

# ARTS



## Curious stimulants at York



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### Husky parkas leg & sink

by Trevor Campbell

Meeting Place

The North American premier of *Meeting Place*, at the Art Gallery of York University (Sept. 26 to Oct. 29), offers an interesting and imaginative view of the sculptured work of three internationally known artists.

Liz Magor, Robert Gober, and Juan Munoz, from Canada, America and Spain, respectively, present enigmatic pieces indicative of their individual outlooks. They have created identifiable pieces laden with underlying themes.

These newly created works are statements about personality rather than comments regarding prevalent world issues.

Of course, there exist various allusions to certain social situations since few people are able or willing to remove themselves from these global influences. However it is the multi-faceted characteristics of each artist that marks each work.

Liz Magor's *Siberian Husky* and *Gut Parkas*, suggest the ideal tranquility of nature and its northern inhabitants amidst the encroaching gaze of civilisation.

A husky sleeps beneath what seems to be freshly fallen snow.

This creation is an exact representation of wildlife, but its location within the room disconnects it from reality.

It is a reflection of Magor's attempt to connect her internal concepts of nature with her external concepts of nature.

This theme is reinforced by the *Gut Parkas* that line one wall in an extended tripartite. Encased in plexiglass and framed by wood, these parkas offer mixed messages as to the relevance of their placement.

The stiff posturing suggests urban society's misunderstanding of nature. While the convoluted plexiglass effectively distances them by distorting their image.

Magor admits having a fascination with nativity. The framed parkas could therefore be a testimony to this feeling, a type of preservation of the native tradition. Or perhaps she is illustrating society's distorted view of these people by approximating the media's fragmented presentation of native Canadians.

Robert Gober's most compelling piece, *Untitled (Leg)*, reinforces the theme of reality disconnected from the real. Attached only to a white wall, the leg is both horrific and enchanting. It resembles the real but simultaneously denies reality because of its placement. Gober employs theatrics, but in a modest way that intrigues without overwhelming.

*Untitled (Sink)*, from 1985, approximates Marcel Duchamp's *R Mutt*, by transforming the banal

into art. However, *Sink*, is not a reflection of contemporary art similar to that of Duchamp's early 19th century Dadaist movement. *Sink* is more of an illustration of Gober's imagination meeting with reality to create curious enjoyable stimulants.

Juan Munoz's compositions continue the theme of enigmatic meanings within realistic forms, but his terracotta figures do not have the finished surfaces that Magor and Gober prefer.

*Eight Figures* and *Six Figures*, are separate works comprised of dwarves standing on wooden balconies. Identical in appearance, these expressionless men stare fixedly in space as if waiting for something to happen, making the viewer feel like we are the attraction rather than these curios.

Magor, Gober and Munoz succeed with their self-expression. Magor's concern lies within her internal and external concepts of nature, Gober wonders about social realities as they pertain to his own identity, while Munoz's diminutive figures address his other contemplative self.

Gregory Sulzman the guest curator said, "the imagination is the meeting place between what in experience is concrete and what is ungraspable."

*Meeting Place* is an interesting show that should be seen.

The AGYU is located in York University's Ross Building, room N145, and is presently in the midst of an extended membership drive that could use your support.



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