

News of the arts

Absurdly serious exhibition

Irony, wit and humour in both city and country life are the main themes in the exhibition, *Do You Take This Seriously?*, currently being shown at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta.

The exhibition features the figurative prints and small sculpture of 23 artists, many of whom are from the Canadian prairies. And while the works are designed to make the viewer laugh, many also adopt serious tones.

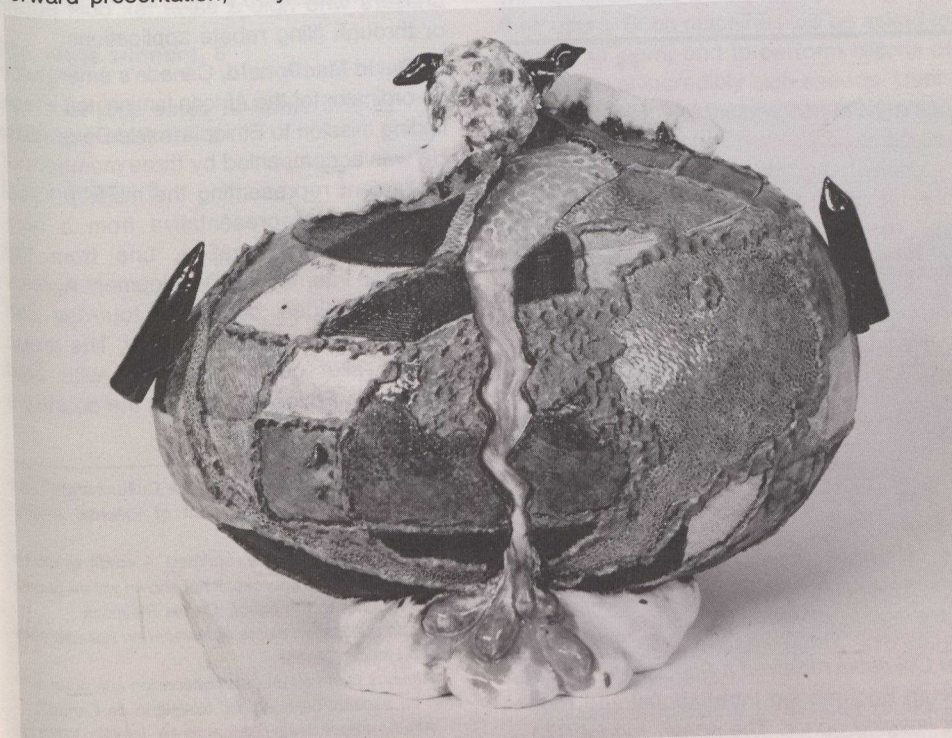
By personification, exaggeration and incongruity, the artists have attempted to depict the absurd in the familiar. At times they have used humour to mark the dismal, wicked or unjust and call attention to the more serious aspects of reality.

According to Glenbow curator Eva Newman who helped organize the exhibition, the works "poke fun at the habits and customs of both private and public affairs. They look at the past, the present, and the future, offering new perceptions of staid impressions".

Marvin Jones's print entitled *American Expectations*, for example, is an attack on materialism: it shows cigarettes, liquor, food, jewelry and furniture on a treadmill amid the stars. "Humour has been a way of communicating ideas I thought people would be unlikely to accept in a straightforward presentation," says Mr. Jones in



When Jessie Rolled Snake Eyes, 1983, by Garry Williams of Calgary, appears initially as a classic bronze sculpture of a gunfighter about to draw his gun. Instead it is a denim-clad lizard with steely gaze and clenched cigar, venomous snakes in his hands, and a tail poking from the back of the long coat. For the artist, it represents a jest of the figural bronze, a traditional Western art genre, and a comment on his dislike for guns and snakes.



The glazed ceramic work, *Don't Blow the Lid Off Our Terrine*, 1983, by Joe Fafard of *Pense, Saskatchewan*, is an egg-shaped "earth" covered in fields and meadows. The pastoral quietude is marred by the jagged "crack" that threatens to split the creation in two and the ominous pair of nuclear missiles that are the handles.

a note accompanying the work.

Another example, Wayne Friesen's ceramic, *Baroque Burger*, elevates a universally middle-class symbol — the Big Mac — to a social icon. It rests upon pillars while a tiny cherub cavorts atop the sesame-seed bun.

Kisten Abrahamson looks at pampered tourists in *Dere's a Deer Dare Dear*, who ignore the beautiful scenery around them and concentrate on eating their ice-cream cones.

Do You Take This Seriously? was sponsored by the city of Calgary, the Alberta government and the Canada Council. The show will be on view until January 13.

Anniversary tour for school

The National Theatre School in Montreal, will celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary by sending two productions across the country in the fall of 1985. The productions will feature actors, singers and dancers who have graduated from the school and have become renowned in Canadian theatre.

Jean-Louis Roux, one of the school's founding figures and now its director-general, travelled across the country negotiating dates for the showing of the twin bill. He said it is probable the tour will start at the Stratford Festival next fall, move to Niagara-on-the-Lake and then to all four Atlantic provinces, before going to Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. The tour will end with performances in Toronto and Montreal.

English and French productions

The school will produce Goldsmith's rollicking Restoration comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and a new French musical play, *Avant la nuit Offenbach*, by Michel Garneau, a teacher at the school. Graduates of the school will play the 19 roles involved, and stage direction, design, and technical backup will be provided by the school.

Since its inception, the school has had 640 graduates in acting, theatre design and technical aspects of theatre production, as well as in playwrights. Well over half of them have remained in the trade.

Students are trained "co-lingually, rather than bi-lingually," said Mr. Roux, and as it grows in its next 25 years, he would like to see the school offer courses in stage direction, theatre criticism, and film and television work.

According to Mr. Roux no other country has a national theatre school quite like this one, embracing all aspects of live theatre production, financed nationally and with a student body which, in 1984-85, will draw from all ten provinces.

Glenbow Museum photos