

JACK HUMPHREY

The exhibition of Jack W. Humphrey's paintings currently on view in the Arts Centre has excited considerable interest among the student body — and rightly so. The consequence of this has been a large sale of the paintings and the evidence of an added regard for the work of the New Brunswick-born artist. All this is greatly to the credit of UNB's students for, apart from the obvious regional interest in both the subject matter and origins of Mr. Humphrey, he is a distinguished artist with an international reputation.

The majority of the works in the exhibit were painted during the past year, and are of the abstract expressionist genre. The watercolors seem to have the most popular appeal among the spectators and, indeed, Mr.

Humphrey is most renowned for his work in this medium. These paintings are usually composed of a few significant lines in pen and ink, which are then enveloped by a quick series of washes or dabs of paint, all closely related tonally. As the titles "The Sand-Bar, Mac's Bay" and "Kallers Brook" will suggest, the majority of these creations have as their subject matter the landscape around Mr. Humphrey's home in Saint John. The paintings in oils and gouache are of a much less representational character (except in the case of the portraits) and the main concentration is on colour. Works like "Tall Trees" and "Leaves" are much more complex than the watercolors, both in conception and realisation, and the color values are low-keyed and muted.

The similarity between many of the expressionistic paintings becomes somewhat monotonous, and they appear rather static. But other works, such as "That Never Was" and "Fresh Water Flowing" are much more aggressive, and have a strong feeling of movement that immediately catches the eye.

Mr. Humphrey has been described as "that rarest of creatures, a painter's painter", not interested in commercial gain and preferring to work in solitude to achieve his private artistic goals. Such inclinations combined with the appalling ignorance of this reporter resulted in certain necessary restrictions on the scope of the interview. Hence, the result:

Q. What painters have furnished you with the most inspiration, or have most greatly influenced your style?

A. In my younger days I most admired the work of Cezanne and John Marin, an American painter who works in watercolor. Now, however, I find I am constantly discovering exciting works that I admire. It is important for all student artists to study under a good teacher and examine the techniques of the great masters, but even more important for them to develop their own style on the basic principles, and let their own imagination and talent carry them on from there.

Q. Do you think it is necessary, then, for a great artist to be an innovator or break with established traditions?

A. This has generally been the rule in the history of art but two of the greatest artists, Van Gogh and Cezanne synthesized, rather than revolutionized art. Van Gogh took Impressionism and moulded it into Expressionism, while Cezanne took Impressionism and placed it on a more solid

foundation. I think that the pressure in modern art to discover something new is a good thing, however. Innovation for its own sake is a waste of time, but I get very tired of going from gallery to gallery and seeing the same stale things.

Q. What do you feel is the cause and ultimate result of the so-called 'crisis in contemporary art'?

A. There most definitely is a fact that up to eighty percent of all modern art works are abstract. The public, for the most part, doesn't like non-objective art, usually from a simple lack of understanding. Most of the loudest objectors are suffering from a lack of exposure and often find on closer contact that they appreciate abstract art. Hence, a need for educating the public. Just as music deals in sound, painting deals in the visual, and consequently should not be expected to have a literary meaning.

Q. Do you think an artist is obliged to please the public taste?

A. Most definitely not, as the public doesn't know what it wants. If you raise a composer above a specific piece of his music, why not an artist above a particular painting which you may not like? Art adapted for commerce and its rewards can only be second-rate. But appreciation of art is certainly more universal today than ever before and more paintings are being sold, although too often for the wrong reasons. I don't feel modern art will ever return to academic meticulousness, so the public may as well learn to appreciate non-objective painting.

Q. Do you think Canada will play a larger and more important role in international art in the future?

A. Every effort is being made to produce Canadian art of international calibre. But international meaning.

(Continued on page 6)



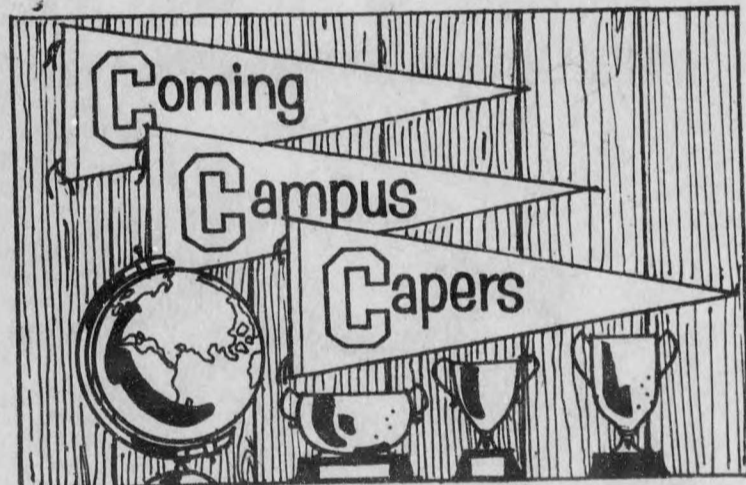
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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24

8 p.m. UNB Varsity Hockey vs. Colby College

Lady Beaverbrook Rink.

8:30 p.m. RED 'N' BLACK REVUE—T. C. Auditorium

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25

2 p.m. UNB JV Basketball vs. Camp Gagetown

Lady Beaverbrook Gymnasium.

4 p.m. UNB Varsity Basketball vs. Saint John Flyers.

Lady Beaverbrook Gymnasium.

8 p.m. UNB Varsity Hockey vs. Colby College

Lady Beaverbrook Rink.

8:30 p.m. RED 'N' BLACK REVUE—T. C. Auditorium

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27

7:30 p.m. Varsity Christian Fellowship—Are the New Testament Documents Reliable? Rev. John Griffiths. All Purpose Room, Centre

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER, 28

8:05 a.m. Formal Chapel Service—Chapel, Douglas Hall

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