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Escher exhibit distorts St. Mary's

BY GREG FRY

"A Personal View on M. C. Escher" was given by the late artist's son, George Escher, last Wednesday at the St. Mary's University Art Gallery.

The public lecture was part of the *M. C. Escher: Landscapes to Mindscape* exhibit that is organized and circulated by the National Gallery of Canada. Escher presented the audience with slides and stories about his father's life leading-up to his death in 1972. This is the first time Escher's work has been presented in Atlantic Canada.

Escher, now a universally acknowledged print master of the 20th century, is one of the most commercially successful artists of our time.

Engraving his images into a board of pine and using that as a master plate, Escher employed a "print shop" technique that enabled him to make multiple facsimiles of his work. Each print on display from his "Mindscape" era is an innovation to the medium and to expression in modern art.

Escher is probably the only artist who has successfully united religion, humour and

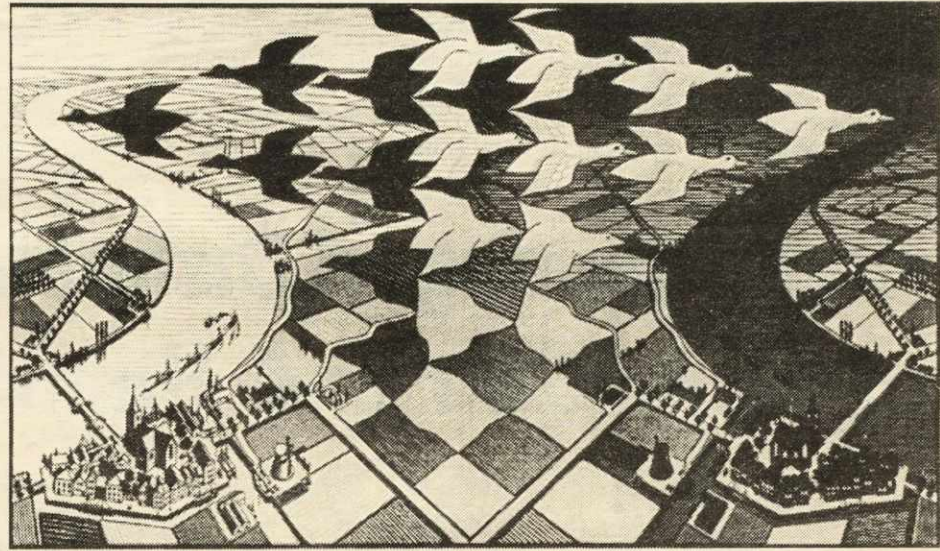
mathematics in his work. Pioneering mathematically-based art, Escher experimented with mirrored imaging and the symmetry of patterns and figures. In combination with the mathematical bewilderment there is usually a subtle joke or light-hearted comment about such holy issues as creation, predestination or reincarnation.

Later in his career, Escher spent most of his time trying to craft the infinite picture using spherical imaging. In short, an image with no boundaries that could fit on a single sheet of paper. He did eventually succeed in giving a flat piece of paper a sense of depth, making a colourful hybrid print of fish and birds which appears to stretch infinitely with no artificial cut off. After heavy analysis and inquisition the math-

ematics community declared this piece to be mathematically perfect. Ironically, Escher failed mathematics as a young boy.

Not only was Escher a brilliant surrealist, his landscapes clearly demonstrate how versatile an artist he was as well as the depth of his artistic abilities. These works are not well circulated, but are certainly worth checking out while the exhibit is in town.

M. C. Escher: Landscapes to Mindscape continues until October 20 at the St. Mary's University Art Gallery. On Friday, October 4, at 8 p.m., H.S.M. Coxeter from the University of Toronto will be giving a public lecture on the mathematical evolution of M.C. Escher's work. Unfortunately, George Escher's only other lecture will be in Sudbury, Ontario.



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