

# Maximum flexibility provoked evocative exhibits



By NANCY CURD

"Women's Work", a collection of work by women students at the Ontario College of Art opened at Gallery 76, Feb. 15. To allow for maximum flexibility in the exhibit, the organizers provided no theme apart from the title. The show was non-juried, since all students were free to submit works, and only spatial considerations prevented inclusion of all material submitted.

The results in most cases were inventive, evocative and amusing. Although woman's liberation was not a theme of the exhibit per se, it was obvious that many of the women had strong opinions on the subject which were reflected in their art. Through a variety of media which ranged from silk screen and ceramics to cookie dough and serviettes, Women's Work examined the ways in which women respond to their environment and themselves. Donja Jarrett's "Boob on Wheels" in wood and metal provided an interesting perspective on the female body, while Audrey Armstrong's six foot long "Liberated Knitting Needles" and Barbara Laffey's "Groceries" ironically examined some objects which are traditional accoutrements of a woman's role. Other works were less politically oriented but equally delightful. A good example is Ann Jordan's "Hors

d'Oeuvres" sculpture and "Cookie Dough" sculpture, which expressed both the joy and the repulsion involved in the elaborate production of food.

Along with the exhibit, the women's workshop at OCA also arranged for two five-hour showings of films made by and for women and held a conference on Feb. 25. The subject was women in art, and the speakers included Vera Frankl, Joyce Wieland and Bonnie Kreps. Discussion covered a wide variety of topics, such as how to be taken seriously as an artist and a woman, and the problem of coping with a society that does not consider art as honest, fulltime work for a woman.

When asked for an overall estimation of the exhibit, which closed Feb. 25, curator Amy Lewitt seemed quite pleased, not only with "Women's Work", but also with some of the reaction it provoked. The organizers felt that because of its non-juried status, the show helped to point out some of the inadequacy of present day selection standards in most galleries and the equally inadequate standards currently used to describe women's art. One contributor, for example, was informed by a male critic that her work was "bally". Hopefully, this exhibit may provide an impetus for women artists to examine their position on their work and their status as women.

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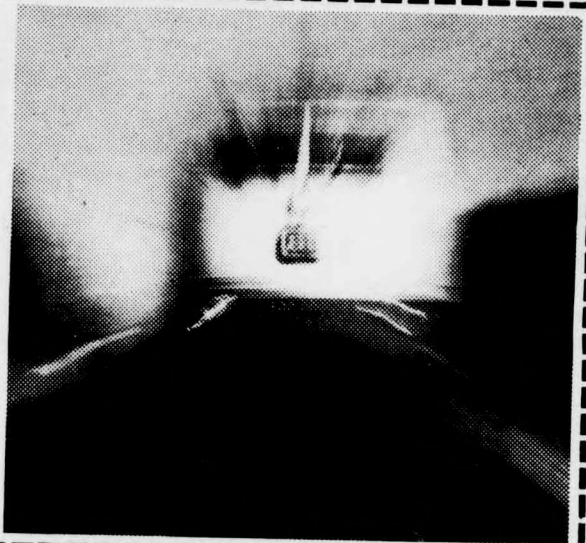
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