

## CUTBACKS CONTRA-STYLE



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ings, there is virtually no canvas to be painted on. Cheap plywood is often the only substitute available. "This gives us a lot of problems because of the climate. In five years, they start having problems with cracks and other technical problems," he says.

There is also a severe shortage of art books, which is largely the only contact Nicaraguan artists get with current trends in world art. "It isn't until now that we're opening up more, to see what's being done by the slides people take and the books people send," says Quintanilla. "We think it's very important to get the students in contact with the art which is being done. It broadens their... desire to do what they want to do."

One Canadian organization which collects donated art supplies and other materials for Nicaragua is "Tools for Peace" which has local organizations across the country including Nova Scotia.

Even if there were adequate supplies and peace on the borders, Quintanilla knows there are also problems to overcome from within — and the women of Nicaragua know this as well.

"Machismo is very prominent in Nicaragua still," he says. "It's something we have to combat a lot." It can make nude modelling difficult, as he explained, and it can attempt to keep women in the traditional role of house- and child-keeper. If much of this is changing in art, it is only due to the women themselves. In the Ministry of Culture, almost 350 of the 500 workers are women, as are similarly large numbers in other, non-traditional roles, such as Managua's woman Police Chief. It's more of the same hard slog from below that led to a new country in 1979.

"We've just had six years of revolution and we're starting to build a new society," explains Raul Quintanilla, spokesperson for a national dream. He can see it changing his society and he sees it reflected in his country's art. "With the participation of women, women's issues are coming out in art right now. It's not man interpreting woman, but women interpreting themselves and saying what they want to say. That's very important."

... As important as a country giving itself life through its art. □

## The confessions of a sensitive guy

"For me it started when this woman I was dating sort of turned into a feminist..."

By NAIRNE HOLTZ and JONATHAN PLYMOUTH

**T**imes are changing. And sensitive guys say they're right for the times.

One of the newest animals to prowl the 80's social landscape is the *Sensitive Guy*, those men who aren't too stiff to cry or too shy to tell everyone about it. One such tamed beast is Stefan S. (not his real pseudonym), whom we found at a local cafe in the act of detailing his shortcomings to a young woman. We managed to distract his attention long enough to obtain the following interview for *Gazette Arts Magazine*:

**Question:** What exactly are sensitive guys and how did they come about?

**Answer:** Well, I don't normally like to speak for a group because that's a very male-identified trait, but I will anyway. The way I see it, times are changing, and sensitive guys are those men who see the need to change or be...left behind. For me it started when this woman I was dating sort of turned into a feminist.

**Q:** That made you more responsive to women's needs?

**A:** Absolutely. I found she wasn't paying attention to me when I talked about my job, my university courses, or even the little bald spot on the top of my head that's thinning really fast — see? (he leans over). So, all of a sudden we had nothing to talk about after coming back from dates. I thought our relationship was over until I decided to read some of those books she'd been reading.

**Q:** And that made you more responsive to women's needs?

**A:** Oh, absolutely. After reading the books, I could see exactly what feminists didn't like about men. So I went to my girlfriend of the time and said, "Look, I'm dominating, insensitive, patriarchal, and on average I can earn much more than an equally-qualified woman. Let's talk about it." She did, and we had something to relate to again. Our relationship was allowed to run its course on an even keel. It worked with other women I went out with, too.

**Q:** You're not very responsive to women's needs, are you?

**A:** I think I am. Whenever women have a need, I try to respond with one of my own. That way we're more equal.

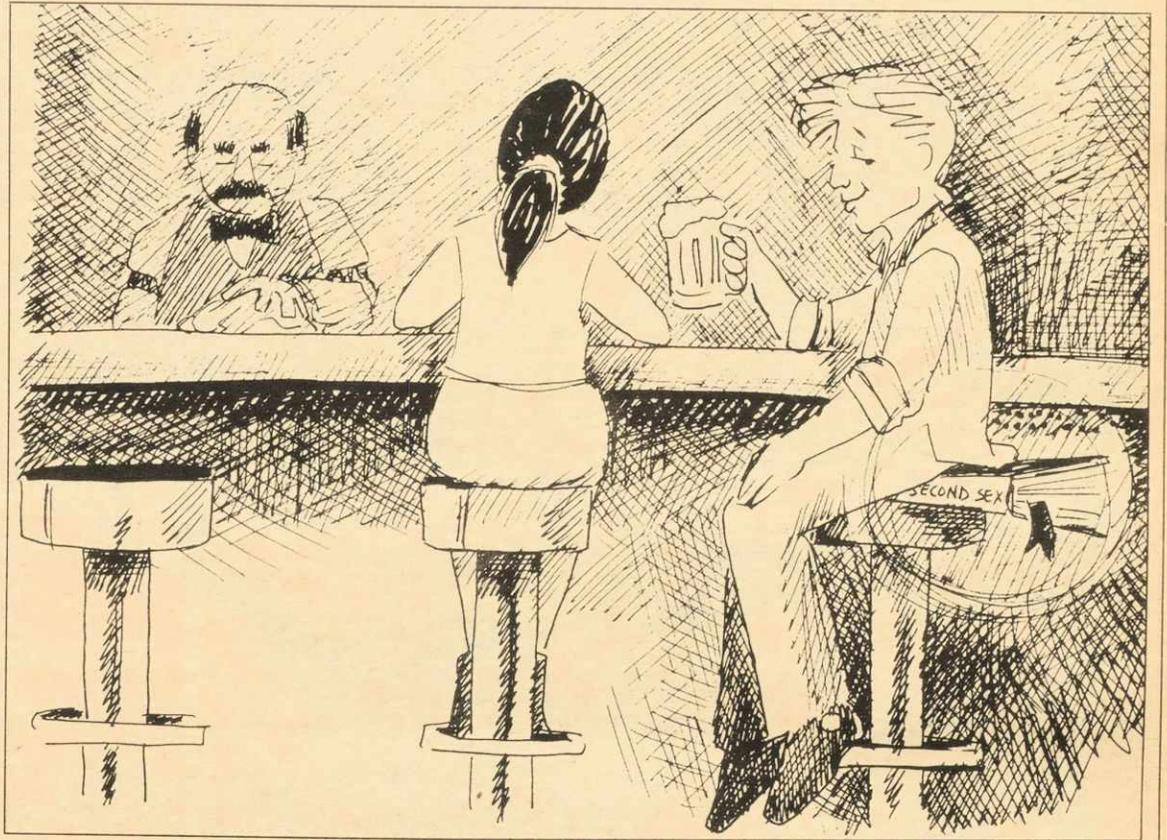
**Q:** Are you saying you haven't learned anything about yourself by being a sensitive guy?

**A:** That's not what I'm saying at all. Since I've been a sensitive guy, I've gotten more in touch with my feelings. I can appreciate beauty in the world around me, I have a less goal-oriented approach to my career, and I've even learned to cry since the manual arrived. I'm not like other men anymore.

**Q:** How so?

**A:** Well, I've progressed beyond the he-man approach to life where aggres-

# END PIECE



sion is something to be rewarded and you put a tough exterior before the world. I'm not interested in impressing anyone by my physical prowess or by acting like a cave-man.

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**Q:** You've made a conscious decision to reject these unhealthy attitudes, then?

**A:** They never really worked for me, anyway.

**Q:** Hmm. Maybe you could offer some insights into your lifestyle — with a few tips for the aspiring sensitive guy.

**A:** Sure. I do have some ideas for other men. I guess the first thing I'd mention is the importance of the correct friends to a sensitive lifestyle. Having a gay friend is very important.

**Q:** You mean friends.

**A:** No, that's friend in the singular. You see, it's important to maintain contact with an oppressed male group, and prove how open-minded you are. One gay friend does just fine for that. If you have too many gay friends, a sensitive guy might give off the wrong... messages to women. Lesbians are another matter, though. When you can tell your date, "As I was talking to Sarah yesterday — she's lesbian, and I'm the last man she's close friends with —"... then you're in the sensitive guy club for life. Of course, actually being gay is going a bit overboard — for me, anyway.

**Q:** You certainly have some... unique

political beliefs.

**A:** I've been told that. Something like that, anyway.

**Q:** Besides who you're seen with, are there other lifestyle changes a novice sensitive guy should make?

**A:** Well, your position on sports is another choice that says a lot about a man's sensitiveness.

**Q:** How so?

**A:** There are sensitive sports and he-man sports. Sensitive sports aren't limited to big-muscled men competing. They're open to both men and women; sports like jogging, swimming, cycling, and so on are ideal sensitive guy sports. It's a good idea to talk about how good it is, too — especially to women who can appreciate your progressiveness. After you finish that pool length, casually state, "You know, I really enjoy swimming because of its non-competitive nature," or, "Well! Sports where you don't have to be violent are so much better!"

**Q:** What exactly led you to this critique of traditionally masculine sports? Was it recent socio-psychological research on the effects of aggression in sports?

**A:** Yeah — uh, absolutely. That, and the fact that I never was any good at them anyway. I must've seen what trivial, useless sports they were even before I was sensitized.

**Q:** I see... If you don't mind us saying this, most of your responses seem geared towards meeting women — feminist women anyway. Have you modified your sexual life any to accommodate this?

**A:** You bet. The cave-man approach is dead for sensitive guys. One good alternate way to work things is to say, "You look really tense. How about a nice foot massage?" That can lead just anywhere...

**Q:** What about the act itself? How is that changed?

**A:** Well, the tyranny of man-on-top, woman-on-bottom sex is definitely over, let me tell you. It's important to let your girlfriend know how strongly you feel your sexual habits should be

balanced, with her in command some of the time, and you on top at times also. If you work it just right, when you're kinda tired or bored you can let her take charge. That way, when you're in the mood, you can get on top and it'll be your turn.

**Q:** That's as far as your changes go?

**A:** Oh, not by a long shot. One thing I've found is that there's nothing women hate more than men just rolling over and going to sleep after sex. That's really... insensitive. So after I've just made love, I always make sure to spend the time afterwards in gentle touching and caressing.

**Q:** Now that sounds like a positive change.

**A:** Absolutely. I figured it out that it takes the same amount of time to fall asleep whether you roll over or do this caressing business. So it's not like it's an effort or anything. Sometimes your lover even gets aroused again, so it's just good sense to do it.

**Q:** But what about the woman's pleasure?

**A:** Ohh. You mean that *clitoris* thing.

**Q:** Uh, something like that, yes.

**A:** See, that's another area where the whole equality issue comes up with sensitive guys. When your lover raises that question, you had better be prepared to deal with it. That's even if you find the area down there personally distasteful. Where equality comes in is that it often... obliges women to do something in return, something they might not ordinarily do. It all balances out.

**Q:** That's sick.

**A:** Hey, you asked for honest answers. My name isn't going to show up anywhere in this, is it?...

*Feeling a bit nauseous, at this point the Gazette interviewers broke off the interview, leaving Stefan S. to read a Simone de Beauvoir book over a cooling cup of herbal tea. As they left, a familiar, faint voice could be heard from the cafe even over the noise of the street: "Hey, would you like to talk about pornography from a male perspective? I have some feelings I'd like to share with the right person..."*