

Art McMullen Gallery: where the Heart is

Heart to Art
McMullen Gallery
 Run ends March 31
 review by Cathy Duong

The abstract heart shape, the widely recognized symbol of love, can assume many forms. It is visualized as a sun rising, birds in a cage and other

subtle concepts in the exhibition at the McMullen Gallery at the University Hospital. The exhibition, which began last month, was organized as a result of the University of Alberta Hospital being on the forefront of heart surgery as well as February being the month for lovers.

The works of fifteen artists who support the

concept of displaying art in hospitals are gathered here. These displays are imaginative and light-hearted — they will surely liven up any hospital atmosphere. For example, one consists of gaily coloured hearts on a magnetic board. Aply named "Heart's Desire", the display invites the viewer to arrange the hearts to any form he wishes.



Artists explore the universal symbol of love, the heart, in various art forms.

Theatre Late night with Theatresports show

interview by Randal Smathers

It seems fitting that when a story on Theatresports came through the office, I got it. After all, in addition to writing entertainment, I also write sports, and theatre + sports = Theatresports.

There is a new "league" starting this Friday, the "pro-level" of Theatresports. The best of Edmonton's improv teams will be in action at the Theatre Network, starting at 11:30 p.m. in something called "The Impro — Late Show — On The Edge."

One of the competitors will be Cathleen Rootsart, who, along with sister Christine, David Belke, and Wes Borg, finished third at

the Olympic Arts Festival, where there was a major International Theatresports competition. The contest featured teams from across Canada, the States, Denmark, Australia, and the UK.

Canada swept the medals, with Calgary and Vancouver taking first and second ahead of Edmonton. Theatresports is Canuck-dominated because the genre was developed by Calgaryer Keith Johnstone in 1975 at the U of C. The rest of the world is catching on to the idea, as shown by the international participation at the Olympics.

Theatresports involves teams of improvisers receiving suggestions for skits from the

audience, then doing whatever they can with the idea. Three judges do the scoring, from zero to five points each. They also have a "gong show" ability to stop a skit on grounds of boredom. A zero skit is boring, and a five skit "has everyone in the house breaking down from laughter", according to Rootsart.

Rootsart has been in theatresports for "six or seven years", since she was in high school. She not only plays Theatresports, but also conducts workshops for others. The regular Sunday night timeslot includes try-outs and workshops at 6 p.m., before they show at 8 p.m. Her favorite skit in all that time is a song

The painting by Vivian Thierfelder catches the eye. Bright flowers and heart-shaped items such as candles and doilies work well together to create a bright and cheery atmosphere. Also, the painting by Alan Worman entitled "The Art of Healing" is an interesting and sweet piece of pop art. The gallery staff is thinking of reproducing it into greeting cards.

An especially clever display is by Norman Yates, who teaches at the University of Alberta. The work actually contains two pieces. The first piece is an artist's stand with the inscription "see with your heart as well as your eye". Embedded in the stand is a part of the artist's spectacles. Looking through the glass, the viewer can see the second piece — a painting hung behind the stand. In a way, the painter is looking through the artist's eyes.

The low relief sculpture by L.E. Weaver, a professor at Lethbridge, is worth pondering about. It consists of a bar of soap on a stand with the words "scrub and rub this p.m.?" above it. Could it be referring to operating room activities? Incidentally, the soap came with its wrapping and the gallery staff was wondering whether to unwrap it or not.

The other items in the exhibition include some plants and paper hearts that were submitted by the hospital staff and the children in pediatrics. Paintings of flowers are also present and they add to the gaiety of the exhibition.

All the art works were donated by the artists and will become a permanent part of the Mackenzie Centre's art collection as a tribute to the late William McMullen. If all goes well, the exhibition might become a travelling show. Eventually, some of the displays will be sent to other hospitals and nursing homes where others can share in the enjoyment of viewing them. All the works signify the care that went into creating them and the organization of the exhibition.

The Gallery coordinator, Peggy, gave a well-informed and entertaining tour of the works. The exhibition, which runs until March 31, is worth a look.

called "My Baby Left Me Because I'm Fat."

The new Friday night slot will be for experienced Theatresports players only, and will be more adult-oriented than the Sunday shows. They will be trying to get out the "late-night crowd, itching for something to do", said Rootsart.

They ran a successful "Midnight Madness" show recently, which shows that they have already tested the concept.

Theatresports gets out not only professional actors, but high school and university students, and people from the general public — including a prison guard/improv actor.

What's it take to be a good Theatrejock? "You've got to eat cereal — lots of cereal," said Rootsart. "Something with flakes."

Tickets are \$5 at the door, but get there early, as this is a popular event.

Unusual role for BFA grad

interview by June Chua

"It's not a particular dance, more like movement that follows the play. I portray nature... I'm the coming of winter," says Sharon McFarlane of her role in *A Prairie Boy's Winter*, showing at the Edmonton Art Gallery this week.

The play is an adaptation of William Kurelek's book of the same name, and it also features his own paintings which are on display at the Edmonton Art Gallery. McFarlane feels that this stage adaptation is a good reflection of the book because "it's very naturalistic... you can feel that it's a child's point of view. The play brings out the feeling of the prairie and the winter, and how they survived through the Depression." The amicable McFarlane is classified as a dancer in this production but she says that the only training she had is in the BFA (Drama) program at the U of A. We took ballet, jazz, tap and modern movement.

At the U of A, McFarlane was involved in several productions at Studio Theatre: *Crime of the Heart*, *Love for Love* and *Ten Lost Years*. The restoration piece *Love for Love* was her favorite. "I'm mostly interested in classical theatre, like Shakespeare... but I don't like limiting myself to this. I enjoy Canadian pieces and modern works," she says, adding that she also likes Sam Sheph-

ard's plays. Since David William from the Stratford Theatre directed *Love for Love*, she feels that it was a good experience. Three of her classmates are now at Stratford, so she hopes to work there sometime in the future as well.

After graduating in 1987, McFarlane has worked continuously. All summer, along with fellow classmate Jeff Hirschfield, she was involved with *Geeks in Love*. During the Fringe, she performed in *Elmo's Rainbow*, and in the fall, she toured schools in Northern Alberta in Chinook Theatre's production of *Step Sister*, *Blood Brother*, until December.

McFarlane's attraction to her role in this production was that it is so different from others she has portrayed. Also, she says, "I don't have any lines!... I'm just this spirit, so it's very odd to be performing on the stage while the other characters aren't suppose to be aware of me." She sees her role as reflecting what is going on, "especially how nature has control over lives."

McFarlane, an Ontario native, is ready to go anywhere to perform. "I've auditioned in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary and I've sent my resumes out". She says that it would be nice to be able to move about, "but think I'm based in Edmonton right now."

Graduating from the U of A drama program has been a definite asset to Mc-



Sharon MacFarlane in *A Prairie Boy's Winter*.

Farlane. "There is a demand for well-trained actors, simply because so many of them don't have any training... so it doesn't matter whether the part suits you but if you are formally trained to act." The U of A BFA programme is acknowledged to be one of the best in Canada.

McFarlane has had some experience in television and radio. However, she feels that the mediums are very diverse. In TV, "you're not very important as an actor... everything is (centered around) the technical part of it, so you're sort of shuffled off to the side." She

adds that "it's hard to get accustomed to making gestures smaller, because in the theatre you must make bigger gestures so they can be seen. If you did that on TV you would look pretty stupid." She has done mostly workshops on the radio but nothing that has been aired.

Sharon McFarlane is enthusiastic about her craft and wishes to concentrate on acting before spreading into other fields in the fine arts. She feels that "it's fun to do TV, film or radio, but acting on the stage is really what I want to do."