

Bruno Bobak

-- An Artist

by DONNA HOLLAND

The painters Bruno Bobak admires most are Grunwald of the old Masters, and more recently, Edvard Munch, a Norwegian.

"They have done more what I want to do, more successfully than anyone I know. They have presented humanity in its simplest and most honest way with a feeling of understanding and sympathy, never really brutality."

"As a child everyone paints and I guess that this is why I became a painter." Mr. Bobak said that he paints mostly from nature, at first, plants and flowers. More recently he has begun to do figure paintings instead of landscapes. The reason for this change said Mr. Bobak is that "the only things that really mattered to me were people, their behavior, something about humanity."

Born in Poland in 1923, Bobak came to Canada while still a very young child. He studied art in Toronto at the Central Technical School and later under Arthur Lismer at the Art Centre. He also studied at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London, England. During the war, he served as an official artist with the Canadian Army in Europe.

Since his return from overseas, he served as a designer for the Government Exhibition Commission in Ottawa and as an art teacher in the Vancouver School of Art. Mr. Bobak was awarded a Canadian Overseas Senior Fellowship in 1957. This enabled him to visit Europe.

In 1960, he came to UNB when he received a grant from the Canada Council. "The reason for this grant was to enable me to



Resident Artist Bruno Bobak, works at a woodcut in his studios at Memorial Hall.

paint without interruptions and without financial responsibilities. Since there was no Fine Arts faculty here, it was felt that an artist on campus would in some way create an interest in the arts."

Mr. Bobak is also the director of the Art Centre on campus and is therefore in contact with other artists in Canada. He is able to arrange exhibitions here as well as make the plans for the Festival of the Arts. The Festival this year will consist of a series of Friday evening lectures on the various aspects of the arts.

"There is a group of students on campus who are quite serious attending art classes on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings." Mr. Bobak is much encouraged with this and the better ones meet with him where they can paint together in an informal way. Mr. Bobak is available to talk to students during university hours.

He claims that it is "how you paint it that counts, not what you paint. There is a need for expressive quality." Mr. Bobak feels that this is the attitude of the Northern Expressionist painters of Europe particularly the Germans and this is why he feels their influence in his work.

Mr. Bobak prefers to work in paintings, woodcuts and black and white drawings. He says that "woodcuts are marvellous because you can't fiddle with details: you have to get the details in."

When asked whether or not he enjoyed painting at UNB Mr. Bobak said, "I find that the Canadian mind is not geared to human minds. We live in a tradition of landscape paintings. For this reason I get far more response for my work in Europe than in Canada. It is for this reason that I feel very much indebted to the University of New Brunswick for allowing me to paint."