



JOHN DREW'S THE PAW IS ON THE OTHER FOOT

A choice exhibit at Calumet

By WENDY QUINTON

Choice of View, the art exhibit currently at the Calumet common room is true to its title. The artist, John Drew is presenting a collection of work involving a variety of themes based on "true-to-life" experiences.

Drew's work, which will be on display until March 31, is a series of paintings completed for a fourth year visual arts course. At York, Drew has had the opportunity to gain insight into the true nature of his work, and feels he is able to create visual images that are very realistic. "I like looking for parts of reality and painting from my own experience," Drew explained.

Although not directly from his own experience, his series of four paintings depicting a wolf conveys a message Drew thinks society needs to understand. "The work is misunderstood—I use him (the wolf) as a way of making people look again," Drew said.

The Paw is on The Other Foot is a painting that depicts a larger-than-life wooden chair facing an open door. In the doorway stands a wolf which is the focal point of the painting.

On first glance, the wolf tends to convey a threatening message, but on a second glance, an inviting aura of friendly warmth seems to surround the animal. This warmth is effectively conveyed with strong colours in hues of pink and brown.

"I want to induce an understanding of the wolf, not create an imposing image of him," Drew said.

Dead Wolf on Table illustrates a dead wolf on a kitchen table with blood streaming from its body. Surrounding the wolf is brilliantly coloured fruit and bottles of wine.

Drew explained that his motive behind this painting came from his repulsion toward man's false conception of himself as king of the beasts. However, the vibrant colours of the blood and the fruit are muted by two large grey guns in the painting. This presence seems to symbolize what Drew feels is the sordid and deceptive nature of man.

One of Drew's more popular paintings, *Choose*, combines vivid tones of red to emphasize an empty hallway. A long wooden handrail that extends across the width of the painting is the focus of the work. When viewing *Choose*, one's eyes are easily guided up the stairs only to be

halted by the curiosity of what is behind the doors in the hallway. However, in terms of figurative detail, this painting does not compare to the artist's other displayed works. Drew's more interesting paintings are full of added subtleties that effectively depict an element of nature.

March 3rd is one of Drew's more beautiful paintings. The work features a barren tree beside a blue lake against a grey background. Although the tree stands isolated, Drew's artistic and magical use of vivid colours creates an inviting sense of warmth and tranquility.

Perhaps the most bizarre of Drew's works is a hand-carved wooden canoe placed in the centre of the room. Drew summarizes the purpose of the canoe as "a vehicle for expression . . . it is my magic carpet of the north . . . it can go anywhere." It took him three weeks to hand carve the canoe and it definitely adds a unique and historic touch to the exhibit.

Choice of View is an interesting and relaxing collection of paintings. Drew seeks to entice the viewer by offering a variety of artistic niches for those who enjoy a "choice of view."

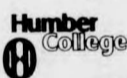
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