

## The Phase Show: Exploring man, technology and nature through art

By CHRISTINE GARDINER

"In a way, nature had become for us what we anticipate the effect of human intervention to be," says Paul Petro, guest curator for Glendon Gallery's *The Phase Show*, currently on display. Indeed, "human intervention" seems to be the key to understanding and appreciating this display, which consists of two electronic sculptures and one wall work from three different artists.

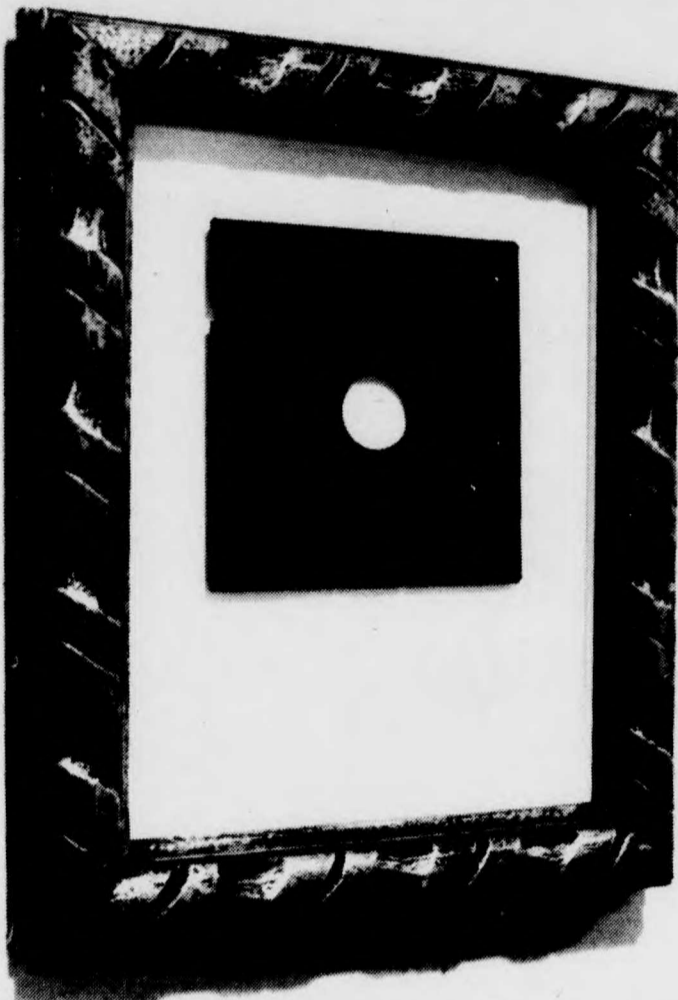
The works comment variously on the relationships between man, technology and nature. The electronic sculptures, by physically involving their spectators, allow the works and their individual comments to become both engaging and accessible.

OCA instructor Doug Back is represented with his sculpture, *Emitter/Follower*, a piece consisting of a video which appears to "float" in a box. The monitor displays an image of the box in which it is contained. The image remains constant, though the monitor "floats" back and forth from one side to another.

Back sees the piece as, "similar to a living organism which strives to maintain equilibrium in a turbulent natural society." At first glance, *Emitter/Follower* merely looks like a structure of wires and electronics, but if watched for a short length of time, the sculpture draws in the spectator, leading him out and in as it moves.

The most popular piece in the exhibit is Norman White, *Helpless Robot*. White, who has been working in the field of electronics for 25 years, is currently teaching at OCA. The work is a prototype for a robot that will eventually stand seven feet tall.

Actually, *Helpless Robot* merely looks like any ordinary computer. However, it has a device which rotates, and through its sensory receptors, the computer issues commands to the spectator, instructing him to move the device to the left or the right. When it is obeyed the computer becomes even more demanding. The irony of the computer making increasing demands on the human,



**MAKING FLIPPY-FLOPPY:** "Ceci n'est pas on Pomme" (above), by Hu Hohn, is just one of the interesting works of art presently displayed at Glendon Gallery's *The Phase Show*.

when it is normal to see the relationship as the opposite, soon becomes apparent. In fact, all of the sculptures in this exhibition encourage a similar experimentation and participation from the viewer.

The third piece, *Ceci N'est Pas Une Pomme*, created by Hu Hohn, director of the Massachusetts Computer Arts Learning Centre at the Massachusetts College of Art. In a sense, Hohn's work is a collaboration between himself and an Apple II computer. The artist's work is displayed on a framed floppy disc, and the computer's on paper printouts. The printouts—256 of them in all—

are displayed in quotation marks on the wall beside the disc. According to the artist, they are the result of the dump of the entire memory of an Apple II.

Hohn states his intention in, *Ceci N'est Pas Une Pomme*, was "to enliven the concepts while being fully consistent with the discipline of computing." It is a very interesting piece of work and, as with the others, a single glance is not sufficient.

*The Phase Show*, at the Glendon Gallery, will continue until February 21. For more information, call 487-6721.

## Our society's Lower Depths

By CHRISTINE BOUCHARD

As part of York's annual Fine Arts Festival, York's Theatre Department is putting on the production of *The Lower Depths*,

Maxim Gorky's play on the brutality, the helplessness, and the humour of life in lower class society.

*The Lower Depths* is about a group of people, from society's "lower

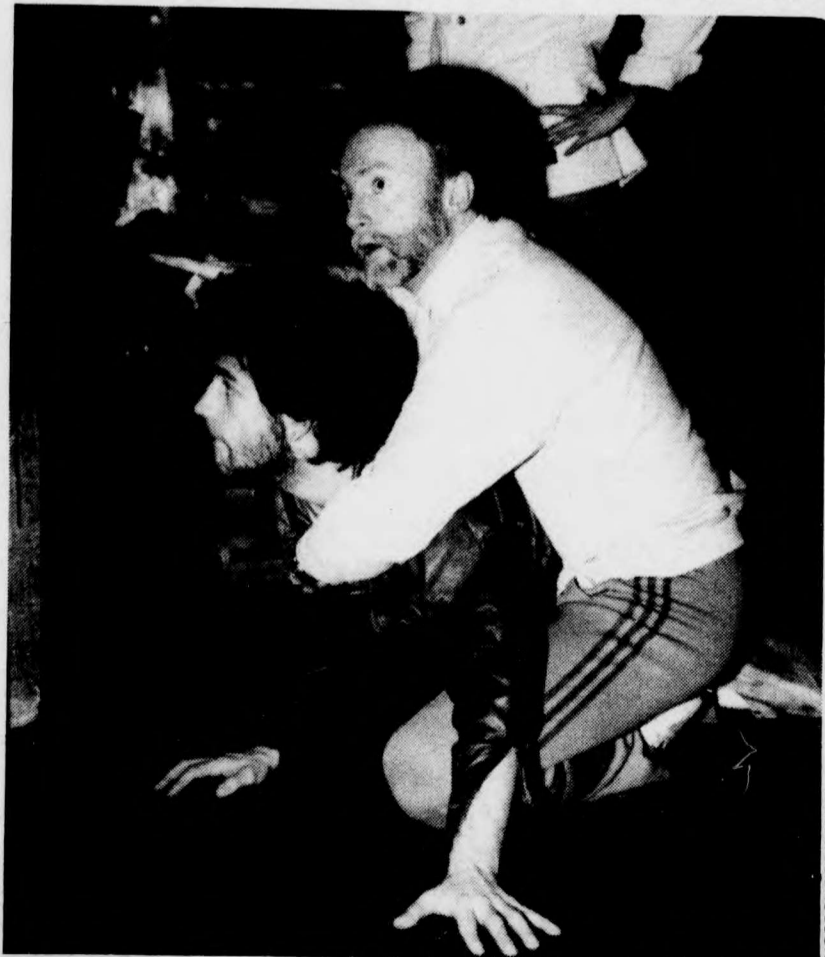
depths," who are living in a boarding house. It is the story of a stranger who comes into contact with the group and eventually changes its outlook on life.

The York Theatre Department has dedicated this play to all the homeless people in our community. In the play the audience is shown what it is like to be one of the homeless and are reminded about the serious nature of this problem.

Although the play was written in 1902, the issue of homelessness still plagues us today for example, in Toronto, alone, there are over 15,000 homeless people. For this reason Director Ines Buchli has set the play in a post-modern urban society, showing us the homelessness now exists and will continue to exist if drastic measures are not taken.

One very interesting aspect of this production is the way Valerie Kaelin, the Production Designer, has made use of the stage. The set has been designed to occupy the back-stage areas of the Burton auditorium whereas the audience will be seated on what is normally the stage. The end result is a strong chemistry between the audience and the performers as well as better use of the various levels and doorways of the stage.

The play will run from February 8-12 at 7:00 pm in the Burton Auditorium. Tickets are \$4.50 for students and seniors, and \$5.50 for adults. There will be a 2:00 pm matinee on Feb. 12. For more information call the box office at 736-5157.



ANDRÉ SORRIBUON

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