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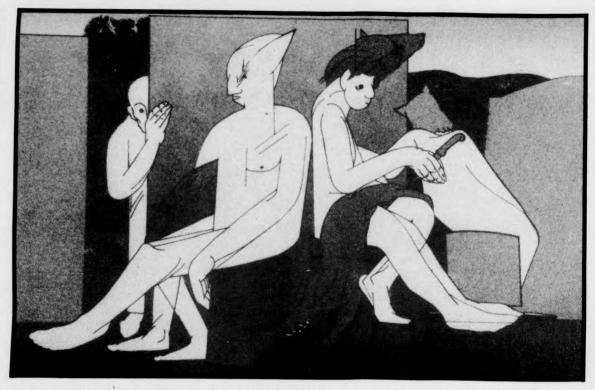
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Fernando Torres' "Ritual" is displayed in the exhibition of Ecuadorian art at Zack's Gallery.

Elizabeth Murtha



Artist, Sonia Meja, displays her work "Escape" in the "Collective Exhibition of Contemporary Art from Ecuador"

ecuadorian art stimulates

by Mark Moss

what was a model demonstration of cooperation between a variety of organizations from within the university as well as externally, the Collective Exhibition of Contemporary Art from Ecuador (Zack's Gallery in Stong College) brought together artists, diplomats, students, professors and members of the community to the opening reception on October 26.

Surrounded by a sampling of the "best" contemporary art from Ecuador, the feeling generated at the reception was different from the usual atmosphere at openings.

Katiana Cisneros, president of the York Hispanic Students Association, summed up the mood as a "potential for solidarity within the Hispanic community, yet with the focus, in this case, on Ecuador."

The turnout for this exhibition was exceptionally high, with a large contingent of people from outside the Hispanic community. There were, of course, the few individuals who wandered in to eat from the cheese plate, gorge

themselves on grapes and have more wine than is appropriate at these occasions. But even these few did not effect the good feeling generated at the exhibition.

generated at the exhibition.

Art is a very powerful conveyor and stimulant of sentiment. Add understanding, interesting people, extremely good art and a little wine, and the result tends to be positive and informing. One becomes extremely aware of the surroundings in such an atmosphere and is then able to observe, listen and absorb the generated stimuli.

Many of the 19 artists represented in the exhibition illustrated a strong message in their respective works. Whether it was political, social, spiritual, religious or philosophical, all in some way were deeply significant in relation to the problems and concerns of Ecuador. As Consul General of Ecuador Jose Nunez said, "Each was chosen to reflect a portion of Ecuador's reality."

Particularly powerful were Washington Mosquera's tight and symbolic works, crammed with allusion and allegory. Carlos Rosero's "Imaginary Nostalgia"

stands out as well, a colourful, thought-provoking work, one of the few items that was not an etching. Etchings dominated the media used, seeming to be the preferred choice of expression in contemporary Ecuadorian art.

The North American tendency to classify South and Central America as one indigenous class is an attitude that is not only offensive, but to some of these artists, out of date as well. Ecuadorian art remains firmly entrenched in the harmony of its continent, bound by a common and predominant language. Yet as many of the works suggest, it is mature and nationalistic in its concerns, more than enough to dispel the "folk art" label of old.

Cultural problems are becoming more universal and domestically relevant. Art of this calibre and content may provide a way to foster understanding and to stimulate cultural thought. The environment, hunger, and poverty are just some concerns that are as applicable to Ecuador as they are here. Art might be the bridge to join our continents. The exhibition runs until November 26.