

Italian treasures presented

The Arts of Italy in Toronto Collections: 1300-1800 was a recent exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto.

This was the first presentation of "fine arts" and "decorative arts" from both the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Royal Ontario Museum as well as from private collections of a celebration of the Italian heritage in the Toronto area.

The 250 items in the exhibition were selected to reflect the creative genius that extended through all the arts of Italy of the period and range from paintings and drawings to silver, furniture, arms and armour.

Among the textiles on view were silks, embroideries, and splendid examples of Renaissance velvets and early Venetian lace. Contributions from the European department of the Royal Ontario Museum, included Renaissance glass, sixteenth and seventeenth century maiolica ware, and several important works in bronze, terracotta, and stucco. Bronze sculptures by such noted Florentine artists as Giovanni Battista Foggini (1652-1725) and Massimiliano Soldani-Benzi (1656-1740) were highlights.

The exhibition provided an opportunity to view many Royal Ontario Museum treasures not accessible because of the museum's current building project.



Madonna and Child, Giuseppe Ferraro, a Sicilian, terracotta sculpture, 57.5 centimetres high, signed and dated 1623, from the ROM collection.

Top Canadian craftsman

Joanna Staniszki, a Polish-born artist who weaves tapestries in wool, has been awarded the fifth annual Saidye Bronfman Award for Crafts and the \$16 000 prize as the outstanding Canadian craftsman of 1981, reports the *Canadian Press*.

Her tapestries have been displayed in international exhibitions in Poland, Switzerland and the United States and her commissioned works hang in banks, insurance offices and business buildings across Canada.

Staniszki graduated from the Chicago Art Institute in 1967 with honours in interior and textile design. She is currently associate professor at the University of British Columbia School of Home Economics, where she teaches design courses.

When she is not teaching she creates tapestries for public buildings.

One of her most recent works, a Prairie scene with billowing clouds of wool over a brown-hued earth, is a ten-by-three metre tapestry for the federal government building in Calgary.

She was chosen from more than 300 Canadian artists who participated in a national competition for the commission.

Oil companies become patrons to young emerging artists

The new office towers being built in Calgary, Alberta, have created an art boom which is keeping pace with the oil boom.

At least two dozen large companies with offices in Calgary, many of them large oil companies, have become art patrons on a very large scale by purchasing the works of Canadian artists to hang on their walls.

The idea of buying the work of Canadian artists originated in 1976, when Shell Canada Resources Limited was planning its new building. The company set \$400 000 aside for original work, with an emphasis on supporting young, emerging artists. The Shell collection comprises 100 works and is currently valued at \$700 000.

More recently the new 33-storey Esso Plaza, built by Esso Resources Canada Limited, provides a perfect example of the kind of all-out corporate art buying now taking place.

There are between 1 600 and 1 800 offices in the building and a piece of

original Canadian art will be purchased for each one. In addition paintings will be bought for hallways and waiting rooms. The total collection will number well over 2 000.

Other large patrons include Nova Corporation, Petro-Canada, Chevron Standard Limited and Gulf Canada Limited.

Ideal for patrons and artists

The situation is not only ideal for the corporate patron but also for the artists. Having one of their paintings hung in a huge office tower means both money and exposure to the artist.

In economic terms corporate support is essential and means many artists can make a living at their art. For some the exposure has led to greater success as they are selling their paintings to other companies as well as to lawyers and architects who are starting collections.

Arts briefs

The most popular film with North American critics, as judged by the number of appearances on 1981 ten-best lists, was *Atlantic City*, the Canadian film directed by Louis Malle, according to a survey of 66 newspaper and magazine reviewers.

Four Quebec directors, Denys Arcand, Louise Carre, Mireille Dansereau and Francis Mankiewicz, recently participated in a major retrospective of Quebec films in California. *Les Bons Débarras*, *The Handyman*, *Rejeanne Padovani* and many other films were screened at four Los Angeles locations (University of Southern California, Claremont College, University of California at Los Angeles and the offices of The Directors Guild of America) in February and at the Pacific Film Archives in Berkeley in March.

The diaries and private papers of internationally acclaimed Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery have been acquired by the University of Guelph library collection. Montgomery is best known for *Anne of Green Gables*, a book which has been translated into 36 languages. It depicts life in turn-of-the-century Prince Edward Island, the province where Montgomery was born. The diaries were purchased from Dr. Stuart MacDonald, only surviving son of Lucy Maud Montgomery and her husband Ewen MacDonald, a Presbyterian minister in rural Ontario.