

Presgrave sketches

By CYNTHIA HOWROYD

If you are interested in art history you should take a stroll down to the gallery sometime this month. Eighty-nine of a collection of 200 prints are hanging on the wall downstairs in chronological order, from the 15th century to the early part of the 20th. From Durer to Rembrandt to Turner; Dutch, French, German, English, and American, each engraving is a separate reality. Yet, one can note certain trends in the artists' subject and method. The earlier engravings are biblical in their subject. In one Dutch engraving of Saint James, dated 1495-1533, the artist used the majesty of the garment, the suffering in the expression, and the suggestion of a halo of light over the head to create the feeling of wisdom and spiritual power.

One artist used a lot of darkness and shading in his work to promote a melancholy message - yet this approach often loses that three dimensional feeling that is created by the delicate nuances of lights and dark and the movement of the line.

Opposed to the overworked prints are the ones that almost remind one of the cartoonist method, where outlines are emphasized and there are



large blank areas. It fails as an artistic work if it creates a stiff, blank look, void of expression and message.

One may note how the strength of the human body, often being in conflict with another force, is emphasized in those engravings of the 16th century. In several of these the artist has not included pupils in the eyes to concentrate all emphasis on the body. One small print is of naked gladiators fighting one another. The conformity of figure and face seems to suggest the senselessness of individualism in battle.

The engraving of the 17th century are portraits. It is interesting to note how many of the artists of this particular era include the frame in the

engraving, as if they already see it hanging on the wall. I was particularly struck by the warmth that a Dutch portrait conveyed - not only through the ability of the artist to control and tone and shade, but through the expression of the face, and even the warm look of the garment material.

As you end the tour you can see how artists with time dropped the laborious and delicate smallness of engravings to larger ones with much more freedom of line, and with the idea of suggesting a shape rather than portraying it in its complete reality.

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more to life than Rock 'n roll), all day Monday and Tuesday between 9:15 a.m. and 12 p.m. and 2 and 4 p.m. at Memorial Hall.

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