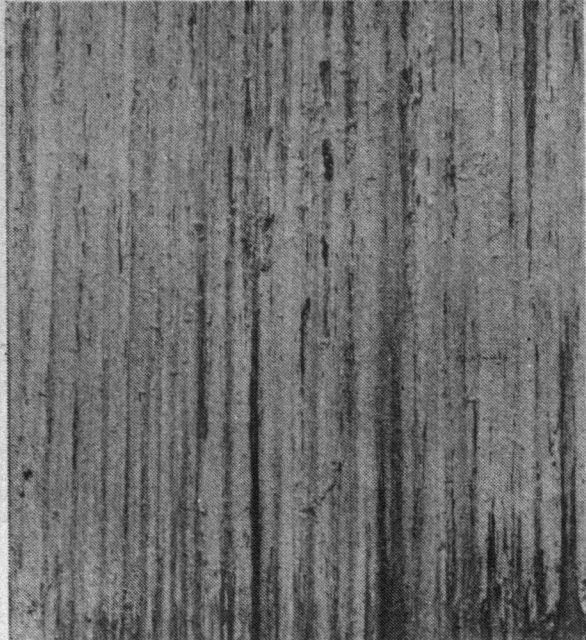
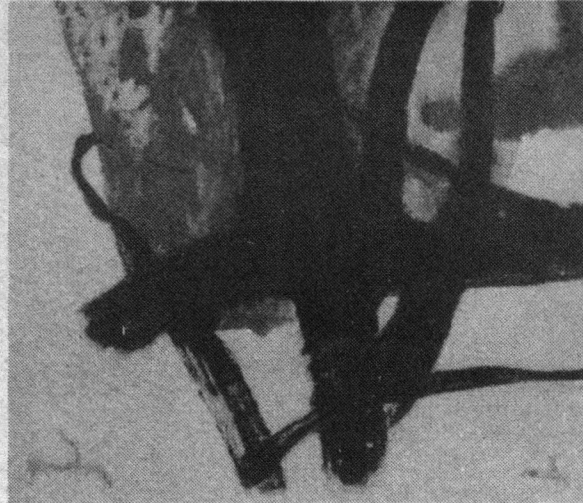


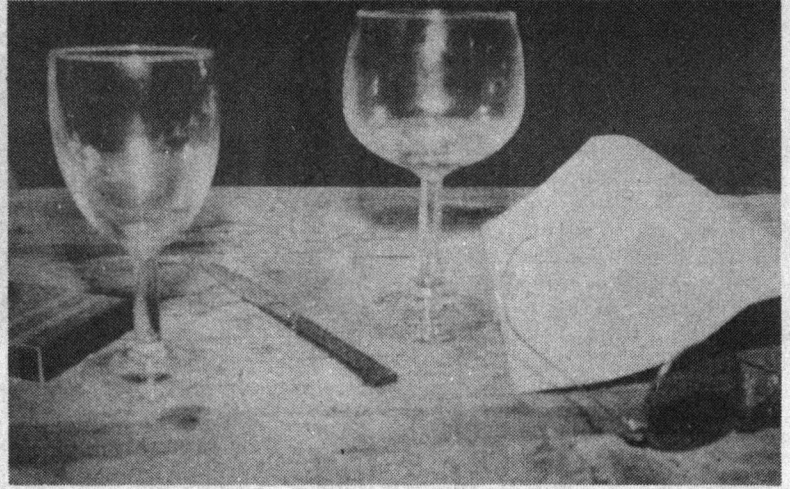
ARTS



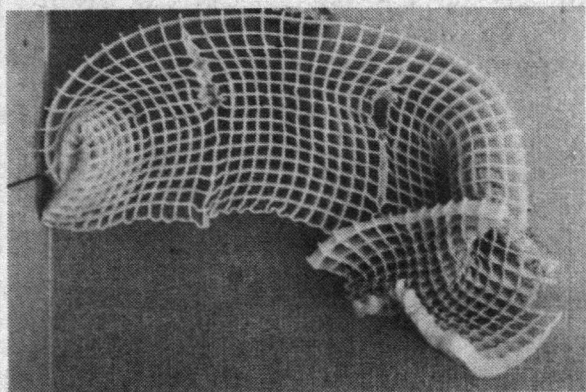
(d) A genuine work of art. Seven people (13%) said it wasn't.



(a) A genuine work of art. Three people (5.6% of those surveyed) said it wasn't.



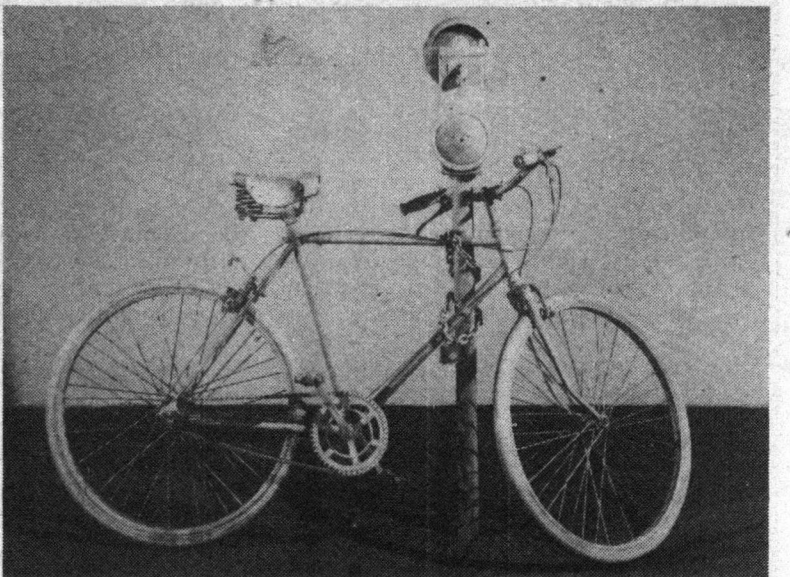
(e) A genuine work of art. Eleven people (20%) said it wasn't.



(b) A blatant fake. Seven people (13% of those surveyed, and less than would be expected from random guessing) recognized it as such.



(c) A genuine work of art. 22 people (41%) said it wasn't.



(f) A genuine work of art. Two people (3.7%) said it wasn't.

Survey reveals profound revelations

by Jens Andersen

54 people voted in the spot-the-fraud survey, seven correctly marked b) as the fraud. If the votes had been cast at random nine votes would have been expected to be correct.

By faculty the votes broke down as follows:

Faculty	Total Votes	Correct	% Correct
PhysEd	1	1	100%
Commerce	2	1	50%
Education	8	2	25%
Science	9	1	11%
Arts	19	2	10.5%
Law	1	0	0%
Medicine	1	0	0%
Agriculture	2	0	0%
Engineering	3	0	0%
Non-students	8	0	0%

Anyone who adds together the numbers under the pictures will see that they add up to only 52. Two of the ballots made no choice for the fraud and were marked incorrect. One, from an education student said, "These are all works of art in their own way."

The second, from a science student, said, "The Arts Editor has hidden talents unbeknownst to even himself. He has concocted a sellable, if not esthetically pleasing objet d'art. I commend him on his efforts/talent?!"

One Education student who voted for c) put in e) as a second choice, a very trendy pair to pick.

The "real" works of art were all taken from the Sept.-Oct. and Nov.-Dec. of *Update*, the magazine of the Edmonton Art Gallery. They were not from the SUB Art Gallery, as many people concluded. The fake is a melted fluorescent light (from the SUB fire) photographed against the burlap-covered office walls.

The question raised by the survey, of course, is whether there are any standards for determining what is art and, if there are, whether anyone is aware of them. The survey answers would seem to indicate that if any standards exist, they were not being used by the vast majority of respondents.

Most of the balloting was done under my nose in the *Gateway* office, and some

rather amusing reasoning was used to arrive at a conclusion as to which piece was the fraud. For instance, I had taken some surveys over to the Ski Club across the hall, and asked two women there to fill out a ballot. One looked up at the ceiling and said, "That b) looks a lot like that fluorescent light thing that got melted in the fire," whereupon she voted for it.

I looked up and, sure enough, there was another one. I tried to look nonchalant. The second lady, however, looked at the fixture and decided that the fraud was another choice.

Many people couldn't see what c) was (a doughnut on a plate) since the photo was underexposed (by us, not the artist) and many people chose it for that reason alone. Quite a few said that all the works were frauds, and at least an equal number pulled the old Socratic bit and asked me to define my terms (I replied by asking them to define theirs).

One person stated bluntly that painting a) was trash, but added that it was "obviously art." Hordes of voters guessed that d) was a wall in CAB (or SUB). Michael Skeet identified it — correctly? — as textural painting. One person guessed that e) was fake because of its poor lighting quality and because it was out of focus (due to the artist, not us). Another thought that its "professional" lighting quality indicated that it was a work of art.

Very few chose f), and a prevalent comment was that the flat backdrop and the lighting marked it as being on exhibit, which in fact was the truth. The bicycle, incidentally, is made of linden wood, including — if my eyes do not deceive me — the tires.

When I was doing the page layout of the survey two persons came over at different times and guessed that b) was the fraud. At that early stage such unanimity of correct opinion shook me badly, and I asked them how they had spotted it. One said that it was the only thing that looked "artistic" so it had to be a fake. The second said it was the only work of any beauty — the others were singularly ugly — therefore b) was the fake.

These two correct answers caused me some worry until the paper came out and incorrectly marked ballots began coming

in. Otherwise, the reasoning used by the two was very appealing to my cynical sensibilities, for my own opinion is that the specimens from *Update* are pretty pathetic specimens of art.

By what standards, do you ask?

Fairly straightforward ones: a work of art is a contrivance designed to convey the thoughts and feelings of the artist to an audience. One judges the work on the profundity of the thoughts or feelings being dealt with, the artist's success in getting them across, and the skill and effort necessary to accomplish the task.

Thus one looks at a Harlequin Romance and sees that though it deals with the awesome subject of love, it does not move one in the same way as a real experience with that wonderful and terrible emotion. The reason is easy to find: the writer is simply cranking out a formulaic tale and has made no brilliant or strenuous effort to evoke in us the sense of having been shaken by love, as for instance Somerset Maugham did in *Of Human Bondage*.

Or take the laughable "heroism" displayed in a James Bond movie, and compare it with Beethoven's ominous and searching musical exploration of the theme in his Third Symphony. The former expresses a shallow and conventional cowboys-and-Indians view of the world, and the most difficult obstacle the film's producer had to surmount was probably swallowing their pride while they worked on it. Beethoven's symphony on the other hand is a staggering achievement painstakingly and painfully sweated out by a master.

Of the *Update* pictures, only one shows any trace of hard work: f), the bicycle chained to the parking meter. It is no easy chore, after all, to make a bicycle out of linden wood. However while the artist (Fumio Yoshimura) evidently put some effort into his work, and undeniably has some talent in his fingers, the final result is merely a wooden bicycle chained to a parking meter. A curiosity, like a typewriter made of jello, or a news editor sculpted from bricks of maple-walnut ice cream. The ultimate question the sculpture asks is why any human with a limited time on this sorry world, would waste their

precious time in such a manner.

Painting a), by J.W.G. MacDonald is called *Airy Journey*. Damned if I know why. It doesn't suggest any sort of journey to me, nor does it seem in the least airy. Rather it strikes me as being sort of smeary. If it took more than two hours to paint, or any particular genius to conceive, it doesn't show. At least not to me. Christopher Varley, Head Curator of the Edmonton Art Gallery, thinks it is wonderful.

Larry Poons, who created d), doesn't make the mistake of giving his painting a title, as Macdonald did. "Untitled No. 21" is good enough for him. Otherwise his work is as nebulous as MacDonald's. And if you think throwing buckets of paint onto a canvas is just a fanciful joke, like the artist who backs up a cow to the easel and feeds it an emetic, think again: this is how Poons paints. Terry Fenton, Director/Curator of Modern Art at the Edmonton Art Gallery, thinks Poons is wonderful.

The picture of the wineglasses is called *Backyard, Toronto*. It is by Douglas Clark, a former Curator of Photography at the Edmonton Art Gallery. I would like to think he was fired for not being able to take pictures, but I don't really know if he was or not.

We come at last to c), the doughnut. Words fail me. The estimable Christopher Varley says that the gentleman who photographed this wondrous object has been a major influence on his life.

You might also be interested in knowing that the photographer (his name is Fred Douglas. I mention it even though he has not yet been convicted of his felony once wrote "a play in which the actors were to have appeared on stage behind a wall of glass, spanning the stage from wing to wing. Instead of speaking their parts, the actors would have mouthed their parts silently, while on the other side of the glass a loudspeaker broadcast their pre-recorded voices to the audience."

God help us all!