

Winters  
College  
Art  
Gallery

The work of Canadian artist Audrey Garwood is now on display in the Winters College Art Gallery. Garwood received art training at the Ontario College of Art, Rijks Academie in Amsterdam, Holland and La Grande Chaumiere, in Paris, France. She is a member of the Ontario Society of Artists, the Canadian Graphic art society and Canadian painter Etchers and has exhibited paintings in most of Canada's larger cities such as Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal and also in Seattle, Washington.

In her current display Garwood has been working on a series of woods and linocuts, portraying the various aspects of human relationships as she understands them. Each print grows and develops from an anorhous mood or sensation rather than as an illustration of a literal idea. The titles are enigmatic but attempt to give a clue to the artist's visual interpretation and of her feelings. In the words of the artist, "if these prints are successful each will strike a remembered or imagined chord — a different nuance in every-one."

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**COSMIC HOME**

By Randy Montgomery

As you all know, the trouble with Yorkville's coffee houses is that you have to pay a high admission charge, cover charge, high prices for coffee and food, and keep buying or you get thrown out. The Cosmic Home is a real up-trip in comparison. There is a moderate cover charge after 7 p.m., prices are low, and there is no set closing hour. You can buy one item and stay all night if you wish. When I was there last weekend the entertainment was supplied by the Young Folk and the audience really dug them. Between sets anyone from the audience was free to get up and perform. The manager explained the main theme of Cosmic Home is to promote new talent by supplying free exposure — i.e. a launching pad — for would-be professionals. Downstairs is a selection of LP's (mostly folk and acid rock) and paperback books. Also downstairs is an art gallery for anyone who wishes to show his or her paintings or sculpture. The appreciation of the casual atmosphere at Cosmic Home is evidenced by the fact that the place was filled to capacity during the first 3 weekends. In the afternoons recorded music is supplied and local types use the Home as a meeting place to rap or do homework. Local businessmen go there for lunch since the food is good and prices are low. Hours are Mon.-Fri., 11 a.m. till ? and Sat.-Sun. 2 p.m. till? The Cosmic Home has recaptured the vibrations of the original concept of a coffee house; free of the slickness of Yorkville's places. Tis only 15 minutes away from Glendon Campus at 2717 Yonge Street about half way between Lawrence and Eglinton. Dig it!

# The YorkYorkYorkYorkYork Plastic Plastic Plastic Scene

by Alex Cramer

One doesn't have to go to Yorkville to gawk at the plastic people. God knows, there are enough at York. It is understandable that many students should be turned off by the "straights" who seem to talk only about their essays, grades, and careers.

So these alienated students gather in groups in two common rooms: the political (the junior Ches) go to Vanier, while the apolitical (Genet's children) congregate in Winters. Many of them are very sensitive and creative people. But many more are cynical operators who use people as toys in their ego games.

In the past six years, during which I was involved in radical politics and underground newspapers, I have been able to observe the "bohemias" of Toronto, Montreal, and New York. The plastic scene here is bush league compared to New York. Many drop-outs from across the continent go to New York in search of an artistic community, a place that encourages creativity. But they quickly learn that New York is very uptight and only the hustler makes it. The result is that the "artists" become very aggressive and vicious. It's a very sick scene.

After New York, the hop students here seem like children in a sandbox. Nevertheless it's worth looking at their games, not because they are funny, but because we have to see the way people pervert themselves so that they become something that is unnatural. What really distinguishes the plastic hippie from the typical student, is his language rather than his mode of dress. Listening to a conversation among hippies, one is immediately struck by how fragmented it is.

When the average students speak you sense a certain continuity. "Professor Jones is a dull lecturer", one student will say.

And his friend will answer, "Yea, I nearly fell asleep."

Does this mean that they are really listening to each other? Not really, but they have a mutual pact to hear out each others monologues. However when we come to the plastic people, they don't even bother listening to each other's monologues. Each phrase, each sentence, is seen only as a key to a piece of witticism, usually at the expense of someone.

The hop people have developed the put-on and the put-down into an art form. Everyone knows what a put-on is, but few people are aware how often it is used. Whole conversations can consist of nothing but put-ons.

The usual procedure in setting up the put-on is to lead a rather naive (or sincere) person into believing that you are serious, when in fact your tone has a tinge of sarcasm. The plastic people will lead on the victim by saying things that are square or sentimental, but this will be done with a straight face, so that the poor fellow will miss it.

For instance, the hopster, referring to a mutual friend, might say "Steve is a really warm person."

And the victim responds "Yea, Steve will do anything for you."

Of course, those in on the joke are laughing to themselves as the victim begins to make ever so much more "foolish" statements. The ultimate put-on is when there are only two people and one of them is mocking the other. Of course there's no audience, but the person does it for the benefit of his own ego thinking "what an idiot that fellow is."

We all know how the put-down works. Listening to the hippies it seems that every second sentence is a put-down of someone. Whereas in the straight world there is a mutual agreement never to insult those present in a group, such a taboo doesn't exist in the hip circles. The hippies hurl barbs at each other, some less subtle than others. No one is immune including one's "friends". This explains why they have few close friends and are so lonely. This fact, in turn, makes them more vicious and so they learn more put-downs. It's a vicious cycle.

### The Put-Down

The put-down, fully developed, is more than

verbal. For instance, the best put-down is to look away once a speaker has started. Sometimes all the "listeners" are looking away initiating something else with another person. Then when the speaker sees that his audience is disappearing, he desperately turns from face to face looking for someone that will hear him out. Since there's no one, he stops in mid-sentence and feels like a fool. Often he will blame himself for this, thinking that what he was saying just wasn't stimulating enough.

Another common trick is to ask "what?", pretending that one hasn't heard the witticism. Needless to say, in the new context it's no longer funny and the speaker is made to look like an ass.

Hipsters strive to get all the attention on themselves, so that they do as much talking and as little listening as possible. There's little feedback between people and so conversations seem about as coherent as an Archie Shepp solo.

Of course plastic people want to appear intellectual even though in most cases they aren't. So they sprinkle their conversations with meaningless phrases culled from charlatans like McLuhan and Frye or the latest issue of Arts Canada. "It's really a question of negative space . . . Film is the truth 24 times per second . . . Reality is the consciousness saturated by particles of knowledge and emotions."

Since these phrases are meaningless, and neither the speaker or listener know what the fuck they are supposed to make of them, there is little mutual understanding. But of course they were never intended to be used as bridges for conversations. Rather they were employed to impress their friends.

Because the plastic people don't have a critical understanding of art, they are very faddish, and constantly the victims of put-ons. They'll go to see the shittiest underground films at Cinecity, admire Warhol and Corman, buy Tiny Tim records, and watch horror flicks ("It's camp"). One season they'll like Fellini, the next it will be Truffaut. They'll praise one Godard film and pan another even though the second film said the same thing.

### The Flower Girls

The Flower girl has at least one Mexican peasant dress in her wardrobe. Generally she'll wear it on a warm spring day while she sits under a tree reading Dylan (Thomas, that is.) Her dormitory room is decorated with various objects of art: old boards, stained windows, pebbles, old doorknobs and of course, the necessary buddha. Her small but growing record collection includes the Beatles, Joni Mitchell, Judy Collins and one Jimmy Reed record (she's really into blues.)

Though the flower girl may be 21, she lives in a fantasy world that isn't much different from the 16 year old groupie. By this, I mean that she can't relate to people except as variations on her idols: Jim Morrison, Dylan or Baez. While she can idolize a Dylan or a Cohen, she would never be able to see the two as ordinary people. Were a disguised Dylan to walk into the Winters Common Room and talk to the flower girl she'd probably give him the gears and dismiss him as a short, skinny runt. Although she may "know" that Dylan is really Robert Zimmerman and that he has been married for two years with one child, she sees him only as a sad-eyed Sensitive Poet.

It's not enough that the flower girl wear hip clothes; she must participate in some creative work. Accordingly she dabbles in art (with about as much seriousness as your Aunt Hilda.) Her work is rather bad, but who is going to criticize?

Since she'll never be able to talk to her idols, the famous poets and singers, she settles for the next best thing: her professors. It's easy to see why she can get hung up on them; many are young and hiply attired and they know a lot about literature and art.

Though they may "know" a lot they don't create anything but live off the works of oth-

ers. "And on page 73 of White Nights you can see how much Dostoevsky suffered living alone . . . Looking at Ionesco's the Lesson, we see how absurd language has become and the impossibility of communicating."

These are the glib cliches we get from the professors. In actual fact the professor lives a rather placid life and is hardly concerned with such disturbing questions. Your Professor Angst worries more about his Canada Council grant than the solitude of man.

Nevertheless, the flower girl is impressed and visits her hero-professors as often as possible. In the corridor, try catching one of the flower girls and she'll announce breathlessly that she's off to see Professor Soren-Furcht.

"About what?"

"Oh, life and things."

While we all playact, there's no doubt in my mind that the flower girl is a tremendous actress, so good that she fools even herself. It's not enough that she wears the uniform of the artist, the paint-splattered blue jeans and work shirt, but she must act like a sensitive person. Often she'll talk softly and her voice will flutter with emotion and her eyes will look as if she was about to cry, or has just finished.

### No Exit

There must be a way out of here, Dylan sings. But where can the sensitive person go. On the one hand he finds nothing in common with the straights whom he thinks accept life too easily without asking questions. And the thought of the plastic hippies makes him sick. Are there real hippies, then? No, for hippie is a label manufactured by the mass media.

The answer lies partly in the fact that within everyone there is a potential. Some of the most beautiful people I know talk in a McLuhan language. They have chosen the hip role, and so they have to go on with the performance. But in reality they are just naturally warm people who feel that they need something special in addition to their long hair and specs. And then there are Gord Lightfoot-type straights who are equally open and who think that Marcel Proust plays centre for the Montreal Canadiens.

Most of the hip students play their roles rather amateurishly, and it is for this reason that it's not too late for them to change. By this I mean that they are only roles that they are trying on for size, and so have not committed themselves totally to them. In Montreal and New York, I have seen what happens to people who get caught up in the plastic bohemia, and believe me, it is not pleasant.

In actual fact few from York will enter the CBC, the NFB, the magazines or the theatre. Most of the hippies will have to become high school teachers and social workers. It really doesn't matter whether one is creative or not. There are plenty of so-called creative types who are selfish bastards. Similarly there are quite a few warm people who don't do anything artistic.

The flower girls go to all the poetry readings but they don't really hear the poetry. Because if they did they'd relate differently to the people around them.

There is a song done by the Mothers which satirizes the plastic hippies. One line says that although the listener is laughing, the message is aimed at him. Most people miss that line because it is much more comfortable to laugh at others than to look at oneself.

In ending this article I wish I could say that this piece is really a reflection of all of us, since we all surround ourselves in plastic. If the MBA student and the athlete reading this article conclude that their views on the freaks are accurate, that is, that they are nothing but a bunch of "psuedo-intellectuals", then this piece has failed. Similarly, if the hipster reading this thinks that he is for real, while the other guy is a fake, then I suggest reading the article again.

It's still not too late to melt the plastic. What we need is , well you fill in the blank.