

# This review is not real . . . that's all

by Ian Runipson

**Aspects of Realism**, Dalhousie Art Gallery, August 18 thru September 18.

"To be a good realist I must invent everything."

One might easily attribute such a trendy remark to the Ginsbergs, the Ferlingettis, the Idealists all, none of whom have contributed much more than pure unreasoned emotion to any culture or any art. May we thank god that the trend is not world-wide.

Fortunately though, painting is a medium that is able to transcend such anti-intellectual mockery. Especially when it is realist painting and the artist has taken the initiative to delve into the narrative.

The art I saw in **Aspects of Realism** (at Dal Art Gallery till Sunday) was both good and bad. That I should so readily jump at categorizing them as such is an indication that the works exhibited were of two general types both easily discernible.

Technically none of the paintings and certainly none of the sculpture was lacking in professionalism or ingenuity. All exhibited a consciousness of medium. What one sees in the exhibit is a cross section of realist art in all of its various compositions.

Not once did I feel that the artist(s) were misusing the canvas as a poster or a billboard would. It is rather unfortunate, however, that again and again one's sensibilities are attacked by paintings exhibiting too much color and a false sense of importance. That an artist can (to the crumb) enlarge a ham sandwich (**Automat**, Charles Bell, 1974) and make all viewers feel like Lilliputians

or confuse us with a dresser drawer full of colorful mementos and playing cards (**Queen**, Audrey Flack, 1976) is not to our advantage. It takes more than a few scattered clues (as one might find in **Queen**) to stimulate a viewer to become involved with a painting. I would contend that only after the artist understands what he / she is going to do (like naming the picture before it is painted or anywhere near complete) will we be able to understand the intent of a picture.

And if we are to learn from art -- that is in a logical sequence -- then we must understand the logic of creation and the logic of finality. Why has such a piece been presented and how does it relate to what I know or what I might know?

Quite frankly some of the pieces turned me on, precisely because I was able to impose reasoning: make up a story which was full of my own creed. That's philosophic creed in the sense that some paintings were making profound

comments and I agreed.

**Table Landscape** (John Ridgewell 1973) might never happen. One could not cover an embroidered tablecloth with such delicate trees, grasses and vines. Or place a teacup upon it and expect such dramatic contrast. Ridgewell has balanced the man-made with the natural; the fresh (form) with the classic (technique). His ideas are modern because he has intertwined his knowledge of the logic of artistic (hence philosophic) history. This painting pulled me from across the gallery. It gave me reinforcement and tomorrow I will be even stronger.

John Berger, the British Art Critic, has written often and persuasively that both naturalism and realism exist. Naturalism is cold -- and realism recognizes all of mankind as a social, thinking animal. Simply dynamic; that after 5000 years of written history artists must have discovered something. Yes, some pieces in this show are modern classics, for one can see aesthetic movement and development within them.

The exhibit is well mounted and shows off the Dalhousie Gallery to its best advantage. One has plenty of room to see the paintings and sculpture and unlike the College of Art gallery up the street we are allowed time to feel comfortable with the exhibit.

**Aspects of Realism** is sponsored by Rothmans. Their curators have done a good job, and no expense has been spared. Now if only Rothmans would get out of South Africa.

## Unity Task Force here next week

### Conference Agenda

#### Thursday, September 22

- 9:00 - 10:00 Talk Show  
CJCH; CFDR
- 10:00 - 12:00 ACADIANS  
Open to public debate
- 12:00 - 14:00 Board of Trade & Halifax/Dartmouth Chamber of Commerce  
Not open to public
- 14:00 - 15:30 Youth  
Representatives from various high schools across the province  
Open to public debate
- 15:30 - 17:00 Labour  
Representatives from labour union  
Open to public debate
- 17:00 - Major speech by the Task Force  
Open to public

#### Friday, September 23

- 09:00 - 10:30 Academics  
Teachers' Union  
University Students  
Open to public debate
- 10:30 - 12:00 Multi-Cultural Groups  
Open to public debate
- 14:00 - 15:30 Royal Canada Legion Women's Institute  
Open to public debate
- 15:30 - 17:30 A.P.E.C.  
Open to public debate
- 17:30 - 19:00 Public Debate  
Regionalism vs. Centralism and the Constitution  
Open to public debate

#### All sessions will be held at King's

The format of the sessions with the Task Force shall be one of debate. As indicated by the schedule specific times have been allocated for specific interest groups to present their views on solutions for the continuing existence of this country. The Task Force is not looking for problems since it is evident what the problems are; it is looking for answers.

The mandate of the Task Force on Canadian Unity has three basic elements:

- (a) "To support, encourage and publicize the efforts of the general public and particularly those of

voluntary organizations, with regard to Canadian unity";

(b) "To contribute the initiatives and views of the Commissioners concerning Canadian unity"; and

(c) "To advise the Government of Canada on unity issues".

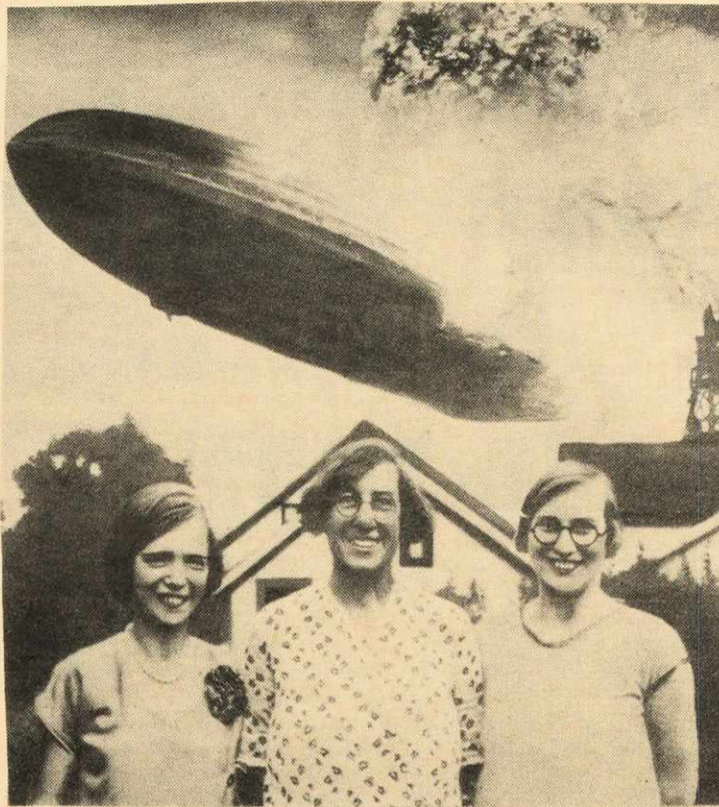
The sessions shall be an attempt to understand the real concerns of all Canadians on the functioning of our social, economic and political institutions as they relate to the mandate of the Task Force and based on this understanding the Task Force will make recommendations for changes in structures, concepts and attitudes which are required in order to make our Canadian institutions more consistent with the needs of our times.

The success of the Task Force does not depend on the government but depends on public input; it is therefore necessary for maximum student participation.

#### Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat is back by popular demand.

The pop musical, based on the Old Testament story of Joseph, an Israelite slave who saves Egypt from famine, was performed last March by the Mount Saint Vincent University choir. The production met with such an enthusiastic response from the Metro community that the choir will present it again September 30 and October 1 and 2 in the auditorium, Seton Academic Centre.

The cast of about 50 people is directed and produced by Sister Margaret Young and co-directed by John Frederick Brown, assisted by James Farmer, associate choir director. Performances are September 30, October 1 and 2, 8:30 p.m. All tickets are \$2.50 and are available at the door.



## SHINERAMA



"LEND A HELPING FOOT"