

Ron Bloore's office number is Vanier 206

York University is not the only campus where there has been wailing and gnashing of teeth about the lack of an identifiably Canadian culture, but here our pessimism is countered by the presence of a man who has made a significant contribution to that nebulous cause, "Canadian art".

The man is Ronald Bloore, a 44 year old artist and art historian, now teaching art history at York.

His most recent show was at The Jerrold Morris Gallery (Toronto) in November, and his works now hang in the Confederation Centre, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; at Dorval Airport in Montreal; and in various private collections in Canada and abroad.

Brampton native

Originally from Brampton, Bloore has received degrees in fine arts and art history from the University of Toronto (1949) and Washington University in St. Louis (1953). After studying a total of three years at the Institute of Fine Arts in New York and the Courtauld Institute in London, he returned to Canada to teach at the Regina campus of the University of Saskatchewan. While there he also held the directorship of the Norman Mackenzie art Gallery in Regina. In 1962-1963 he travelled to Greece on a Canada Council senior fellowship, after which he destroyed

all the work he had completed there, and as much of his previous work as was accessible. Since 1966 he has been teaching at York University, but for the academic year 1969-1970 he will devote his time exclusively to painting, thanks, in part, to a \$7000 Canada Council senior award.

Bloore is, to say the least, reticent about giving an interpretation of his own work, but not so hesitant about describing his technique. It involves working out a definite preconceived image in a sketch (on the back of a lecture note, say) and transferring it to a masonite panel through the painstaking application of layer upon layer of white oil; each layer is hand-polished (really! with the side of the hand) before the next is applied. The result is characterized by carefully-controlled relief, geared to the proposed setting in that it is planned to look most pleasing in specific light conditions. The role of light is heightened, too, by the use of both matte and gloss finishes, and shades of white ranging from warm to frigid. The effect can be austere or delicate, but always disciplined. After seeing Bloore's paintings it is difficult to recapture my old prejudices against white on white as dull, lifeless, sterile, or even monochromatic.

Reason for painting

Why does he paint? "To externalize private images," but in the process the

images have to be adapted to material limitations. As an artist he is adding to our environment another object which must be considered in the deciding of values, and thus fulfilling what he considers to be the function of the artist in society, that of questioning its values. This may or may not take on a political aspect, depending on the viewer. The so-called 'meaning' of art depends solely on the individual. "No society before has had such a proliferation of styles, and of quality." This makes it difficult to predict trends or direction in art. He did, however, deal with an art 'form' with which society is confronted today, destructive art: "Personally, I consider it an objectionable notion, but academically I accept it as an historic phenomenon. It remains a major issue in contemporary art... The work of art, in this case, is not complete until it is destroyed... The art is in the actual destruction... A society which can talk about the death of God cannot legitimately profess permanence as a major value." What about the future? "I'm an art historian; I deal in the past."

Chris Mills, pretty second-year Founders student, also writes poetry in her spare time. Dave Cooper is Excalibur's ace photog who boasts, 'I can snap them anytime, anywhere, anyhow.'



feature by
Chris Mills

photos by
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