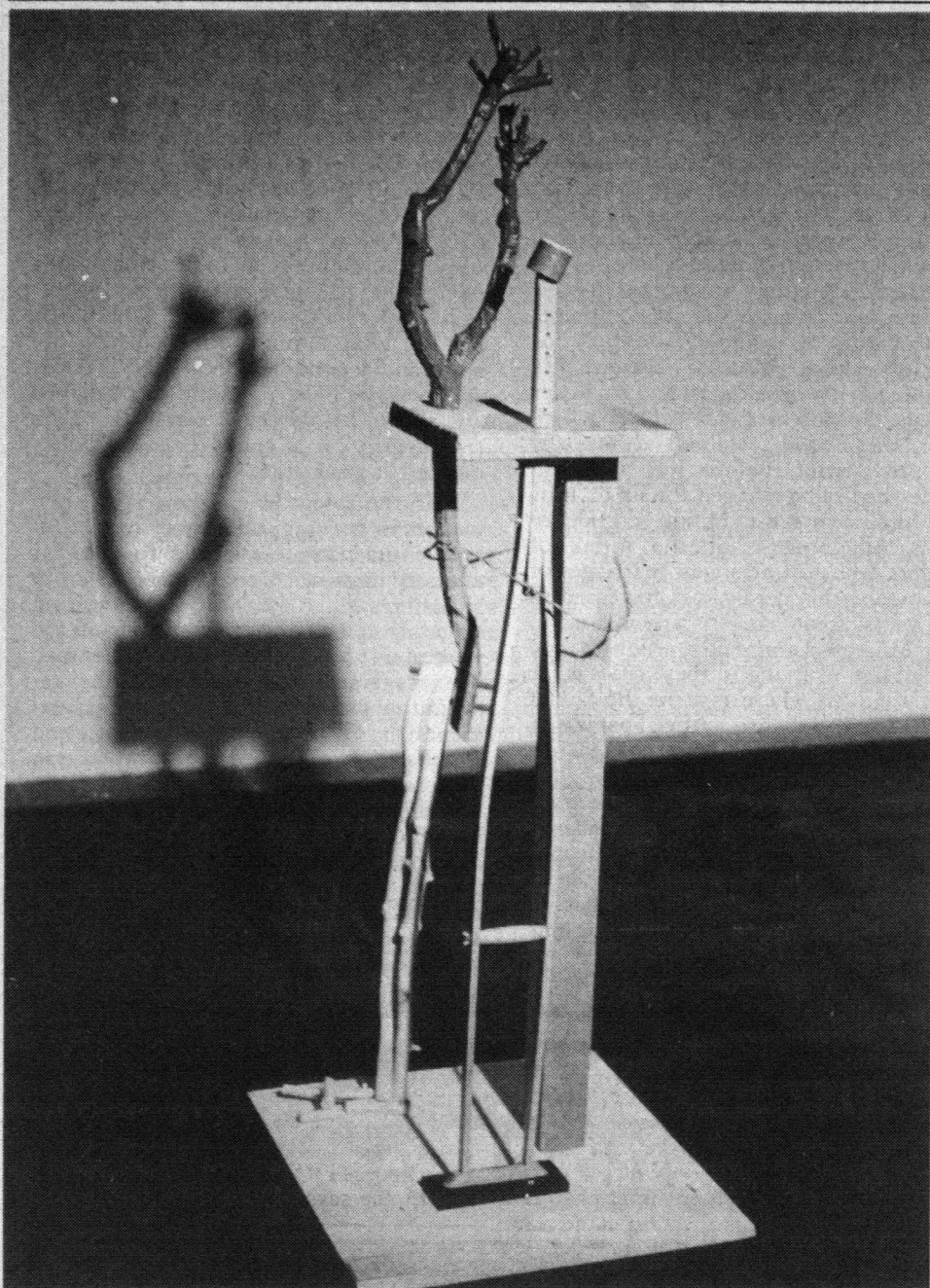


ARTS



This is "Getting Out", a sculpture in wood and clay by Phyllis Green. The Arts Editor said it falls into the category of Grand Fraud but he was forcibly hog-tied and straight-jacketed before he expressed his opinions more fully with a sledgehammer. A more reasonable critique is presented below.

Abstract joined to literal

Phyllis Green, (Sculpture)
SUB Art Gallery,
Sept. 24 - Oct. 12, '81

review by Donna McAlear

Winnipeg born sculptor, Phyllis Green currently resides in California where she has recently completed her M.F.A. at the University of California, Los Angeles. This exhibition reveals the compelling results of this period of study and also indicates the changes that have occurred in Green's work during this two year period.

My Ladder and *Fragment Litter* of 1979 are very subdued, monochromatic works, composed of branches ordered into simple geometric arrangements on top of which organic clay forms are placed, some of these forms subtly suggesting body shapes. These 'earthy' works are very simple in terms of forms and composition and project concerns for natural materials and process as a means to an end.

The most recent pieces in the exhibition deal with a completely different aesthetic and are by far the more provocative. These, like the earlier works, are characterized by the combination of found branches with ceramic elements, but the introduction of strong and often odd color combinations and the use of patterning and texture, reflect the California 'funk' aesthetic that has influenced much of the ceramic work of the past decade. The concern for a 'natural' look or process is no longer in evidence as paint and 'trompe-l'oeil' effects become the focus, transforming sculpture bases into tables, chess boards and skyscrapers, while twisting branches suspended overhead suggest movements of the human form. The merger of the abstract and literal which Green timidly attempted in the 1979 pieces are now boldly realized in complex arrangements of literal and non-literal elements that deal primarily with movement as a theme.

Diving and *Hurdling* are two of the more successful works in the exhibition. In *Diving* a black geometric circular base is

surmounted by a rolling blue-green mass of land or sea, above which a twisted branch-like figure slowly hovers, its movements reiterating the undulating motion of the land mass and the circular base below.

Getting Out, another interesting work, shows a harsh red branch-like claw straining upward in an attempt to escape the confines of a tall thin building. These organic, moving elements co-exist with the static in Green's work and it is here that her sculptural development is most apparent. She deals with space and sculptural form in a more complex and tension-giving way than in the earlier pieces of 1979 where a wall support or pedestal base were resting places for rather static works.

In the recent work the animate linear forms never escape the confines of the static sculptural environment she has created, thereby imbuing the works with a timelessness and sense of suspended movement. Because of this they have a rather disturbing quality about them. This concern with suspension and timelessness directly reflects the influence of inspirational Surrealist painters Magritte, Ernst and de Chirico, who gave inanimate objects life and stopped time.

Some of Green's least successful works in the exhibition are *Running #1* and *Running #2*, where she incorporates figurative elements such as a plaster cast foot into the piece. These blatantly literal elements put a damper on the fantastical animate branches and detract severely from the rest of the work. The feet do not possess the same subtle ambiguity as do the table top bases or chess board in *Moving Game* as they do not function on the abstract and literal level at once, an important aspect in the success of the other works, and therefore can only be read in a literal sense. Also these pieces are less resolved in terms of movement and appear weighty and cluttered when compared to the simple complexity of *Hurdling*. They refer too directly to Magritte's plaster cast images and as a result detract from the personal symbolism of Green's more enigmatic works.

Beauty and the monomaniac

Practice Makes Perfect
Tues., Wed., 9:30 p.m.
The Princess Theatre

review by Elizabeth H.

Philippe de Broca's *Practice Makes Perfect* is a beautiful film. The characters are personalities, the settings are sumptuous and the photography that weaves them together is eloquent. Though superficially a French farce of infidelity and marital conflict, the more subtle theme of the film centres on the nature of beauty and perception.

The film's protagonist, Edward Choiseul, is a brilliant pianist in his early fifties. Edward is happily married (well, not quite) for the second time. When a Symphony co-worker remarks on the loveliness of both Ex and Present wives, Edward replies; "They all are, (lovely) Marcel; all of them." From this we might surmise that beautiful women are Edward's 'problem.'

Examining Edward's situation more closely, however, one could easily get the feeling that de Broca is defending the 'mad' again, (so to speak) as in *King of Hearts*. Edward seems to be benefitting and suffering from what could be defined as a personality disorder; hyper-sensitivity to beauty. The symptoms of his personality disorder manifest themselves as musical brilliance and an obsession with feminine

beauty.

Such characteristics could alternately be defined as personal idiosyncracies. Weighing more heavily in favor of personality disorder, however is an unnatural degree of self-concern that isolates Edward from other people. In the first minutes of the film, a single pan shot forms a motif that makes this lack of communication abundantly clear; Edward at the piano, with telephone. Throughout the film, one really gets that long distance feeling.

As de Broca converts the asylum into a preferable lifestyle in *King of Hearts*, so he seems ultimately to transform monomania into a laughable, livable condition in *Practice Makes Perfect*. Tragic consequence seems short-lived, if only because there are implied happy endings; the last word goes to visual beauty.

Edward likens musical themes to "threads in an unending tapestry, perfectly interwoven"; so the theme of beauty becomes part of the film. 'fabric' by its visual 'threads.' There is a quality of life, a beauty of moments that is constantly re-asserted by say, a shot of a woman's face or a vase of flowers briefly illumined in a dark hall as a door opens and shuts.

This beauty triumphs over the tragicomic inevitabilities of human situation. If there is anything that amplifies the amorality of *Practice Makes Perfect* and heightens the clarity of de Broca's cinematic vision, it is this triumph.

A low-key blues charmer

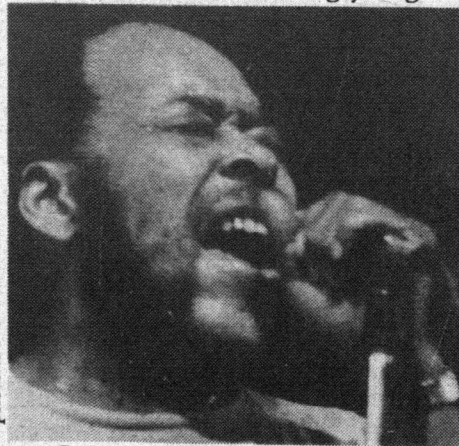
My Foundation
James Cotton
Jackal Records WOW720

review by Jens Andersen

I didn't see the James Cotton concert last week since it happened on a layout night, but extrapolating from his concert last spring and this record it would be fairly safe to say the concert was a humdinger.

I found the album doubly enjoyable, hearing it as I did immediately after John Cale's *Honi Soit*. Whatever the merits of Cale's music (some of it is excellent), there is no denying that he composes high strung, agonized stuff. James Cotton's relaxed blues provide just the medicine one needs to unwind afterwards.

"Good natured" describes Cotton perfectly. Even his version of "Killing Floor," though fairly close musically to Howlin' Wolf's hurt and angry original,



Cotton at Sub Theatre last week.

somehow manages to take on an air of sunny cheerfulness. (The guitar break in the middle of the song, incidentally, is one of the loveliest things on this lovely album.)

All this is not to say the album is sappy or saccharine in any way; its easygoing atmosphere is natural and tempered with



humour and irony (as in "Take Out Some Insurance" where Cotton warns his lady that if she ever leaves him she had better buy a policy for when he keels over and dies).

Other favourites include "My Babe," the seductively danceable "Dunn Got Over It," and "Dust My Broom," - and old blues chestnut which has no right to sound as fresh as it does here. A bit of monotony creeps into "Hungry Country" and "Clouds of My Heart" but they are pleasant enough otherwise.

The musicianship is deft and assured throughout, and it is worthy of note that the band (which includes veteran bluesmen like Sam Lay and Pinetop Perkins) needed only a day to lay down the tracks for the album.

Jackal Records are distributed by Trend Records and Tapes, 47 Racine Rd. Unit #6, Rexdale, Ontario, M9W 6B2. I imagine our illustrious SU Records (plug plug) would have no problem getting the record for you if you asked them nicely.

MUSIC

Vin Garbutt and Joan McIsaac; Oct. 10; South Side Folk Club (104 St. and 84 Ave.); 8 p.m.; Tickets at HUB.

Doc Watson; Oct. 10; SUB Theatre; 7:30 p.m.; Tickets at HUB, Mike's and West Den.

Richard White; Oct. 10; Sid's Fine Foods (formerly the Hot Box); 9 p.m.; cover charge - \$4.00; reservations 482-2111.

Up and Coming

GALLERIES

Annora Brown: Next to Nature, Art; Oct. 8-Nov. 1; Ring House Gallery; Weekdays 11-4 p.m., Thursdays 11-9 p.m., Sunday 2-5 p.m.

Exhibition opens 8 p.m. Oct. 8. Dr. Brown is a pioneer Alberta painter who has just published her autobiography.