

MSVU Gallery: Ten highly-strung artist types

by Melanie Cameron

The artists who contributed to Mount Saint Vincent University's feminist exhibit made powerful use of traditional female media. While each individual exhibit speaks for itself, they seem to be joined by a common thread, and collectively address certain feminist concerns.

Each artist chose a particular fabric as a means for her expression. The result is a balance of innovative pieces in a variety of forms. Instead of attempting to use other, less traditional media for their work, the artists used the age-old aspect of women's reality: fabric. By doing this, it is made clear that progression does not necessarily mean doing away with stereotypical associations.

In fact, by keeping these "stereotypes," and turning them into something positive and beautiful like this, the artists give their voice extra

ing degrees among viewers, of course.

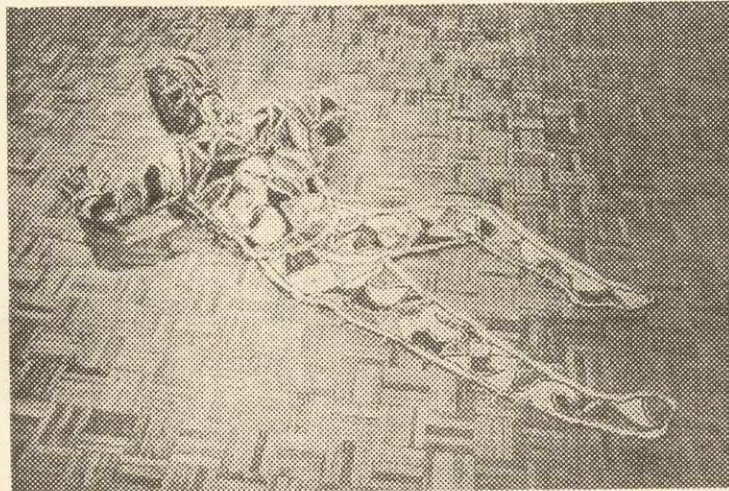
Having said this, it may now be safe to venture into some (necessarily) subjective observations. Upon entering the gallery, one piece in particular (perhaps initially because

"innovative pieces in a variety of forms"

of its size) caught my eye. The work was entitled "Breathing Space". It consisted of what appeared to be three masts and sails (of a ship). Each was made mainly of home-made paper pieces stretched across a wooden frame. Each sail seemed to have a strong breeze behind it. The effect was a sort of powerful sense of free-

energy flow is evident throughout the exhibit. "Imagine Labour", a boat composed of pieces of braided fabric, was dedicated by Noreen Battaglia for the women who "...pave the road for their grand-daughters to be strong and empowered and more verbal than they were ever allowed."

The bow of the boat is pointed



tion and determination. My cloth can be torn, aged, or ripped apart and still have beauty in its scars."

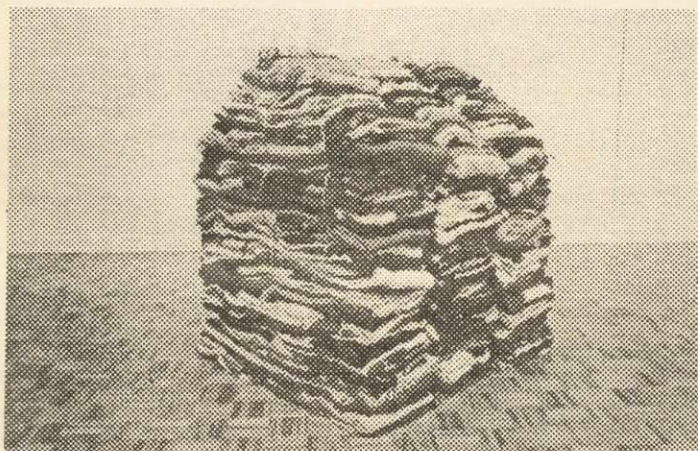
Gayle Wilson suggests that textiles can be used to express the need to heal and mend things, to give strength to people, and to provoke thought. "Working with cloth; printing, fraying, and stitching gives me

time to rest, contemplate, and revitalize." Through their use of fabrics, these women are reclaiming a part of their lives that has existed for many ages. Here it becomes a form of empowerment, a celebration of women.

Although the exhibit does seem to be outwardly lacking in representation of the cultural and racial diversity of Nova Scotian women, I think it successfully unifies, and thus addresses, some of the many con-

"...the need to heal and mend..."

cerns of women on a more general level. On exhibit at the MSVU art gallery until Sunday, April 4 is a thought/emotion/power provoking display—a visual experience that truly promotes vision.



ugh! A tonne of laundry

strength. It is somewhat difficult to comment upon more specific details and meanings that could be derived from the works without, in some way, straying from the artists' true intentions. Also, some pieces will inevitably have stronger meaning for some than for others, as they will appeal to certain sensitivities in vary-

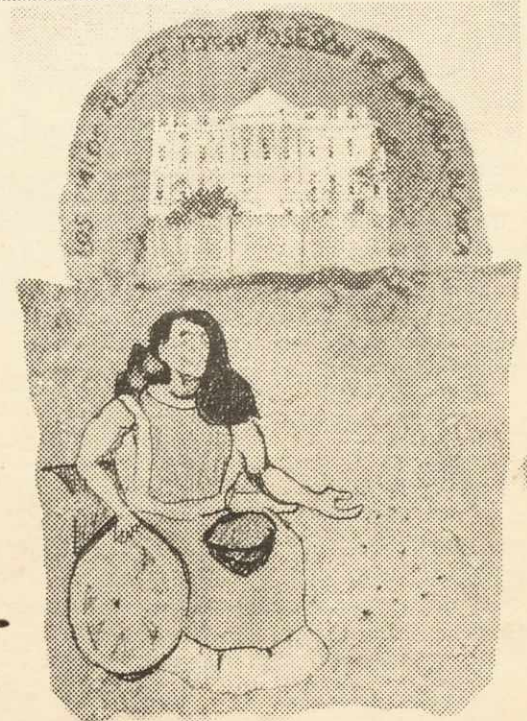
dom, like the natural strength of the wind itself.

What was most interesting was at the center of the tripartite unity. Here there was a circular space defined by a ring of ocean-worn rocks. I got the feeling that from this space (and maybe even of it) came a positive energy flow. This idea of positive

upward—as though in difficult waters—yet appears steady in determination. It suggests a positive progression, a constant continuum. Here as well, we can see the strength the bonds of tradition can have when

"the age-old aspect of woman's reality: fabric"

used positively. Speaking on her fiber medium, Tracy LeBlanc comments: "Masking themselves as one cloth, the layers are held together by a common bond; the thread of ambi-



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