

## Four artists of Edmonton

Edmonton is becoming a big rich city; it sprawls across the North Saskatchewan River and sports a skyline that seems to change monthly. This summer Air Canada offered special jet flights just to view the lights (the best view, they advertised, there is in Canada). Comparatively, it is a city innocent with clean air and tidy people. It is often regarded by visiting art entrepreneurs as trembling with unawareness eager to be seized and converted. Such zealous cultural missionaries pursue their quarry through the (awestruck) streets seemingly mad with the need to perform before the abundant succulence of the indigenous tender flesh. Afterwards, less awestruck, the streets remain. Some visitors stay to exploit, but others, taking in a fresh draught of space and air stay to discover what is here and attempt to contribute to development.

Recently I talked with a few artists who have settled here; I visited their studios and looked at their works. Of course a brief report like this cannot cover the work of many other artists; for example the university art staff has grown enormously and is beginning to affect the local scene one way or another in a number of fields. In this instance, I have visited four artists with whom I have in common identity with the city—being part of it and watching it grow.

Doug Haynes is a maker of archetypal images which he feels are an expression of a complex of self and environment. The works are richly textural and draw colour from the earth. Originally from the prairies, Haynes is tuned to the silent timelessness that one gets in the big western space. Chinese chimes in distant trees. It's a phrase he used to attempt to verbalize his feeling.

Recently he stated about his work: "While formal and plastic considerations are taken into account during a procedural build-up of the paintings, and while the paintings, due to the nature of the medium, are "planned," the justification of the image remains essentially intuitive, for when the image appears strangely familiar and hints at a strange entanglement of things contributing to my make-up—background, environment, experiences—and most important, still remains curiously aloof, then I feel I have come close to creating an effective image." So be it. Since he is a human being, so will his paintings find response in other human beings and become part of other environments and entanglements.

Sylvain Voyer returned from New York last May and plans to try it for another six months this winter. Voyer has mixed feelings about the effects of his sojourn in New York. Artists abound there, and because of the very nature of the compressed abundance of multi-direction, Voyer says he has tended to simplify and formalize his recent works.

Living in that vast urban jungle seems to have had little effect on Voyer's natural good humour or on his predilection for open space. Many of his pieces are shaped to give illusion of spatial definition and employ sequences of colour repetitions that, optically, vibrate and change as they move in and out of space.

Curiously, he continues to produce miniature naturalistically-inclined landscapes, meticulously brush-stroked and full of the pleasure of summer warmth and peace in the countryside. No sweat, no hang-ups in these little works and he says they sell well. Nevertheless, these tiny mirrors contain a genuine empathy with nature; every brush-stroke is a structural build-up that is as organic as the subject matter. The seeming extremes, the detailed natural miniatures and the much larger formal containments of space in perspective meet in Voyer's lyrical and hedonistic concept of nature. The miniatures seem resolved; the larger structures develop.

Ihor Dmytruk takes a flat plane and a module of simple three dimensional illusion, multiplies the module, multiplies the theme, juggles tone and colour, analyzes, shifts and juggles again from one canvas to another. Though the canvases are impeccably surfaced, Dmytruk is prolific and almost austere relentless in his search for variations within a prescribed theme. Yet when each painting is examined it seems to contain its own direction.

Dmytruk says that for him the problem is set in each painting at the time it is being produced. After the major portion of a work is completed, a round of modifications (the need for which is intuitively derived) follows until the work seems right. For the most part, the modular forms are produced in what Dmytruk describes as "typical" greys, by which he means greys which for him seem to be alive and warm, and are often set against vibrant mauves or greens. Invention of space and form continues within Dmytruk's personally-set limits which do not rigidly confine so much as chart a course of visual opportunities.

Harry Savage brings to bear his wit, concern, and delight with the affairs of the world, creating imagery of a bold and solid intensity. A master of assemblage, Savage combines familiar objects (plastic tubes, advertising forms, toy soldiers) into the realm of powerful comment by visual association.

*Whipped Dream*, for example, sends a plastic ice cream cone (soft variety), knifing through a star-bordered circular area on which are imprisoned a mass of small figures half melted and brilliantly silvered; this whole interaction culminates in a word, POW! Ominously protruding from the base of the cone, plastic tubes are suspended like forlorn celebration ribbons. The formal structure is attractive and solidly crafted; it's when one gets closer that you get it in the groin.

I found Savage in a state of transition and engaged in experiments toward incorporating a technique of photography. The outcome will be interesting because the technique has caused him to turn to close-ups through which he can still comment, but more directly, through his immediate environment. Next winter should see some of this come to fruition and it will be worth seeing.

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# Art becomes an elastic mosaic

By Norman Yates

Educational programs in art in one form or another have had their effect on such people as these four artists and the polemic on the character and usefulness of various types of programs has been a prolonged one. In these days of rapid change, it has become even more intensive.

In a paper titled, "Up Periscopes, . . . the Cement is Hardening" distributed to the Department of Art faculty last August, I presented a few ideas on possible changes to existing structures. From that paper I would like to present here some parts which contained quotes from noted men and then add to this a lengthy quote from an article by Victor Doray (head of the Department of Medical Illustration at U.B.C.) whom I think has some good ideas on the topic.

Part of my paper dealt with the artist's role:

... There are other views given of the artist. For example, the noted figure in psychiatry and writer of its history, Dr. Rollo May, states in *Love and Will*, "Since art is communication springing from unconscious levels, it presents an image of man that is as yet present only in those members of society who, by virtue of their own sensitized consciousness, live on the frontier of their society with one foot in the future". In a world bombarded with communication that makes personal communication difficult and rare, Dr. May goes on, "The artist—who is the 'antennae of the race', in Ezra Pound's phrase—lives out, in forms that only he can create, the depth of consciousness that he experiences as he struggles with and molds his world".

The major problem of any course structure with a rigidly prescribed orientation, a controlled progression development by which appears to be meant a linear development, and an organizational framework that encloses expansion is exactly what those terms imply—a fixed location and a hard structure which is difficult to change. It seems to me that this is completely at variance with the concept of learning as a lifetime process, flexible, with self-motivation at its core. . . .

On the contribution of the individual in relation to world development, Lewis Mumford has written recently in *The Myth of the Machine*, "Now, the whole picture of 'backwardness' changes as soon as we cease to judge early technologies by the provincial standards of our own power-centred culture, with its worship of the machine, its respect for the uniform, the mass

produced, the mass consumed, and with its disregard for individuality, variety and choice, except in strict conformity to the demands of the megamachine . . . To deny the name of invention to the creative expression of subjective forms is to deny the unity of the organism itself and the impress of the human personality."

The current information flood, the availability of artistic experience as an experience of life, and the proliferation of ideas and immediacy of events brought to us through electronic media produce a fast-changing mosaic which out-dates the isolated specialist. Of greatest value, in my opinion, is and will be a creative state of mind in any field and the means to exchange ideas freely. Technology can serve us well in this respect if it provides the means for this kind of mobile information.

The need at university is for means for an individual to search out his own program of learning through advisory discussion, experimentation, the use of audiovisual information capable of self-paced input and response, and group dialogue when this is required. This view of the individual as a contributor is not a new idea. For example, Johannes Itten in his description of studies at the Bauhaus writes, "My best students are those who found new ways through their own intuition" and, "The task was to build the whole man as a creative being. Stuffing students with alien knowledge and a lack of time for contemplation hinder individual growth."

My plea is for the provision of opportunity for an individual to move flexibly through our facilities and employ as his major motivation for learning his own desire to accomplish it. In this way, participation by students in discussion and change of what is being offered by the university become more meaningful. "The university is not a production line in the service of existing society" states former President of C.A.U.T., Dr. C. B. McPherson, who also notes that the faculties must recognize the students' need for a "real voice in the uses to which the whole resources of the university—intellectual and material—are put."

How each individual, or if they so decide, how individuals in a group may attempt to discover what art is, why it exists or how it may serve society, or how it may contribute to the network or be enhanced by receiving from it, or where and why it may be a vital factor in our future is a matter for continuing development. . . . The

noted Ekistics scientist and author C. A. Doxiadis has stated, "If we consider man the centre of a system, the picture of our knowledge looks like an expanding asteroid, which expands in some directions more than in others."

Discussing further, the complexities of human problems of the future, Doxiadis turns to art:

"Similar questions can be raised about art. We are beginning to understand that art is indeed important in our lives, but we must also begin to understand that the real pleasures in life 'do not consist in consuming the arts, but in producing them, as those who do not produce art are even bad consumers', Bertrand de Jouvenel recently

