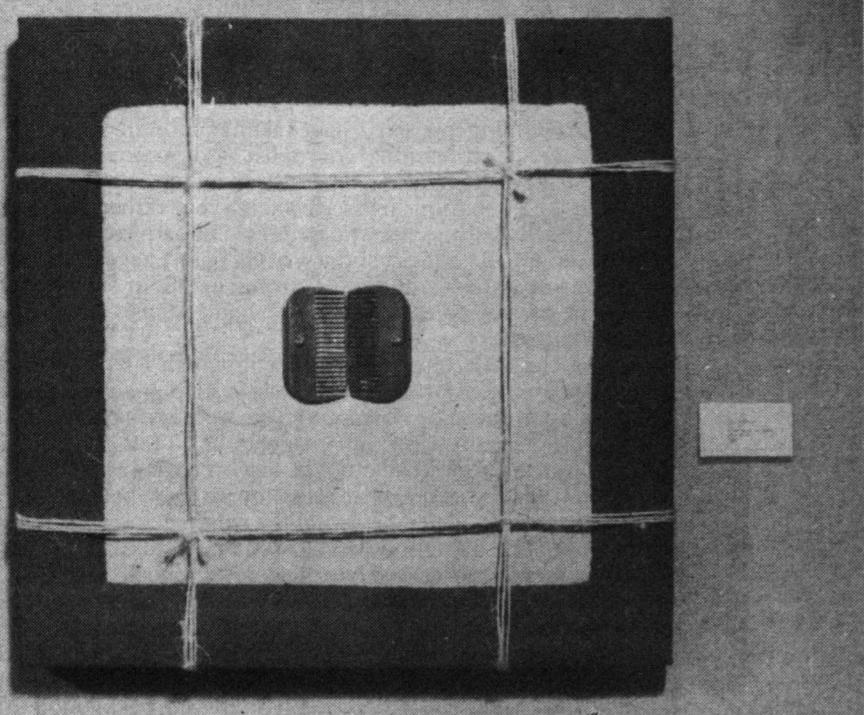


ARTS



This is "T.C." by Toyo Kawamura. Two colors? Tied with cord? Two combs? Teasing coyly?

East-west duality and politics

Kawamura and Haacke
SUB Art Gallery
Until March 28

review by Dave Cox

The current exhibit at the SUB Art Gallery is bound to stir up some controversy.

The first part of the display, a Japanese-Canadian artist named Toyo Kawamura, is aesthetically striking but not likely to arouse debate.

The second portion, however, is striking in another way. Hans Haacke, a German-New Yorker, uses his art works to make a very distinctive political statement.

Ms. Kawamura's paintings reflect the innate sense of duality of someone raised in occupied post-war Japan. Traditional Japanese dualism is enhanced by the "bi-cultural orientation" of growing up on a "knife-edge of balance."

Her themes relate to the Pacific Ocean, at least in the early works, and she makes a fascinating technical use of sand as

an artistic medium.

These are the sort of paintings that one feels require a certain amount of reflection and contemplation to grasp and appreciate fully.

Hans Haacke's work, on the other hand, makes no bones about its intent.

Haacke, born in Germany but now teaching in New York, sees his artistic role as "corporate critic", and the pieces being shown here now are fine examples of this view.

He tries to stir up a response by showing the barefaced cynicism with which companies manipulate public opinion. The audience is all those people who are unfamiliar with the corporate rationale for the support of art, he says in an interview in *Parachute* magazine.

The show is composed of a number of pieces of promotional material from Mobil Oil, aimed at the business community. Removed from their original context, they bear a very different meaning.

As Haacke states, people who examine his works often "become visibly

angry at those good corporate citizens who were clearly trying to dupe them."

He is honest about his intent to change public opinion more honest than his targets, who only reveal their intent to their commercial colleagues.

He seems to feel, as well, that people will agree with him, "particularly when they realize that they are also being fooled

A philosophically nourishing film

My Dinner with Andre
Cineplex 9

review by Geoffrey Jackson

This film surpassed all my expectations. Last night I went to the Cineplex 9 to see a film lauded by the critics, one that was made by one of my favourite directors, Louis Malle. So of course I was hoping for an interesting movie. What I found there was so rare, improbable, and exciting that I scarcely know how to express my enthusiasm.

My Dinner with Andre is based upon an extremely simple premise. The actor/playwright Wallace Shawn sits down to dinner with Andre Gregory, a man once deeply involved New York's avant-garde theatre scene. Seated at their meal they have a wonderful conversation. That's it. It shouldn't work, but it does.

It works because Andre and Wally have created a miraculous illusion of spontaneity. (By the way, Andre and Wally are playing themselves in this film, they are not fictional characters in any normal sense of the term). If I didn't know how time-consuming even the simplest of cinematography can be, I'd swear that Louise Malle had literally eavesdropped on their table.

But even the most spontaneous of conversations would fail to hold our attention for two-and-a-half hours unless something special was being said. The joy and wonder in this film lies in the brilliance of thought and expression to be found in this conversation.

Andre has returned to New York after being absent for five years. Wally is curious to know what he has been up to. We learn that Andre left the theatre because he could no longer find any meaning in his work. He speaks of a series of improbably Alice in Wonderland adventures (such as living in a wild Polish forest with forty actors, wandering the Sahara desert with a Buddhist Monk, or building impossible houses in Findhorn). Andre describes his bizarre

activities with glee, insight and an eloquence that leaves a very vivid impression upon your mind.

Wally, solid and down-to-earth, greets these revelations with sceptical looks, polite nods, and the occasional expression of appropriate wonder. You can tell he thinks this is all too weird.

Then Andre begins to draw conclusions from his experiences. He describes modern society as a ghost world in which people, snugly insulated from reality by comfort and habit, have lost the ability to really live. Wally tenses at this, because his life is one of comfort. He, for one, "isn't going to give up his electric blanket." Drawn out of his polite shell Wally begins to attack Andre's airy-fairy mysticism.

This all retains the excitement you find whenever two sharp minds really are going at it. It's almost as if the ideas are leaping out of the air with the crackling of electricity. There are moments in this film when I could hardly breath for fear of breaking a chain of thought these men were creating.

In the end the film embodies the very essence of their conversation: how can we be really alive? What starts as a humdrum dinner becomes a celebration of life because these two men can truly speak to each other about things very dear to their hearts.

Their enthusiasm is contagious. Returning from the cinema late Saturday night I felt as if I were under a spell. All the lights seemed brighter and all the sounds seemed clearer after seeing this film. My long walk home, across the High Level Bridge became special because I was keenly aware of everything. The snowy river, the stars, and the late night traffic were more real than before. Mundane cares of papers, projects, and exams seemed trivial, just being alive was adventure enough. That is the great message to be found in *My Dinner with Andre*. Life is an exciting, terrifying, joyful, and tragic adventure as long as we have the wit to perceive it clearly. Such clarity is the heart of this film.

and exploited for the gain of a small minority."

The pieces shown aim "to mimic the slickness with which corporations present their message," so they are excellent in technique. The question that arises is "But is it really art?"

I suggest you see the exhibition and decide for yourself.

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You are invited to present your views at a meeting of the Minister's Advisory Committee on University Affairs, chaired by Dr. John G. Paterson, to be held on

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
Room 3-15 University Hall
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1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 30
EDMONTON INN
Fireweed Room
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Interested groups and individuals wishing to make oral or written presentations should contact:

Peter Maxwell-Muir, Executive Secretary
805 - 9th Street S.W.
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