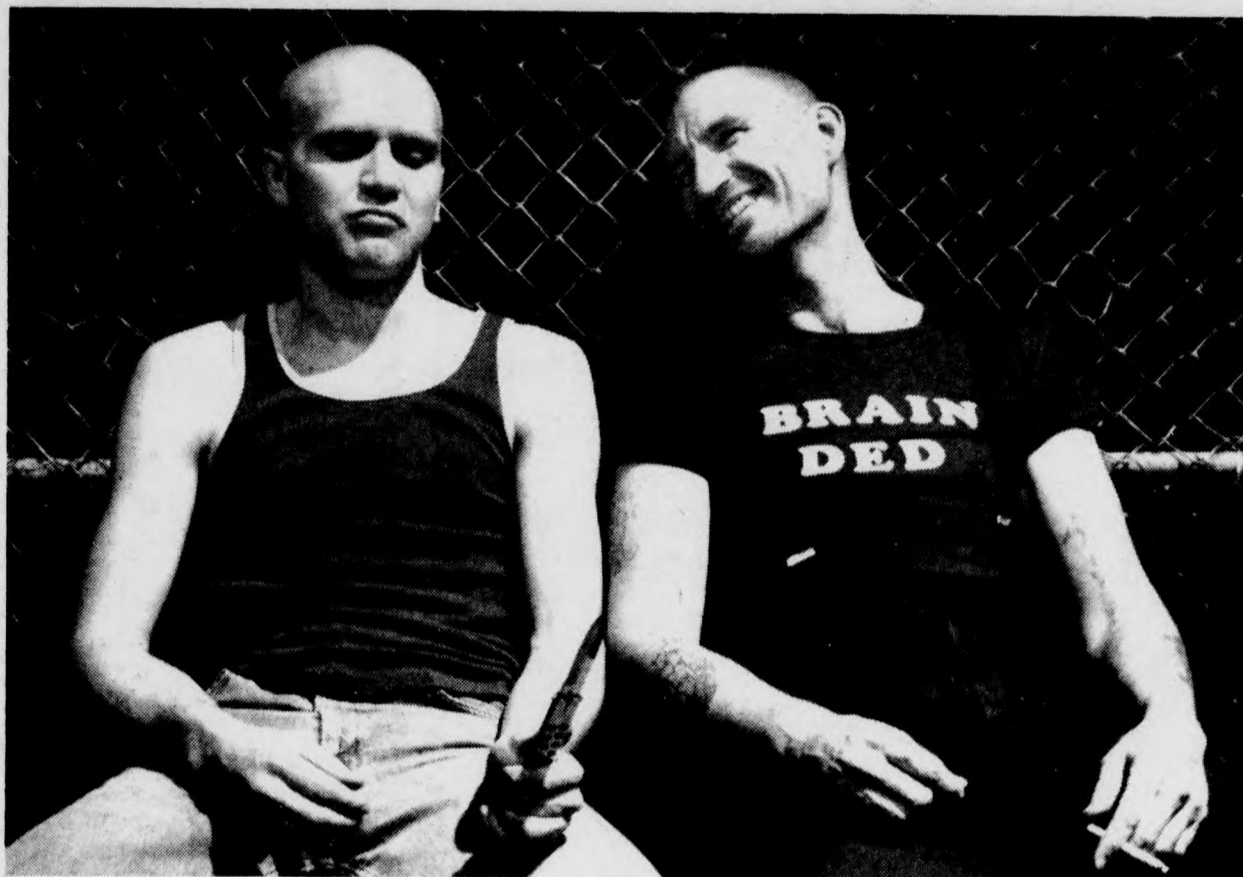
One such critique is his work, "Sub-culture Carnival," in which the urban landscape represented is reminiscent of Edvard Munch's ghostly, existential figures. In "Carnival," the message is familiar, as the work comments on the destructive effects of capitalist industrialism.

Evans' most inventive work, "Specimens," is a conceptual instal-

lation which deals with the cycles of life and death. Comprised of painted glass with an animal's skull hanging from it, the work is based on a general concept, yet stands out from the other pieces which tend to use the cliché less successfully.

Despite his criticisms, Evans does not believe he can have a tangible effect on society as an artist and admits "my ideas are adolescent." Evans says he uses his pessimistic outlook as a starting point for his creations, and in doing so, finds a way to deal positively and personally with these issues.

"I have a talent (and) it makes me feel good," Evans concludes "(But) the politicians are who can change things. Artists are on the fringe. They produce in response to events."



A "TOOLED UP NUTTER": Skinheads Liam (Milan Cheylov) and Rory (Bruce McFee) in a scene from the Another Stage and Bootleg production of *Treatment*.

The violent rage of the skinhead

By KEN KEOBKE

A life of crime liberates one from the ordinary.

Father Michael in *Treatment*

The skinheads in *Treatment* speak a language studded with spit-dripping obscenities that is vaguely similar to English. But, almost as if recognizing the limitations of words for expressing their feelings, they have added to their vocabularies a parallel physical language. When Liam (Milan Cheylov), the young skinhead, tells a joke, his body is consumed with his humour; he convulses and writhes. Then, just moments later, he contracts every muscle to underline a threat.

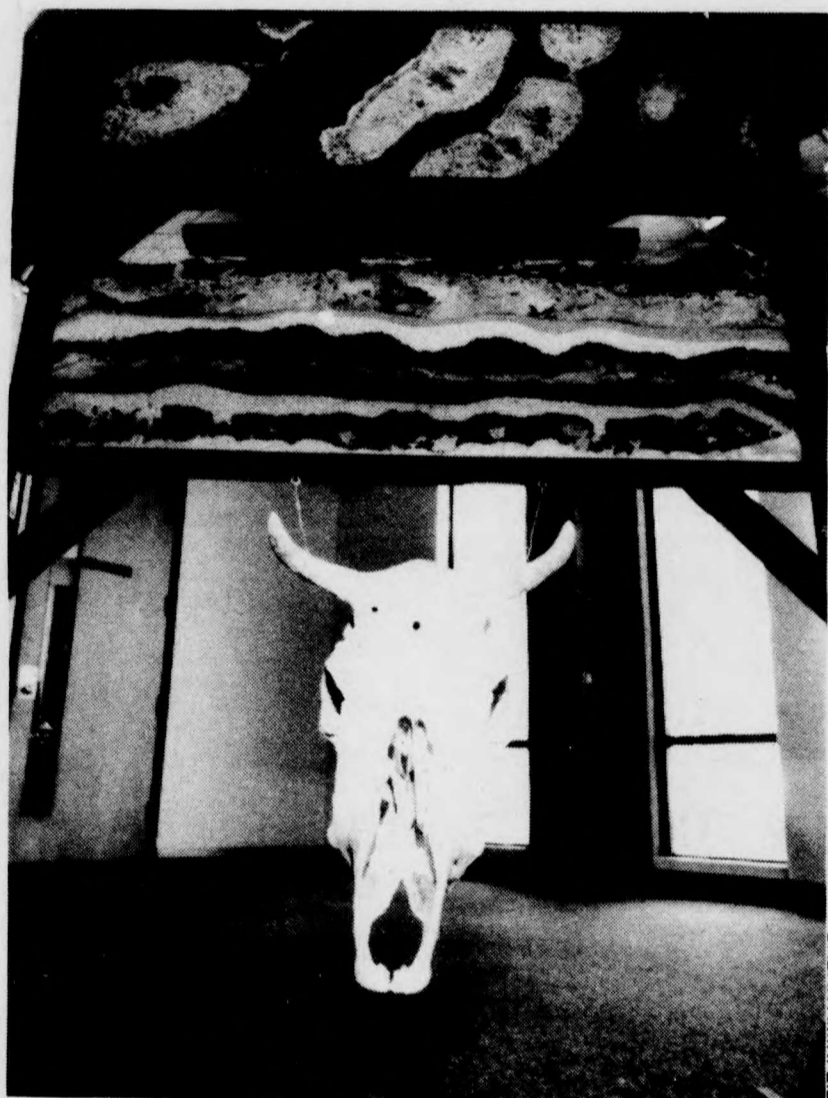
Treatment, Jonathan Moore's exploration of the skinhead mentality, now playing at Toronto Free Theatre, uses a blood spattered cross for a set. At the centre is a white block that might be a Druid sacrificial altar. Up a ramp at the head of the cross, sits Liam's newfound friend, Father Michael (Terrence Slater). To the right, perched on garbage cans are Liam and his older skinhead brother Rory (Bruce McFee), and to the left, Julia (Lori Lansens), Liam's Cambridge educated lover.

Liam is one of thousands of disaffected British youths using the excuse of no jobs or future to strike out, shock, and unbalance the world. The principal tool is random violence, most often directed against racial minorities; Pakistanis are described surreptitiously eating shit off the sidewalk and Chinese carving up cats to serve in their restaurants. Greeks, Turks, Arabs, Jews and Gays are all ridiculed, and all seem to deserve the same fate: a swift kick to the head. At one point, when Rory describes English soccer, now synonymous with skinhead rioting, the ball is referred to as a "Paki head."

At the play's beginning, Liam embraces the skinhead mentality without question. He's encouraged by Julia, who is attracted by his physical energy and, using him for sex, makes no value judgements about his lifestyle. It's only when he is stopped from looting a church by an encounter with its James-Joyce-spouting Priest, that the plot turns from its little vignettes of terror to a suggestion that Liam might rise above the pathetic booze and glue-sniffing stupor of his brother and their gang.

But what does the play say to the well dressed conservative Canadians that filled out the opening night audience? A few weeks ago, I saw two teenage skinheads flanking either side of an older woman. As I walked toward them, I wondered if the woman was being threatened and in need of assistance, but a few paces away, the conversation became clear: "But Mom, I really need new boots; these just aren't the right colour!" Clearly, Mom had the hooligans under control. If Toronto Skinhead kids can afford to shell out \$80-\$175 for the all important imported boots, they aren't the same deprived class as the British Inner City poor, and with every third shop on Yonge sporting help wanted signs, they can't complain of the same lack of a future.

The play, twice directed by York graduate Sky Gilbert, has enjoyed success here in Canada as well as in Australia and Japan probably because it brings the audience into contact with the tortured twisted minds of violent neo-Nazis. Like Father Michael, perhaps we're shocked and repelled by it. Or, perhaps like Julia, we're attracted, and long to hold on to the purity of the rage.



HOLY COW! Blake Evans' piece, entitled *Specimen*, deals with the cycles of life and death.

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