

## Bateman and robins at Museum until Sunday

If it has been some time since you last visited the Provincial Museum, you may find a visit in the next five days particularly agreeable and rewarding.

Currently showing (until Sunday) is an exhibit by Canadian naturalist painter Robert Bateman. The 51-year-old Toronto native has an enticing realist style of nature and wildlife painting.

One can see from the close observation of detail in his works the truth of the statement in the brochure that "natural history scientists were important influences in formulating his ideas."

Bateman is a graduate of the University of Toronto, where he majored in geography and art.

Some of the most unusual and appealing works in the display are African scenes such as his "Baobab" or "Topi." He began his serious African wildlife painting during a two-year teaching stint in Africa.

Now Bateman lives in Milton, Ontario, and gets his inspiration walking in

the country around his home early in the mornings. One clearly sees the "focus on the environment" which the accompanying pamphlet calls "the essence of Bateman's paintings."

The examples of his early work display a direct interpretation of the natural surroundings, unaltered as possible by artistic subjectivity.

Apparently, at a later stage in his career he was strongly influenced by contemporary movements like "Cubism and Abstract Expressionism", although his primary source of subject matter remained the outdoor environment.

Little (or nothing) is shown of his experiments in Cubism and Abstraction, but one does detect a visible change in his style after a certain point.

"He returned to Realism, but with a new approach to composition and concept, deciding this was the style in which he could best express his feeling for nature."

Some of his compositions are indeed, very original, "by the tracks" for example. Other (mostly early) works seem rather static, a bit too "photographic" and not as striking. Even these are interesting, though, for their close attention to particulars and technical finesse.

This show draws together a very good representative sampling of this fine painter's work. For those whose curiosity is piqued, a film on Bateman is showing at the Edmonton Art Gallery Sat. ept. 25 at 1:00, Sun. Sept. 26 at 4:00 and Tues. Sept. 28 at 12:00.

Also well worth seeing at the Museum in the next gallery over from the Robert Bateman show is an interesting concept called "the Poetry gallery," featuring some fascinating calligraphy and home paper-making. I leave it to the reader to discover this for her or himself.

# Wah's happening!



Breathin My Name with a Sigh  
Fred Wah  
Talonbooks 1981

review by Alex George

"Breathin' My Name with a Sigh" is Fred Wah's seventh, and most recent, volume of poetry. Retrospective in theme, the poems are a celebration of life — past, present, and future — telescoped into the poet's universe. For Fred Wah, the universe is his family and their locale. And in this universe, one's perception of time and space is demarcated by breathin'.

Air, breathin'; life. Wah's universe is an organic metaphor. The poet/reader becomes a wind instrument, a composer/musician improvising on a theme.

I take the breath  
through throat  
and hold it in the stomach  
hit the fingers  
on the horn blow the jazz  
that's where it goes

And in the end, ... "when I ran up the road out of breath...", the song fades and the (next in) 'line begins/and goes to pulls/deep liquid wire/to the bell day/daying."

Wah queries his 'ontegeny' in an early poem:

Are origins magnetic lines across an ocean migrations of genetic spume or holes, dark mysteries within which I carry further in to the World through blond and blue-eyed progeny father's fathers clan name Wah from Canton east across the bridges still...

He attempts to understand the phylogeny of his family (through not in the sense certain zoologists would interpret the term) through a subjective evaluation of the preceding generations of Wah's. In his metaphor, the theme does not change; each generation simply takes its own cue, and ad-libs for awhile.

These are simple, well-crafted poems. Wah chooses his words with care; phonemes, morphemes and literal symbols are added where advantageous. Consider the untitled poem:

mmmmmm  
hm  
mmmmmm  
hm  
yuhh Yeh Yeh  
thuh moon  
huh wu wu  
unh unh gnuh  
w\_\_\_\_h  
w\_\_\_\_h

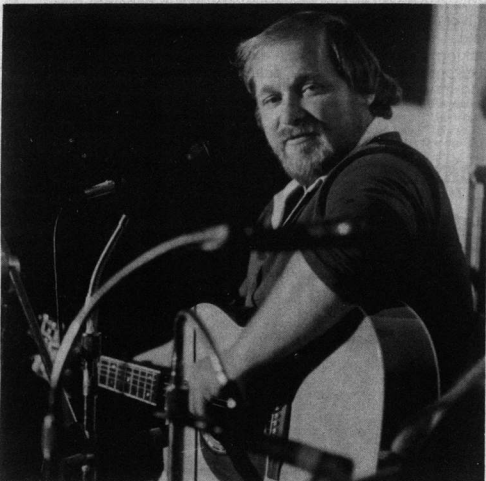
Breathin' while watching the moon? And then there is the cover of the book itself. In bold type, the title, a schwa, and the author's name. Clever use of symbols or an intentional pun? Fred Wah is clearly a crafty writer and not without a sense of humor.

Wah's best quality is his ability to write an objective poem in a style that seems subjective. Not an easy task for practiced writers, yet Wah consistently manages to draw the reader down into the personal perspective while remaining a distance from the subject.

All in all, this volume is a decent volume of poetry by a rather good poet.

### Arts Quiz Answers

Fred Wah in the answer. 5.d 6.b 7.a,8.b 9.c 10.d



Last Saturday night at the Southside Folk Club Eric Bogle packed them to the rafters

## Bogle packs them in

I was sharply criticized by one of my colleagues last Friday when he learned that I had no one lined up to review the South Side Folk Club show on Saturday evening. "But," I protested, "I don't really even like folk music that much." "So what?" he indignantly demanded, "Half of those University students out there do like it." My friend was eminently correct, as usual, and it most certainly is my responsibility to cover these events. However, since my knowledge of quality folk music is minimal, and a review written by me would be lukewarm at best, I hereby openly solicit aid from all you folk lovers hiding out there. In the best tradition of my predecessor in this job, Mr. Jens Andersen, if I receive no

response, I will make the justified assumption that not a single aficionado of folk music exists on campus, or else they do not read the Gateway, or they are stricken en masse with the killer apathy, any of which would give me reason to make future folk coverage as brief as possible. Your duty is before you!

P.S. A principle might be deduced from the above: if there is one kind of music you treasure above all others, and you want to see it written about in the press, you would be well advised to come to the Gateway offices (room 282, SUB) and volunteer your services. This applies to the whole spectrum of tastes, not solely amateurs of folk.



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the  
Top

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