

arts

Variety key to SUGallery exhibit

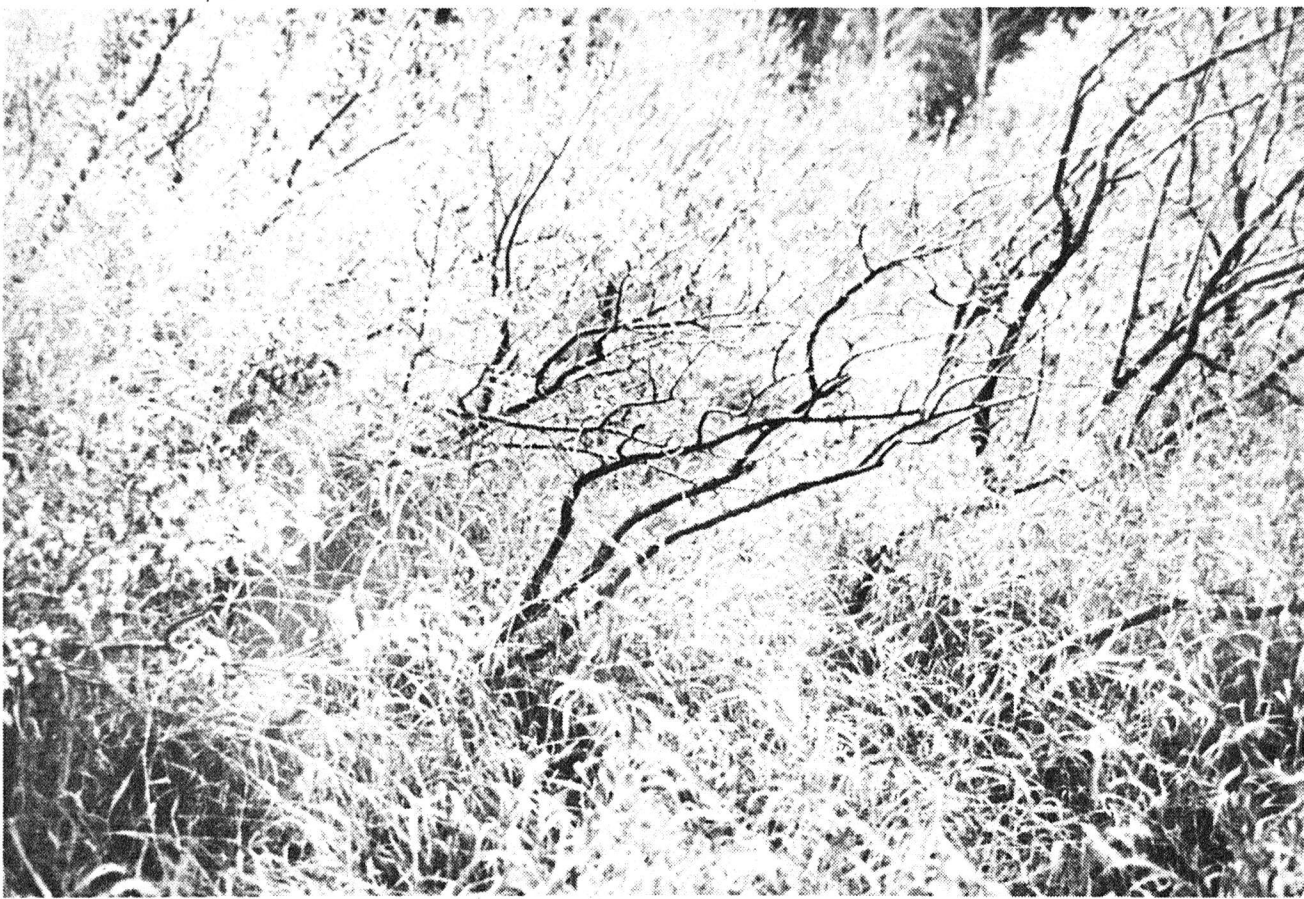
By Michaleen Marte

In this exhibition it is possible to see the forest for the trees. Currently on display at the SU Art Gallery are the works of six students from the Banff School of Fine Arts. The show is the collaborative effort of Joan Borsa (director of the gallery) and Peter McKendrick, lecturer and visual arts program coordinator at the Banff School of Fine Arts. The exhibition features the media of drawing, painting and photography. The selection was made to be representative of the quality of work which is currently being produced by the artists of the Banff centre.

Photography dominates this show both in quantity and the ability to hold the visitors' attention. Three of the artists (Rick Beaton, Grant Ponton, and Andy Sylvester) have chosen to show a series of one particular subject. For Rick Beaton it is the wedding reception. Here we have a common enough event, made even more anonymous by the treatment it is given by the camera. One might say that it is a collection which is "lacking" by photojournalist standards. The blurred images do much to dismiss a

sense of identity to the group of people who appear. But in this case precise portraits are not the objective; rather it is a creation of a certain atmosphere. We've all experienced the scene before; who really cares what relatives are sitting across the room from us, anyway? Beaton consciously creates the indifferent attitude.

In the photos of Grant Ponton and Andy Sylvester we find an environment free of human life. Ponton concentrates on the untouched natural setting in his study of wooded grounds through changing seasons. Perhaps the most effective photo is the autumn scene close to the entrance of the gallery. It is marvelous to look at for its enormous variety of colors and subtle forms. Andy Sylvester, in contrast to Ponton, works in black and white. He has managed to capture the lush backyards, frontyards and sidewalks of the middle-class city landscape. We see the flora, vast clumps of bushes, trees and plants; the fauna, plastic flamingos; and all of the structures that interrupt and contain it, white lawn chairs and picket fences. Within this theme, Sylvester manages to produce some good light and shadow observations in crisp and controlled compositions.



If you chance to take a stroll into the south room you will find paintings that are less intriguing; dull is the sensation. We find Art Lodge, who has presented a series in mixed media and collage. This is truly the slap-dash result of expressionistic fervor, and ironically, is quite exciting. Towards the back is Ron Crawford. He investigated color relationships, executed in a manner. For safety's sake there is a faint suggestion of a grid system. Perhaps the only merit in the work of three painters is the work of Peggy Johnson. Her acrylic "slab paintings" are notable for a textural as visual impression. In close view the canvas is a series of heavy, wave-like layers of paint. The overall effect when you step back and look up is like a gasoline rainbow — after it has been washed. Johnson gives a certain resiliency of color that is nowhere else in the southwest room.

The works of the six young artists are available for purchase by the public. The exhibition is useful in that it is able to show the activities of one area of an institution which is significant to the overall art scene of Western Canada. Furthermore, it is indicative of the ever-increasing importance of photography as an art medium.

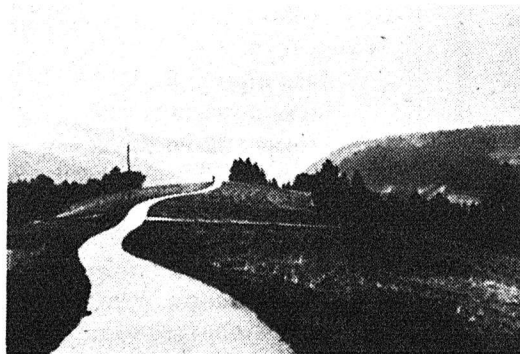
Garbarek gives us two sides of fries

Jan Garbarek
"Places"

Record review by Rick Dembicki

My favorite Norwegian saxophonist recently brought out an album: *Places* by Jan Garbarek. The sound is right, the backup good, in all; a pleasant experience. But allow me to explain. Jan Garbarek is no ordinary jazz artist. His performances (or innovations) often lack any clear-cut harmonies, leaving uninitiated listeners with the feeling that they should have stayed at home in front of the tube. In fact, their attitude is justified. Have a listen to *Body and Soul* by Dexter Gordon, and you will have your foot tapping in no time. Jimmy Heath's insouciant *Picture of Heath* conjures pleasant imagery. But *Places* ... well, it defies such reverie.

Garbarek's release is best defined as "fried" jazz. Now, this can be taken in two ways: First, *Places* makes excellent background music whilst one fries his scrambled eggs in the morning. This is obviously a better choice at 7 am than some raving lunatic playing disc jockey at CHED. Second, *Places* also sounds good when fried is used in the context of one's mind. Too much Roxy Music has sent more than one partygoer out the door. But that rather limits the album's applications, doesn't it? I mean, how much of one's life is actually spent cooking eggs or getting loaded? Not a whole lot — and that reinforces the concept — *Places* takes time. It is probably why a certain *Edmonton Journal* columnist dismissed the album as a misguided



effort and went on to talk about some other drivel in the same review.

But after a few listens, the album exudes a certain familiarity. Sure you won't be able to whistle a Garbarek piece while you work...but be aware that there are not too many symphonies that can be performed in like manner, and no one discredits them.

Garbarek plays with a talented trio; Bill Connors on acoustic guitar, John Taylor on organ and piano, and the perennial Jack DeJohnette on drums. The three rarely perform together, the emphasis being on their individual abilities. So when Garbarek winds down from a piano exposition, Taylor takes over on piano, only to be displaced by some fine guitar work by Connors. DeJohnette backs steadily, though his percussion is hardly inconsequential. It puts Garbarek in a different position. On *Red Lanta* it was Jan Garbarek with Landa on piano. On *Dis* he was matched with guitarist Ralph Towner. But on *Places* the man can cope with a quartet, meaning it cannot be fifty years of saxophone alone. And this seems to be Garbarek calling, as he clearly excels.

Instead of concentrating solely on the saxophone, he would also like to mention the record jackets. ECM recording have long been known for their covers—usually much more subtle in expression than their North American counterparts. *Places* is no exception, having a rather pleasant landscape emblazoned across the cover—but in a combination of black and white. This essentially reduces the scene to a mere place, just as Edmonton is a place, or Chicago is a place, or wherever.

The fact remains though, that this is a beautiful place, and evokes emotions that no other Avenue simply cannot match. Well, Jan Garbarek's sax works the same way. Sure *Places* is just an album, but it is a special one, one worthy of a listen.