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Security a problem

Curator whisks campus art into hiding

By CHRIS GATES

Following the September 4 theft of over \$15,000 worth of paintings and Eskimo art from the Winters-Vanier college masters' dining room, Michael Greenwood, curator of the York art gallery, has ordered all paintings currently on display around the campus to be withdrawn to prevent further vandalism or theft.

Greenwood concedes that this action contradicts the whole idea behind the college displays.

"The purpose of the displays was to embellish the campus environment," he said. "But in light of recent events, I don't feel justified in displaying them any longer. It would be irresponsible to continue to leave them exposed."

While some of the larger wall murals, like the ones at the Winters and Founders ramps, have suffered some damage from vandals, they have been repaired and will continue to be displayed. Virtually all other paintings will be removed.

Complex One, Osgoode Hall and Stong College have already been cleared, and Greenwood is considering removing some of the displays in the Fine Arts building.

Considerable time and effort has already been expended repairing damage to wall murals and paintings. In one instance, a jar of jam was thrown at a mural in the Winters College dining room. The acid in the jam destroyed part of the canvas surface.

Greenwood believes most people on campus are unaware of the value of some of these works.



Thomas McKerr, photo

George Dunn, director of safety and security, indicates the original position of one of the paintings stolen last week.

"Some of the art work purchased by the University has appreciated in value to such an extent that, under present security arrangements, there's nothing else to do but lock them away."

He further points out that while the present art gallery in N145 Ross is ill-suited for displaying some art forms, one point in its favour is that it is virtually theft proof.

Security has always been a problem on campus, since there are only 12 officers to patrol the whole area. George Dunn, campus security chief, feels that even a ten-fold increase in manpower wouldn't solve the problem.

"What we need is support and co-

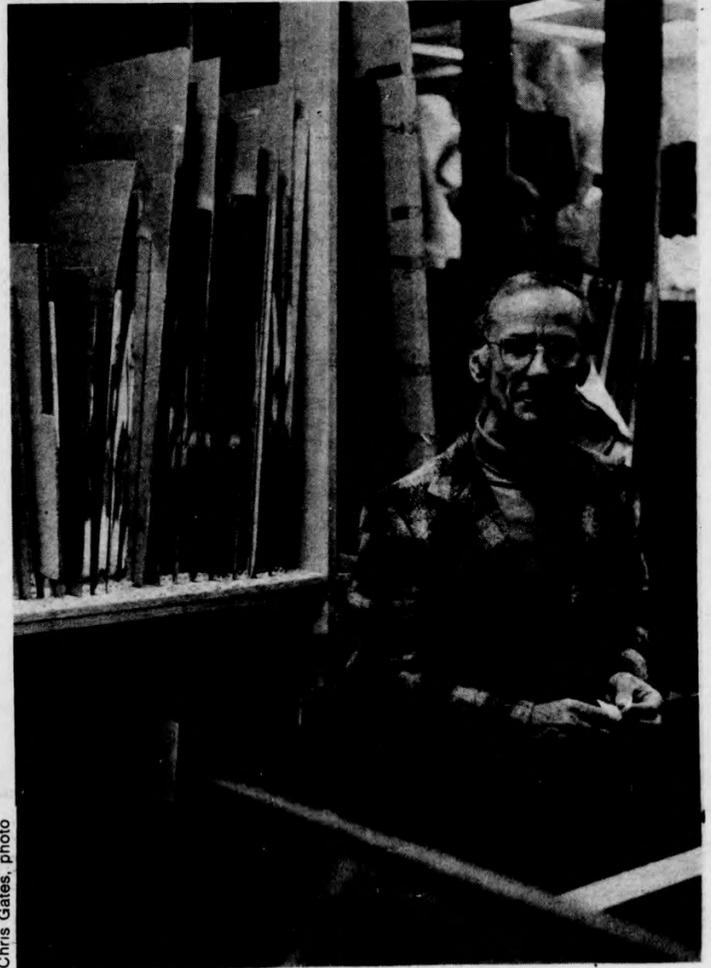
operation from the campus community," he said. "Anything that looks suspicious should be reported to us immediately."

Part of the problem stems from a lack of communication between departments on campus. Dunn admitted he was not aware that the Harold Towns and Eskimo art works were even at the university until after they had been stolen. He also indicated that he had not known where the other valuable displays were located on campus prior to their removal by Greenwood.

Greenwood believes that a greater number of uniformed security personnel would act as a visible deterrent to would-be thieves.

"Ultimately, the University is going to have to provide a proper art gallery with adequate security precautions," he said.

In the meantime, Greenwood feels the only safe places on campus for art works are in closed storage areas, shelved or crated under lock and key.



Chris Gates, photo

York curator Michael Greenwood stands in front of campus art works which have been locked away for security purposes. Most paintings have already been taken off display.

INSIDE

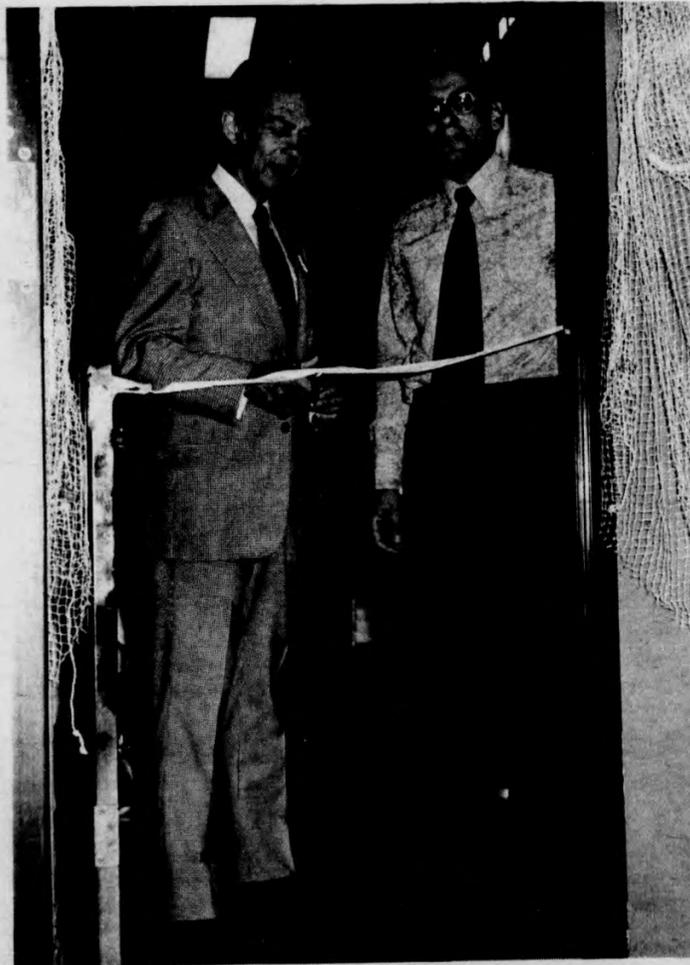
Suicide..... p. 3

Editorial..... p. 4

Sports..... p. 8

News Beat..... p. 9

Entertainment.... p.12



Carlo Squassero, photo

York's administrative vice president Bill Small takes a whack at slicing the ceremonial ribbon to open Nabil Labib's sporting goods store in Central Square. Dr. Labib, who earned his Ph.D at York in 1972 and is currently doing post-doctorate work, set up his shop, which shares quarters with the barber shop, to "get into something different." Seconds after Small cut the ribbon, the walls in Central Square collapsed.

Donated chapel may be erected on Central Square amphitheatre

A university chapel which has remained on the planner's drawing board for the past 10 years may see its realization in the near future.

An eight-man committee established by the president to investigate possible sites and specifications for the chapel has submitted an interim report, and the chapel's original architect has already drawn up a series of preliminary sketches.

The chapel issue started in 1964 when the late William Pearson Scott, noted Bay Street businessman and member of the York board of governors from 1959 to 1971, made a donation of \$250,000 to the university expressly for the construction of a chapel in memory of his deceased daughter.

But in 1968, an anti-chapel campaign was mounted on campus around the question of whether a private benefactor should have the right to determine the needs and priorities of the university.

The faculty voted in favour of the proposal, but a campuswide referendum in March, 1969, rejected the plan by a vote of 945 to 795.

In 1972, Scott asked the university either to accept or reject the donation, which, held in trust since 1964, had increased in size to \$400,000. However, before the issue could be pursued further, Scott died last year at the age of 76.

"I think," acting president John Yolton said at the time, "we have

some moral obligation to make up our minds soon."

One problem is that the donation — currently estimated at \$500,000 — is insufficient to cover the cost of construction of the architect's original chapel design.

Architect David Horne, who won \$5,000 and the contract to design the chapel in a university contest in 1968, designed an elaborate structure with a chapel, choir area, 11 offices, secretarial and reception facilities, filing units, waiting area and a conference room, to be situated by the drainage lake west of the Scott Library (itself named after W.P. Scott.)

The cost of erecting such a building now was recently estimated at \$524,000, in addition to considerable annual maintenance costs which were estimated in 1968 to be about \$12,000.

The current chapel project committee, chaired by fine arts dean Joseph Green, submitted a draft brief in July in which it suggested that the edifice consist of a dome-like structure over the outdoor amphitheatre atop Central Square.

Throughout the report, the word 'chapel' was replaced by 'centre', and the preamble stated that "although the centre should be designed to permit the celebration of various formal religious activities, it should also be suitable for other activities related to the life of the spirit: serious music and poetry,

philosophical and theological discourse, etc."

"The committee is confident that the campus at large will now support the concept of (the) memorial," the brief began, "and agrees that the York campus requires a centre which will meet both the needs for quiet contemplation and for serious, but intimate celebration."

The report also suggested that the structure be named "Scott House" or "Scott Memorial Centre" to facilitate "its acceptance and support by the community."

The plaza level of Central Square was selected since the location "would be at the focal point of university life, and generate interest in, and bring vitality to, an important part of the campus that is largely unused at present" — since the uncovered amphitheatre is either swept by wind or covered in snow for the better part of the academic year.

The committee particularly recommended the discarding of office space within the chapel, a component of Horne's 1968 design. The latest recommendation included a vestuary, washrooms and storage space to supplement the central chapel space; while the dome concept has been ruled structurally unfeasible, it was suggested that the building incorporate a system of skylights which might open during seasonable weather.